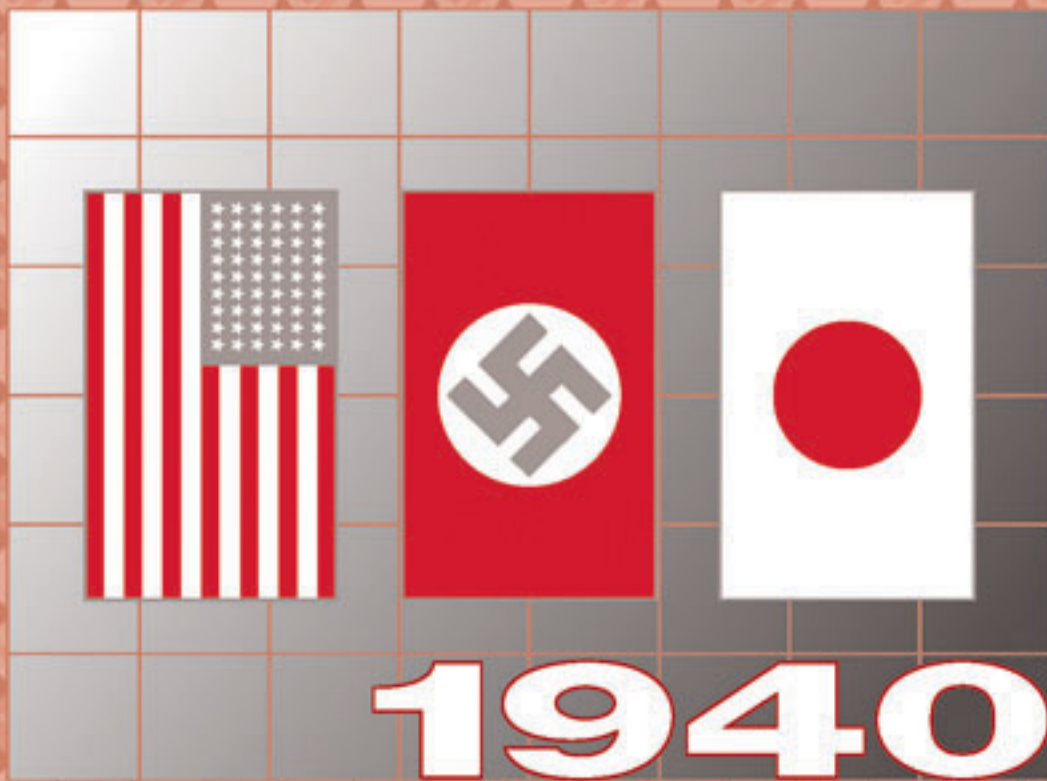


# THE AMERICAN NEUTRALITY DEBATE



Should the United States Enter World War II?

# THE AMERICAN NEUTRALITY DEBATE: 1940

A re-creation of the conflict preceding World War II,  
debating whether or not the United States should end its neutrality

THOMAS R. BROCK, now deceased, wrote THE AMERICAN NEUTRALITY DEBATE: 1940. Tom graduated from Lakeland College in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and earned his M.A. in Contemporary American Studies from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. For Interact Tom also wrote three other debate re-creations as well as individual learning projects—TELEVISION and AUTOMOBILE. He taught social studies at Baraboo High School, Baraboo, Wisconsin, where he coached varsity football and track and field.

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## Why were Americans so isolationistic in the late 1930s?

When high school students assess American involvement in World War II, two of their more often repeated remarks are “It was a popular war” and “Americans were more patriotic then than they are today.” Comparing World War II to more recent conflicts in Korea and Vietnam—military operations whose wisdom a number of Americans questioned and even condemned—makes it easy to understand why such notions concerning World War II evolved. However, a thorough study of America from 1937–1940 reveals a real struggle taking place between those Americans who desired to avoid Europe’s wars at all costs and others who wanted to intervene. The issue of neutrality, heavily debated during the late 1930s, illustrates the intense differences of opinion surrounding the entire era. During these tumultuous years, the return to America’s traditional isolationism would be shattered, but only after vigorous debate and the stunning awakening brought on by the attack on Pearl Harbor.

This re-creation will result in a spirited debate of key conflicts that typified the various moods of Americans in the late 1930s. Specifically, your students will experience the following:

### **Knowledge**

1. 1930s concerns about the direction and implementation of American foreign policy and subsequent attitudes and opinions
2. The main issues debated: neutrality legislation, traditional isolationism, the extent of American vital interests abroad, defensive perimeters, and the military draft

### **Attitudes**

1. Appreciating the sincerity and conviction contained in both the isolationist and interventionist positions
2. Appreciating the anxiety and fear associated with all the debaters as they argued issues of war, peace, and national security
3. Appreciating how the development of diplomacy/foreign policy in the United States brings out the best in a democracy and that such policy decisions are not made by governments alone

### **Skills**

1. Assuming an historic identity, standing up, and speaking convincingly as that identity before a whole class
2. Listening carefully enough to be able to take specific detailed notes under generalization headings

## OVERVIEW



**Interact's** re-creations  
take only a few hours  
of class time.

Four class periods—or days—are needed for this re-creation.

### Day 1

After an interest catcher that makes students aware that they do have assumptions about America's role in world affairs, students read the Student Guide's Background Essay on the issue of whether to aid the Allies in 1940. Then they are grouped into three factions: 1) eight interventionist speakers; 2) eight anti-interventionist speakers; and 3) uncommitted individuals who will ask questions of the debaters. The three groups get separate handouts, which individuals study in order to contribute to the next day's debate.

### Days 2–3

The room is changed into a special debate arrangement. Eight pairs of speakers debate the neutrality-intervention issue at an imaginary meeting in Chicago in October 1940: eight debaters speak for aiding the Allies; eight speak against. The remaining uncommitted persons ask specific questions of specific speakers. Regular votes are taken as the paired debaters present formal arguments and answer specific questions. Eventually one side is declared the winner.

### Day 4

Either in study pairs or activity groups students debrief what happened during the previous days' debate. They pinpoint late 1930s concepts and attitudes about American foreign policy: the role of the presidency in implementing foreign policy objectives, isolationism, internationalism, and possible results of American intervention in the world war. They then discuss how American involvement in world affairs today relates to the events of the 1937–1940 period. As a result, students draw conclusions about present American foreign policy and how historic events, many of which are outside the realm of our nation's control, have shaped America's status within the world community of nations.

## SETUP DIRECTIONS



*Certain roles are so important that only you should determine who plays them.*

1. **Assigning roles** Decide in advance how you wish to divide your students into the three groups. Since no student has a larger responsibility than making a two-minute speech and a one-minute answer to a question, you may wish to have students pull numbered slips to determine who is to be in which group if your group is roughly homogeneous in ability. However, if not, you may wish to assign students to roles to assure that all three groups have a fair number of “vocal” persons; that is, individuals either capable of or desirous of speaking on their feet. **Note well:** *After duplicating a ROLE ASSIGNMENTS: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY DEBATE 1940, fill in its spaces with students’ names so that you will always know the debate’s sequence.* (You may also want to give each student a copy.)
2. **Handouts** Duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
  - INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS (eight: one page per speaker)
  - ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS (eight: one page per speaker)
  - UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS (eight: cut pages in half vertically, one per questioner)**Optional:**
  - \* ROLE ASSIGNMENTS: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY DEBATE 1940 (one copy for your use)
3. **Poster materials** If you wish to encourage your students to make posters with slogans on them to hang on your classroom walls during the debate, obtain some plain cardboard, butcher paper, appropriate paint, and felt pens.



*An example of a poster your interventionist speakers might create for the debate*

4. **Follow-up reading** Since some of your students will be stimulated by the heated quality of the debate, encourage them to check books out of the library on the 1940 Neutrality Debate. See Bibliography on page 4.

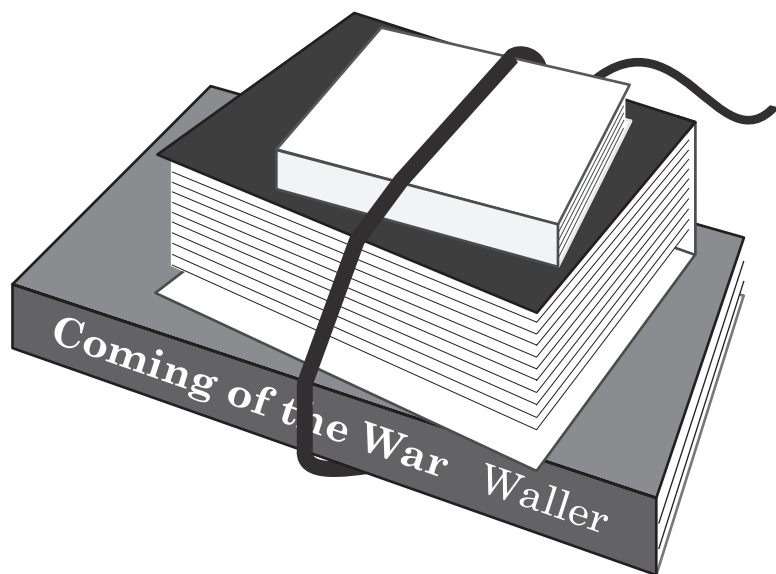
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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Consider asking your friendly school librarian to set up a reserve shelf in the school library for student use. On this shelf have him/her place books on this list which you can encourage students to read before or after the debate.

- \_\_\_\_ *Annals of America: 1930–39*, U.S. Government. Printing Offices, Washington, D.C., 1976.
- \_\_\_\_ *Annals of America: 1940–49*, U.S. Government. Printing Offices, Washington, D.C., 1976.
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# DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



*Also assign your students to read the chapter(s) in their textbook covering America's drift into World War II. Make certain that your students pay particular attention to the maps and illustrations.*

## Before Day 1

(Could be one or more days in advance of Day 1)

1. Consider showing any film or filmstrip that will introduce the foreign policy issues of the late 1930s.
2. Point out how the audio-visual you have shown relates to the upcoming re-creation of the 1940 debate on aiding the Allies.
3. Encourage your students to read in the books you and your librarian have gathered on a reserve shelf labeled 1940 Neutrality Debate.

## Day 1

(Some of the following teaching directions are rather brief since the instructional sequence is written out in considerable detail under Procedure in the Student Guide.)

1. If you have shown no filmstrip or film and want to awaken students to what is going to happen, consider using the following motivator. Either duplicate or write the following six statements on your chalkboard. Then have your students respond to each statement by writing one of the following: **SD, D, NO, A, or SA**. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, No Opinion, Agree, Strongly Agree.)

*Statements for students' response:*

- a. If it were left up to me, I would like to see the United States return to an earlier, simpler era when our nation was isolated from the problems faced by the rest of the world.
- b. The area of gravest concern to our nation today involves domestic issues (economic, political, social), not foreign affairs.
- c. Given the unstable world we live in today, the United States should prepare itself militarily to meet any aggressive possibility created by a hostile nation.
- d. American presidents have a solemn responsibility to inform American citizens concerning *any and all* matters relating to their security.
- e. The United States has a moral obligation as the leader of the free world to protect and defend other free societies—and this can mean sending military supplies and even our troops overseas.
- f. The United States should be more selective than in previous years when deciding which countries are to receive our military and/or economic aid.

## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2

2. You may decide to hold a short discussion after the survey is completed. Encourage students to share their thinking with one another. Another possibility would be to have your students write their names on their surveys and turn them in. Later you could redistribute them as part of the debriefing that follows the debate.
3. Follow numbers 1–6 under Day 1 on page 7 in the Student Guide.

### **Days 2–3** (One or two days)

1. Follow numbers 1–7 under Days 2–3 on page 7 in the Student Guide.
2. Either yesterday or today before the debate begins, you might like to deliver a brief lecture in which you give some additional information about the Chicago Neutrality Debate. Cover some of the following:
  - a. Although it was not public knowledge at the time of the debate, during 1936–1939 President Franklin D. Roosevelt made several efforts to persuade leading congressmen to understand that the situation in Europe was so grave that the United States might have to become involved. Usually such attempts were fruitless because the isolationists had the loudest voices at these presidential briefings. On one such occasion in 1939, FDR announced that his intelligence sources estimated France and England’s chances of survival against the German blitzkrieg at 50–50. Isolationist Senator William Borah disagreed, boasting that he had a far better source of information than the president—foreign newspapers. Such a response prompted Secretary of State Cordell Hull to literally break into tears following the meeting.
  - b. Entire studies have been written about the events of 1941, especially the crucial weeks and days leading up to the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Several historians have postulated that President Roosevelt possessed knowledge of the impending attack. These historians offer evidence such as 1) the warnings made by Japanese ambassador to the U.S. stating that “events will get out of hand” if the United States government did not lift a trade embargo on the Japanese; and 2) the inability of the American decoding service to warn Pearl Harbor military commanders of information they possessed which



*We have enlarged the type here so that it will be easier to read.*

## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3



*If you have quite capable students giving the speeches—ones who will do extra research—you may wish to duplicate pages 6–8's large type lecture materials and give it to them to read. This material could stimulate them in their speech preparation to do even more research.*

- hinted at “an attack somewhere in the Pacific.” Two assumptions result from such historic interpretation: 1) President Roosevelt would logically know of such happenings; and 2) President Roosevelt “jockeyed” the United States into eventual war by allowing events to happen that would facilitate American entry.
- c. An image of isolationists that haunted them and hurt their efforts to campaign for their cause was associated with groups and individuals whom many Americans identified as un-American. Communists and ethnic organizations such as the German-American Conference opposed intervention. Individuals such as Norman Thomas, an influential socialist leader, and Father Coughlin, a popular radio commentator of the early 1930s who by 1940 was considered a demagogue, burdened the cause of the isolationists, who were making every effort to associate their policies and beliefs with American patriotism.
  - d. Eleanor Roosevelt was deeply hurt when leaders of one of her pet projects, the American Youth Congress, vowed that they would refuse induction when the Selective Service Act went into effect.
  - e. So sensitive were some isolationists toward their favoring of strict neutrality that when the king and queen of England visited the United States in the late 1930s, several isolationist newspapers speculated that the United States would become a colony again. Another illustration of such feelings occurred when a bill was introduced into the Senate with the purpose of arming the American island of Guam against possible Japanese attack. Several isolationist senators argued that such a gesture would “provoke” the Japanese.
  - f. Prior to the outbreak of war involving the United States, interventionists dramatized America’s lack of preparation by pointing to the fact that many foot soldiers were training with broom handles and firing blank machine gun rounds at cardboard tanks.
3. Use the role assignment sheet during the debate so that you always know who is to speak next.

## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 4



*You may wish to use your school camcorder to videotape all or portions of your students' speeches and questioning. Students can learn about themselves by watching their performances. Of course, portions of the video could also be used during an open house for parents.*



*Several years ago JUDGMENT was featured on the CBS Evening News. A junior high class in President Truman's hometown of Independence, Missouri, had just found him innocent!*

### Day 4

1. Follow numbers 1–2 under Day 4 on page 8 in the Student Guide.
2. Have each student write down his/her reactions during the two debriefing activities.
3. Pull together the activity groups' thinking by having a general discussion. Select one representative from each activity group to sit on a "hot seat" along with other activity groups' representatives. Conduct a general discussion of the two debriefing activities.

### Follow-up activities

1. If you wish to come up with a grade for your students' participation in this re-creation, consider having the students individually evaluate themselves as follows:  
**Preparation** Any reading done prior to the re-creation and/or any slogans/posters made  
**Speaking** Summary of roles played, ideas presented, and examples of staying "in character"  
You may also wish to evaluate the students' writing: their notes on The 8 Argument Pairs and their written answers developed during debriefing.
2. If your students seem really interested in World War II, they would likely enjoy Interact's HOMEFRONT, an interaction unit analyzing American society during World War II, or Interact's JUDGMENT, a simulation of President Harry Truman facing trial for his decision to drop the atomic bomb.

## ROLE ASSIGNMENTS: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY DEBATE: 1940

	Speakers	Questioners
Pro 1		
Con 1		
Pro 2		
Con 2		
Pro 3		
Con 3		
Pro 4		
Con 4		
Pro 5		
Con 5		
Pro 6		
Con 6		
Pro 7		
Con 7		
Pro 8		
Con 8		

# INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS - 1

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a pro argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a con speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life. *Be creative!*

**Pro 1** (You will speak first on the first argument pair.) You are William C. Bullitt, a career diplomat whose service to the United States spans three decades from 1919 to 1943. You abandoned a promising career in journalism to become a member of the U.S. Peace Commission that was sent to Paris in 1919 following World War I. Your initial work in government service was short-lived following a dispute with State Department officials in Washington. When they rejected your recommendations that the newly formed Soviet government be granted recognition by the United States, you resigned your position in disgust.

After 12 years of private life you returned to the State Department in 1933 as the first American ambassador to the Soviet Union. This assignment was followed by your appointment as ambassador to France, a post you now hold. You witnessed Hitler’s Germany trample on the French policy of appeasement when Hitler’s troops invaded France in 1940. Your sadness over the fall of France has been compounded by deep bitterness toward American isolationists, whom you blame for allowing it to happen. You had spent many long, frustrating hours throughout 1938 and 1939 attempting to convince a reluctant Congress that France must be supplied with American military arms. Of course, your pleas were in vain. Therefore, as you step to the rostrum to speak, you can barely control your anger. You will blame the isolationists for the “idiocy” of their dreaming; this group has no idea of what is taking place in the outside world!

**Argument:** The year is 1940, not 1840. Instead of living in a peaceful world we live in a world engulfed in warfare. As a result, isolationism is no longer a viable American foreign policy.

- a. Was our entry into World War I for nothing? Didn’t it teach us a lesson? By 1917 we had learned that isolation from that war was no longer possible.
- b. Public opinion, once firmly in the grip of isolationist sentiments, has shifted dramatically in support of some type of intervention. Now if only the 19th-century politicians and idealists will heed this message! The romantic yearnings of these people have prevented any *serious* debate over foreign policy and national security.
- c. You isolationists can’t have it both ways. You have tightened a stronghold on the world’s economy yet refused to take responsibility for world peace. To date, all I see is an isolationist policy of self-indulgence.
- d. Our post-World War I record of involvement in disarmament conferences, notably the Washington Naval Conference of 1921–1922 and the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, attest to our country’s true desire to maintain world peace.
- e. An isolationist foreign policy amounts to no policy at all. Are we going to allow the decisions that we should be making to be formulated in Tokyo, Berlin, and Rome?

# INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS - 2

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a pro argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a con speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life. *Be creative!*

**Pro 2** (You will speak first on the second argument pair.) You are Hans von Heiden, a recent German immigrant to the United States. You are here today because you personally do not believe that most Americans understand the breadth or scope of Hitler’s global ambitions. In a sense, you are on a one-man campaign to alert and educate Americans to the potential of Hitler’s plans for world conquest. Just as it was difficult for you to conceive that a “maniac” like Hitler would ever come to power in Germany in 1933, it was also hard to comprehend the swiftness with which he began swallowing up the European continent. Since those dreary days as a German resident, you have finally come to accept the fact that Germany will stop at nothing to achieve Hitler’s ambitions.

Several important factors support your strong beliefs. First, the Tokyo-Berlin Axis was formed. With Germany in Europe and the Japanese in Asia both building empires, the Western Hemisphere will logically become a common objective for them once their initial conquests have been settled. Second, you read, heard, and witnessed Hitler’s speeches at rallies when he would speak of world conquest as a tangible goal for Germany to achieve. Third, the German-Prussian military tradition glorifies war as the highest form of human endeavor. Wars are unifying exercises that demand great amounts of energy and sacrifice, and that keeps people preoccupied with the business of winning such wars. Recently Reich Marshal Herman Goering spoke out that wars are never over; one war always starts the next war.

So far your warnings have seemed to fall on deaf ears. Few Americans thus far have accepted in reality the events of Europe and Asia. But you will speak with conviction as you attempt to spell out the absolute necessity of American involvement to stop the German onslaught.

**Argument:** The European war is not a local war. We are naive if we believe that the affairs of Europe do not influence us economically, culturally, and politically. The struggle now raging in Europe and Asia is not a British, Chinese, Russian, or Danish struggle. It is a human struggle, fought to preserve the freedom of all mankind.

- a. Adolph Hitler has proclaimed at the Nuremberg rallies what his ambitions are. Initially he wants a European empire; eventually he wants to control the world. You isolationists are asleep. You must read the philosophy of Nazism, its advocacy of *lebensraum* (living space), and its Teutonic laws. All of these glorify perpetual war as the highest calling of a German citizen.
- b. Japanese Emperor Hirohito and his military advisers strive for nothing less than do Hitler and Benito Mussolini. They are methodically carving up the Asian continent. Has anyone forgotten America’s stake in the Philippine Islands? in Guam? in Hawaii?
- c. With modern airplanes and swifter ships and submarines used in warfare, the Atlantic Ocean no longer serves as a barrier from attack.
- d. I fear that the U.S. will realize too late that it has a definite stake in the European balance of power. If an aggressive Germany dominates the European continent, American security will be affected.
- e. The United States is infested with Nazi agents. German U-boats have been sighted near our territorial waters. The German government was secretly behind a recent article in the *New York Times*. This article preached the emotionalism of the isolationists. This philosophy softens us up and would render us helpless. *How can we stand idly by like ignominious cowards while evil consumes the civilized world?*
- f. If America remains indifferent to the fate of Europe, Hitler may be misled. He will be encouraged to believe that the United States is willing to appease him, just as England and France did. Did appeasement help Austria or Czechoslovakia?

# INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS - 3

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a pro argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a con speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life. *Be creative!*

**Pro 3** (You will speak first on the third argument pair.) You are Lord Edwin Randall-Smythe (an imaginary identity), a noted British historian on leave from Oxford University to tour as a guest lecturer at various universities in the United States. It is more than coincidental that the topic of your lectures has been the historic strength of British-American ties. Having met with lukewarm receptions in most of the schools where you have spoken, you have concluded that your speeches have often antagonized rather than inspired audiences. It is only natural that you are greatly upset by the harsh statements made against your country: isolationists are claiming that European society is decaying and no country or group of countries seems willing or able to lead in helping reestablish stability. As you approach the podium to speak, you are prepared to answer such charges by pointing out the many positive impacts Britain and Western Europe have had in the growth and development of America.

**Argument:** We cannot forsake the British and the French. They are our closest international brethren. The seeds of American civilization began in these two countries.

- a. Did the French ignore America while you were struggling to gain your independence?
- b. Basic beliefs in democracy and capitalism did not merely spring from the heavens. They were given to you by the British.
- c. For centuries the British Empire has maintained a balance of power in Europe. The British have single-handedly protected your nation from external, adverse influences. Her navy has permitted the United States to peacefully trade and expand with no incident. And at the present time all that stands between Germany and the United States is the British navy.
- d. Europe’s recent history of wars is not the result of decadence. It is a matter of simple mathematics. With the diversity of ethnic and national groups, a limited geographic area, and a multitude of political, economic, and social ideologies and ambitions, conflicts naturally arise there. You Americans have been blessed with an expansive geography and the natural resources to go with it. The Europeans have been cursed with the opposite effect. It is not decadence or “evil” that plagues their nations; it is their geopolitical history, for which they should not be condemned.
- e. Would someone please explain to the Irish-American, or the French-American, or the Polish-American that the United States can’t and won’t help their ancestors!
- f. Can there be any more reward than the deep gratitude of the British people? Look to your hearts, Americans!

# INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS - 4

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a pro argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a con speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life. *Be creative!*

**Pro 4** (You will speak first on the fourth argument pair.) You are Alden Reynolds, an American economic expert working for the government. Your patron saint is John Maynard Keynes, the famed British economist, who personally advised Franklin Roosevelt on the best methods of recovery from the 1929 depression. In an era when many Americans are cautious about economic matters, your role in the Roosevelt administration has been to be an economic optimist. You have brought with you stacks of statistics showing that at this moment American production is up and investments have also increased. One of your assistants discourages your using statistics, saying you will put your audience to sleep! Thus, you have modified your speeches to include a wider range of arguments. Regardless of your methods, the thread tying together all your statements remains two-fold: 1) the economic depression is almost over; and 2) defensive measures by the administration will advance full recovery sooner because it will cause unemployment to decline and the export business—nearly dormant for a decade—to once again thrive.

**Argument:** The recovery of the United States from the depression is no longer an issue. All economic indicators—employment, production, and income—are increasing at a favorable pace.

- a. Spending for defense, not offense, means more jobs for Americans and a stronger sense of national purpose.
- b. The intelligent American is too wise to believe that economic recovery is still a paramount issue. Radio broadcasts and newspaper headlines are dominated by the wars in Europe and Asia; they show the dramatic shift in public attention. And where is the economic news? On the financial page where it should be.
- c. America is a nation rich in human and material resources. Its people are stubbornly proud of their competitive instincts and drive. Why do you isolationists continually prey upon their fears and apprehensions? Such negativism only breeds more negativism.
- d. Military preparedness is necessary for the continuance of the American way of life. It is not a devious plot to sabotage the American conscience; it is based on cold, hard reality. And, remember, a strong defense means a strong economy.

# INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS - 5

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a pro argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a con speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life. *Be creative!*

**Pro 5** (You will speak first on the fifth argument pair.) You are Dr. Vannevar Bush, president of the Carnegie Institution. You were appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt this year to head a new organization called the National Defense Research Committee. This committee organizes the scientific research of the United States and promotes further study “on the methods and materials of modern warfare.”

From your preliminary investigations, you have drawn two conclusions about the status of American military preparedness: 1) Because of inadequate funding the American armed forces have placed little emphasis on military experimentation. Basically, the U.S. Army is issuing rifles that were developed before 1925. Our tanks, machine guns, aircraft, and most other weaponry are woefully inadequate. The equipment currently used by the American soldier was characterized best by General George Marshall. He said that in comparison to the German army that is presently sweeping Europe “...our soldiers look like nice young Boy Scouts with B-B guns.” 2) To date, private munitions companies which lead in weapons research have received little federal funding. Nor do they produce weapons in mass quantity. Based on these conclusions you find it difficult to dignify the isolationists’ antiquated argument that the United States will once again, as in World War I, be drawn into war by the so-called merchants of death (i.e., munitions makers and weapons manufacturers).

You believe that the American public must realize that times have changed. Defense preparedness should be a highly organized, cooperative effort between private industry and government agencies. And, more important, a dire necessity exists to build up our nation’s defenses—a point that is lost on the isolationists.

**Argument:** The argument that our government is being controlled in some way by military industrialists and mercenaries who only desire to make profit from sales of war materials is totally false.

- a. Many of the arguments and accusations made by isolationists are based on the conclusions of the Nye Committee. The Nye Committee was a publicity-seeking group preying on the emotions of a world war weary public. Now today’s isolationists are using a 1916 argument made in 1934 to warn Americans of a 1940 impossibility!
- b. Here is a solid conclusion based on some alarming facts: at the present time the United States is dangerously unprepared to defend itself.
  1. The American fighter plane could not stay in the sky with a German, French, or British fighter plane.
  2. Our battleships are of World War I vintage.
  3. Right now in German laboratories and research centers, the most advanced weapons of war are being prepared, many of which would boggle the minds of peace-loving Americans. And the sad thing about this fact is that Nazi maniacs are not afraid to unleash such horrors.
- c. What weapons we now have, have been sent to the Allies. We realize the necessity of this move, but we also believe that the United States has nothing on hand with which to replace them. We also must realize that, for the time being, use of our weapons and destroyers by the British can buy us valuable time to prepare ourselves militarily.
- d. Now is the time to throw aside our distrusts and misconceptions about military preparedness. We must get on with the essential business at hand—pooling the finest resources of government and private industry in order to defend our nation and the democratic institutions it represents.

# INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS - 6

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a pro argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a con speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life. *Be creative!*

**Pro 6** (You will speak first on the sixth argument pair.) You are William L. Langer, distinguished emeritus professor of history at Harvard University. You are here today to defend President Franklin Roosevelt’s foreign policy decisions to date. You plan to refute Wendell Wilkie’s (Wilkie was the Republican candidate for president in 1940) contention that the president has disregarded public opinion and misled the American people. Your remarks will form the core of a major study you will do following World War II entitled *The Challenge To Isolation, 1937–40*. This book will result from an invitation you received from the Council on Foreign Relations to undertake “an extensive, scholarly history of American foreign policy just before and during the Second World War.”

**Argument:** President Roosevelt has not deceived the American people. Don’t believe critics who say he has mislead Americans into believing that the United States can totally avoid involvement in the European war.

- a. Through a policy of gradualism, FDR has alerted our people to the dangers that are approaching. What better proof is there than the most recent opinion polls in late August which show the following:
  1. 76% of Americans believe we will likely be drawn into the war.
  2. 61% favor an economic boycott of dictators that resort to arms.
- b. On numerous occasions Roosevelt has attempted to replace U.S. aggression with international understanding:
  1. In 1931, following Japan’s invasion of Manchuria, Roosevelt attempted to mediate settlement with Japanese. *It was ignored.*
  2. In 1936, during the height of the Spanish Civil War, Roosevelt tried to call an international conference involving the belligerents (Spain, Germany, Russia, and Italy). *It was ignored.*
  3. In 1938, Roosevelt called another international conference at which treaties would be altered without resorting to force, and all nations assured access to raw materials. *British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declined, claiming it would undermine his country’s policy of appeasement toward Hitler.*
  4. In early 1939 Roosevelt tried to inform leaders of Congress that Hitler was going to attack France and the Allies stood a 50–50 chance of survival. *Most congressmen present scoffed at the president’s remarks.*
- c. The burdens placed on Roosevelt’s shoulders are enormous. The president is privy to much secret information. For example, in 1937–1939 most of the reports were pessimistic about peace in Asia and Europe. Roosevelt had to stay two steps ahead of the American people, keep the nation together, and serve the public will faithfully. It is a nearly impossible task, but he is succeeding.
- d. President Roosevelt has been wrongly accused of lying to the American public during his re-election campaign. It has been said that candidate Wilkie has forced the president to alter his basic belief that the United States must prepare itself for defense. Nothing could be further from the truth. Granted, the president has not produced clarification on issues such as aid to England or prolonging the draft, but be assured that he is doing everything necessary to insure this nation’s security.
- e. History will bear out the fact that Franklin Roosevelt abhors war.

# INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS - 7

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a pro argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a con speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life. *Be creative!*

**Pro 7** (You will speak first on the seventh argument pair.) You are William Allan White, the widely respected Republican editor and political commentator from Kansas. You hold the distinction of heading the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. This organization was conceived when you became worried over the complacency of the American people this spring. The committee’s primary purpose is to arouse public opinion toward the gravity of the European situation. On May 17, 1940, you sent telegrams to several hundred prominent Americans. The essence of the appeal was, as you wrote at the time:

As one democracy after another crumbles under the mechanized columns of the dictators, it becomes evident that the future of western civilization is being decided upon the battlefield of Europe....The time has come when the United States should throw its material and moral weight on the side of the nations of western Europe great and small that are struggling in battle for a civilized way of life.

Your efforts were an immediate success. More than 300 committee chapters sprang up across the country by mid-summer.

You consider yourself a realist; the isolationists, old-fashioned idealists. You were glad to see their strict neutrality measures of 1935 and 1937 eliminated and replaced by the congressional acts of 1939 and 1940. These acts discriminate against the fascists and provide aid to Britain, who now stands alone in Europe against Germany. You stride to the speaker’s stand eager to stress the importance of continued and increased aid to the allies—both economic and military.

**Argument:** Americans must accept our role as leader of the free world and protector against totalitarian aggression. Through our material and moral resources we can save Europe from fascism and provide our nation with security.

- a. The Neutrality Acts of 1935 and 1937 served the necessary function in their time of defining America’s role in foreign affairs. Events which were out of our control have since made it imperative to revise and update American foreign policy. Therefore, we wholeheartedly approve of recent legislation which has moved the U.S. from an unrealistic position of strict neutrality to a status of non-belligerency in aiding our close ally—England.
- b. Our isolationist opponents choose to continue believing that strict neutrality is possible. They pronounce that recent revisions have betrayed the American people. Nothing could be further from the truth. Review with me what these men are actually asking:
  1. Early neutrality acts were written by naive men who honestly believed that by keeping America from sending military goods to all warring nations we would help keep the peace. Did such legislation save the fallen nations of Europe?
  2. Isolationist congressmen are tragically uninformed men. When the Neutrality Act of 1935 was introduced to the Senate for vote, many had not previously studied it. One isolationist senator exclaimed, “All I knew was that I had just voted to keep the U.S. out of war.”
  3. Isolationists are flailing in the dark on trade bans. On the one hand they applaud bans of trade on war materials to belligerents; on the other hand, they scream “un-American” when President Roosevelt extends the ban to include non-war materials to belligerents and the loss of freedom of the seas. In these desperate times they should make up their minds on what they want. They can’t have it both ways.
  4. As final testament to isolationists’ unrealistic thinking we must examine the Ludlow bill. If this legislation had been passed, the American people would have had to vote before our nation could engage in acts of war. Such idiocy would imperil our president and Congress to act decisively should the occasion arise!
- c. The blustering isolationists have hurt our president’s ability to act in the best interests of the country. Roosevelt has been forced to procrastinate in his true desire to arm our nation and aid its allies. Why? Because he has so often been accused of warmongering by this loud minority. I have good news for you, Mr. Roosevelt: the nation is behind you in your efforts to prepare us defensively.
- d. The Neutrality Act of 1939 permitted belligerents to purchase war materials from us. The more recent Destroyers-Naval Base Deal of this year has helped both England and the United States. They are important first steps. America must continue to produce greater quantities of war materials, take a hard look at an economic boycott of the Japanese, arm England to the teeth, and reconstruct our sagging armed forces.
- e. There is a fundamental difference between defense and aggression. Wake up, you isolationists. Read your newspapers. Check the opinion polls. Listen more carefully to Roosevelt’s speeches. Don’t create an issue when none exists.

# INTERVENTIONIST PRO ARGUMENTS - 8

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a pro argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a con speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life. *Be creative!*

**Pro 8** (You will speak first on the eighth argument pair.) You are General George C. Marshall, a career soldier in the United States Army. Your future as a military leader looks bright as you will become the principal allied strategist in World War II. Presently, you have just been appointed chief of staff of the Army. Previous to that you served as chief of the War Plans Division from 1938–1939. As part of your war plans responsibility you were required to devise a mobilization scheme for American armed forces in the event of war. Like other officers in your department, you reported grave concerns about the army’s current level of preparedness. For more than 20 years, military budgets had been slashed by Congress. Poor pay had attracted few bright young men into the military. Weapons development had lagged far behind other nations. Finally, you estimated that it would take six months to ready an army for combat under the present circumstances.

Only four weeks ago you received a positive sign of change. The Burke-Wadsworth Bill was passed and the Selective Training and Service Act became a reality. The draft act called for men between the ages of 21 and 35 to register with local draft boards. You are happy to report that to date roughly 16.4 million young men have complied. Although the draft is only a first step, it has bolstered your confidence that your country is finally waking up to the menace of fascism. As you walk confidently to the podium, you are prepared to support the draft as an essential first step in defending your country.

**Argument:** The passage of the recent Selective Service Act is a positive sign that the United States is prepared to defend itself against enemy aggressors.

- a. Critics of a draft point to the poor equipment and training our soldiers are receiving at the present time. This need not continue. Give our army and navy the necessary money to prepare an effective fighting force and that situation will change dramatically.
- b. Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito have made headway by preying on the weak, unprepared nations:
  1. Poland had its regiments of horse cavalry rather than mechanized armies.
  2. France had an apathetic army and a so-called impregnable Maginot Line, which Hitler bulldozed under.
  3. Denmark had its system of 18th-century fortresses, which Germany bombed into submission.
  4. The Ethiopian soldier had only spears to throw and bows and arrows to shoot at Italy’s tanks and planes. At the present time, I can see little difference between these lost causes and our military status at home.
- c. The present draft, however, is basically “political window-dressing,” for it is only to be active for one year. I realize that President Roosevelt must walk softly in a re-election year, but I urge him to pressure Congress to extend indefinitely the Selective Service Act.
- d. America is not trying to start a war; nor are we inviting one. But we are a free nation today because periodically we took up weapons to defend our freedom. We are facing a challenge to our freedom now. Don’t hesitate or we may be the next France or Poland!

# ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS - 1

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the anti-interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a con argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a pro speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life *Be creative!*

**Con 1** (You will speak second on the first argument pair.) You are the son of the late William Edgar Borah, a leading Republican senator from Idaho. As the chairman of the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee, your father was one of the leading spokesmen favoring isolationism. When your father died at age 75 in January of this year, one editor proclaimed: “Senator Borah will be missed by his few political colleagues and many political foes.” Spanning a political career of more than 40 years, Senator Borah fought many battles for what he considered to be right. His last battle, opposing the Neutrality Act of 1939, was no exception.

Although you are not involved in politics yourself, you believe so strongly in your late father’s stand against international involvements that you have chosen to continue his life-long task. Your eloquent presentation in favor of traditional American isolationism will cause those present to listen carefully as you introduce the cause of nonintervention.

**Argument:** Our country should continue pursuing its traditional policy of isolation. This tradition has made us the great “Fortress America” that we are.

- a. We cannot betray the leadership of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or James Monroe. Americans have always faithfully heeded the Monroe Doctrine, avoiding foreign entanglements and remaining strictly neutral during foreign wars.
- b. Look around this great nation of ours. The United States has prospered economically because we have built our foundation of greatness by using the natural blessings that God has bestowed upon us—not by exploiting other nations, not by involving our people in far-off wars, not by engaging in shady trade deals.
- c. Public opinion today supports the position I present to this gathering.
- d. We have raised our children to be pacifistic. We have taught them that isolation is a virtue. We have condemned war as the basest of human evils. Does anyone here wish to tell our children we have been in error?
- e. America’s first responsibility is to build democracy and preserve freedom at home. In this way we help the rest of the world by our example not by our interference.

# ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS - 2

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the anti-interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a con argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a pro speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life *Be creative!*

**Con 2** (You will speak second on the second argument pair.) You are Charles A. Lindbergh. Everyone present will recognize you as you rise before the assembly, tall and young looking for your 38 years. As a modest young aviator in 1927, you gained international celebrity status when you flew non-stop from Long Island, New York, to Paris, France, in a then amazing 33-1/2 hours. You captured the imaginations of all Americans and became a national hero. Following the kidnapping and death of your infant son several years later, you became a virtual hermit, moving first to England, then to France.

When World War II broke out in Europe, you once again make headlines; this time as a leading spokesman for American isolation. Your basic theme is that the U.S. must entirely avoid any involvement in the international affairs of the European nations at war. You earnestly believe that any antagonistic movements on America’s part will lead Hitler to retaliate. You are going to focus your attention on the issue of the European war being local in nature and not a potentially worldwide conflict. You will include your own experience as an aviator and personal observer of German, British, and Soviet aircraft as proof that the Atlantic Ocean is a formidable American ally.

**Argument:** Although we recognize the inherent evils of fascism, it is totally impractical to imagine an extension of the war in Europe to our shores.

- a. We must not be misguided by this foreign propaganda that our frontiers lie in Europe. What more could we ask for than the Atlantic Ocean on our east or the Pacific Ocean on our west? An ocean is a formidable barrier, even for modern aircraft.
- b. Although France has now fallen, it appears that Germany has failed in its attempts to defeat Great Britain. Now we read that Hitler has turned his attention to Russia. The tide will soon turn to favor an Allied victory.
- c. The ambitions of the Germans and Italians, dubious as they may be, include territorial acquisitions in Europe and North Africa alone. Neither Mussolini nor Hitler possesses the material resources necessary to conduct a global war.
- d. Do not believe for a minute that the French or British are concerned with the defense of democracy and the western hemisphere that we speak of here. To pretend that the British are fighting a war to preserve western democracy is, in the words of the distinguished Joseph P. Kennedy, “bunk.” Our American way of life should be defended by Americans alone, on our soil, and for the sake of our people.
- e. At the very least, the Canadians, with their vast expanse of territory, could easily absorb English immigrants should such a situation present itself.

# ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS - 3

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the anti-interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a con argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a pro speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life *Be creative!*

**Con 3** (You will speak second on the third argument pair.) You are Hiram W. Johnson, 74, the senator from California. Your distinguished political career has included two terms as governor of California, founder of the Progressive Party, and a vice-presidential candidate for that party in 1912. The Senate, however, is your life; you are in your 23rd year of service in that body.

One of the true symbols of American isolationism, you have one of the most consistent records of anti-internationalism in the country. This record dates to 1919 when you were a leading instrumentalist in opposing President Woodrow Wilson’s efforts to include the United States as a member of the League of Nations. Your opponents accuse you of being naive and behind the times. To the avid isolationist, however, you are a master politician and a champion for their cause.

You will address the topic of the decadence of European society and politics. Your remarks will point out the deep contrasts between the United States—which you consider more advanced and civilized—and Europe—which you consider a dying continent.

**Argument:** The recent conflict in Europe demonstrates once again that Europe is decadent and evil.

- a. The history of Europe throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and continuing today has been characterized by 1) deceit in politics; 2) ancient monarchies, secret societies, and radical ideologies vying for power; 3) inability/unwillingness to establish and maintain continental stability; and 4) anarchy.
- b. Americans fought superior odds in our Revolution and again in the War of 1812. Can’t the so-called democracies of Europe similarly motivate themselves to withstand German repression? Why are they so tired and unwilling to meet such a challenge?
- c. Here are three important points about the democracies of Europe. These points illustrate European reluctance to check fascist aggression.
  1. England and France were and are only concerned about domestic and colonial problems of their own, not the mutual security of their neighbors.
  2. What type of assistance was given by the powers of Europe to the little nations such as Belgium, Denmark, or Austria? None!
  3. As Hitler constantly defied and trampled on the Treaty of Versailles, England and France responded with the cowardly policy of appeasement—forsaking other lands to save their own.
- d. Our nation has grown up. We have not requested nor assimilated European ideas and trends for more than half a century. Even the rich of our own Eastern states who, for so long doted over Europe, have come to detest her because the Europeans have welshed on World War I debts that exceed \$100 billion dollars.

# ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS - 4

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the anti-interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a con argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a pro speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life *Be creative!*

**Con 4** (You will speak second on the fourth argument pair.) You are Lillian Pearson (an imaginary identity), a *laissez-faire* capitalist economist who believes that the government should stay out of the private sector. You begrudgingly accepted New Deal legislation in 1932, with its government regulations, programs, and controls, only because you believed that once recovery was complete, government restrictions would be lifted and the “business of the country” would be returned to businessmen.

Your primary fears at this time are that the threat of war and a subsequent war production/war-based economy will undo the years of slow and painful recovery from the depression. Already bitter, as many Americans are toward government relief programs to European nations, you foresee continued economic aid to these countries, in spite of the needs of your own people. So, rather than continuing on a course toward economic normalization, you forecast several ominous consequences: 1) Roosevelt seems destined to continue deficit spending, increased taxation, and thus fat federal budgets and more federal programs; 2) war preparation and production means continued federal controls, short term employment, fewer consumer goods, and maybe rationing. The biggest gripe you have will be centered on your opening statement: the American people are patiently preoccupied with the business of recovery and rebuilding a nation from ruin. These citizens will not tolerate any outside interference until the job is done.

**Argument:** The United States is still recovering from, and preoccupied with, economic recovery from the Great Depression. Foreign policy must play a secondary role until recovery is complete. (*Put the following chart on a large piece of cardboard or on the greenboard before class.*)

- a. The following chart of matching domestic and international events illustrates how domestic concerns have turned our attention inward, and we have no time for others’ problems: (*Show chart and point out its features.*)

Date	Events in Europe	Events in U.S.
Mar. 1933	Hitler becomes dictator	FDR elected president
Mar. 1935	Germany rearms	2nd 100 days begins
Oct. 1935	Italy invades Ethiopia	Huey Long assassinated
Mar. 1936	Germany occupies Rhineland	Supreme Court challenge to New Deal reaches a peak
Oct. 1936	Axis formed	FDR re-election campaign
July 1937	Sino-Japanese War	Labor Strife hits U.S.
Mar. 1938	Austrian <i>anschluss</i> broken by Germany	Recession frightens Americans

- b. It must be made clear that one country can do only so much for others. We have precious few resources as it is at this time; we can’t be conserving these for the people of Europe.
- c. Just like panic marked the worst stages of depression in 1919, so the Roosevelt administration is preaching the panic of war: businessmen are selling out their interests overseas, domestic businesses are selling sugar in 100-pound bags and canned goods by the case. Does this show a nation trying to regain its confidence and economic stability?
- d. President Roosevelt has forgotten somewhere along the way that his first responsibility is the well-being of the citizens he serves.
- e. We have sacrificed long enough. Renewed faith in America’s economy is based on the belief that we can expect peace and tranquility ... and we must!

# ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS - 5

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the anti-interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a con argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a pro speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life *Be creative!*

**Con 5** (You are the second speaker on the fifth argument pair.) You are Gerald P. Nye, Republican senator from North Dakota. You are best known for your investigation of the munitions industry in 1934; the results of this work promoted the idea that the United States had been needlessly drawn into World War I by economic factors. Specifically, your Senate investigating committee concluded that American arms manufacturers, seeking war contracts from the government, propagandized U.S. entrance into the “Great War.” Your interventionist critics claim that the accusations made by your committee were never proven, that they played on isolationist sentiments of the time, and that they were grossly over-simplified. Nevertheless, you are a respected member of the isolationist community, and most of your colleagues brush off such accusations as petty jealousy.

You will speak today, as you did in 1934, about the dangers of being drawn into another war. You personally see many parallels between 1917 and 1940 that support this contention: 1) no government restrictions on the activities of munitions manufacturers; 2) an American president whom you believe tends to vacillate on important issues; 3) an economy that requires a quick boost; and 4) a newspaper industry that is “sensationalizing” the foreign wars.

**Argument:** We detest these corporate “merchants of death” who would like nothing better than to see a European or Asian war stretch to our distant shores so that they could trade peace and American lives for munitions profits.

- a. A frequent sight in Washington, D.C., these days are lobbyists for munitions contractors wielding a wand of death in the face of all interventionist congressmen they can.
- b. If history is our best teacher, then why can’t we learn a valuable and life-saving lesson from our World War I experience?
  1. Prior to our entry into this war, any friendly nation, through close connections with both the War Department and Navy Department, could unscrupulously buy arms!
  2. The U.S. government stood idly by as our World War I allies were allowed to develop huge and increasingly indispensable arms trade with munitions dealers. Thus, Germany was provoked to attack American ships which were transporting these weapons.
  3. I won’t hesitate a moment to mention once again the villains who initiated these sordid acts: Remington Company, Bethlehem Steel, and DuPont Corporation.
- c. The tragedy of the entire situation is that it persists today. In underground trading at this very moment Latin America and China are receiving American-made arms. The only answer to such treachery is congressional legislation that will limit and control the arms industry.
- d. Can we continue to deny our nation’s moral commitment to peace and isolationism? Do we ignore the good works of the Washington Conferences and the Kellogg-Briand Pact? Isn’t it high time we said no to that brotherhood of blood that desires only profit—regardless of the cost in human lives?

# ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS - 6

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the anti-interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a con argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a pro speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life *Be creative!*

**Con 6** (You are the second speaker on the sixth argument pair.) You are John Sullivan (an imaginary identity), a key campaign adviser for Wendell Wilkie, the Republican presidential candidate in this election year. Because you are a blunt, headline-grabbing speaker, you are the primary reason the Edgewater Beach meeting room is packed to the rafters this evening. Like Mr. Wilkie, you are an out-spoken advocate of private enterprise who rose from a poor background and became a successful industrialist.

It is now the latter stages of your candidate’s election campaign against Franklin D. Roosevelt, one that has found him gaining political points on such issues as the president’s advanced age, his abandonment of New Deal legislation, and his attempt to “stack” the Supreme Court. Nonetheless, the opinion surveys show that Wilkie is still trailing the incumbent president by a fairly wide margin. You have helped Wilkie run a clean but aggressive campaign against Roosevelt thus far, but it is now only three weeks away from election day. You need something to catch the attention of the American voters. Almost in desperation you have decided to attack FDR on his foreign policy. This attack will raise a number of eyebrows for two reasons: 1) Wilkie has been characterized in the past by political analysts as being more like Roosevelt than Roosevelt himself in foreign policy matters; and 2) Republican isolationists will be pleased because they will be led to believe that Wilkie is coming out in support of their basic positions. (In fact, Wilkie is not an isolationist, but at this late hour in the campaign you realize he needs all the votes he can get.) Actually, Wilkie’s basic theme transcends all specific political stances and takes the form of an accusation: President Roosevelt is maneuvering the United States into war and is forcing our country to take a stand against fascist aggression world-wide.

**Argument:** President Roosevelt has deceived the American people with his devious policies. He has every intention of involving the United States in the European war.

- a. If the American people re-elect Roosevelt, they will be solemnly reaffirming how they trust him. Of course if he fails to uphold his promise to keep us out of war, his failure will devastate that trust.
- b. Rumors abound that FDR is hoping for an issue to provoke our country’s entrance into war. When that time comes, and it will if you re-elect him, you will not know when or how. Such is the nature of the man.
- c. President Roosevelt has decided that war is considered probable. He has done so without the benefit of congressional recommendations and without the consent of the American people. What he calls “discretionary powers” to formulate foreign policies are actually dictatorial actions. In a democracy governmental officials have to obey the laws that limit their actions. When a man like Roosevelt begins to use arbitrary judgment, he is exhibiting the first principle of a totalitarian system.
- d. All of the president’s speeches and messages on the subject of the wars in Europe and Asia have been deliberately vague and misleading. How can the American public know the direction their nation is taking if the president himself does not show the way? The answer to this question is simple: he doesn’t want us to know. How easy it is to publicly play on the American people’s ignorance of foreign affairs and isolationist sentiments while simultaneously working behind the scenes to move our country closer and closer to war!

# ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS - 7

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the anti-interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a con argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a pro speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life *Be creative!*

**Con 7** (You are the second speaker on the seventh argument pair.) You are General Robert E. Wood, chairman of the board of Sears Roebuck and Company, and the sponsor of this debate on American neutrality. In the summer of 1940, in association with a Yale law student R. Douglas Stuart Jr., you created plans for an isolationist organization. Called the America First Committee, it now has headquarters in Chicago. Your beliefs, as spelled out in the committee’s charter, are three-fold: 1) Neither presidential candidate has campaigned in favor of isolationism as a foreign policy. Though Wendell Wilkie has recently been accusing Roosevelt of maneuvering the U.S. into war, you realize he is making this accusation primarily to win votes. He doesn’t really embrace isolationism. 2) With the formation of the popular White Committee last spring, the interventionists in appearance, if not in fact, seem to be sweeping the nation. 3) The passage of the Destroyer for Bases deal, a blatantly non-neutral action, has given your new organization a tangible issue that can be publicly exploited. And so, it is no coincidence that on September 4, the day following the public announcement of the Destroyer Deal, you made public the aims of your newly formed America First Committee.

The public response has been immediately favorable. Local chapters have been springing up throughout the Middle West and the Northeast. Regardless of the fact that no major political party is on your side, you are making a valuable contribution to the presidential campaign. You are forcing the candidates to clarify their stance on foreign policy issues.

**Argument:** Recent neutrality revision, which places the United States in a position of nonbelligerency and takes the form of all-out aid to England, can only end in American entry into the European war.

- a. We maintain now, as we have time and time again, that Hitler does not imperil the United States. But such provocative measures as sending military aid to England will surely encourage the fascists to take notice. In the long run we cannot believe that we can become an arsenal for one belligerent without becoming a target for another.
- b. Repeal of the 1935 arms embargo is an act of intervention, regardless of how President Roosevelt colors it. Selling arms to England is the first step toward war; next will come American money; finally, American troops. As late as September 1939, mail to congressmen was running 100 to 1 for retention of the 1935 and 1937 Neutrality acts. Do you honestly believe that Roosevelt is leading his people? He is only leading us toward a course of war.
- c. Our country should be preparing itself internally to defend our shores, not Britain’s or China’s shores. Should our tax dollars, \$9 billion in recent proposed military appropriations, be spent on other countries?
- d. Of fundamental concern to the American people is the fact that the destroyers for bases deal is clearly unconstitutional. It was a unilateral step taken by President Roosevelt without the consent of Congress. What is to stop this man from furthering the cause of war if he is allowed to continue in such a dangerous manner?
- e. I leave you with this warning: If Hitler’s Germany is as powerful and as ruthless as Roosevelt’s interventionists proclaim, then Roosevelt is lying to us about staying out of foreign wars!

# ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST CON ARGUMENTS - 8

## Directions:

1. You have been chosen to present the anti-interventionists arguments below. You should assume the identity of the 20th-century person described in this handout.
2. You will have two minutes to present a con argument.
3. Begin your speech by identifying yourself fully, using the details given prior to your main points.
4. After identifying yourself, *slowly and clearly* state each of your points. Pause after each point for effect and to allow your classmates time to list the key words in their notes. End your speech vigorously—with a “bang,” not a “whimper.”
5. After you and your opponent have spoken (a pro speaker will follow you, speaking against your position), uncommitted citizens of the Chicago vicinity will ask both of you questions. You will each have one minute to answer any such question—from the perspective of your identity’s life.
6. **Strong recommendation:** Do not give your speech from this handout. Instead, reshape this information into a new outline on either 3" x 5" note cards or half sheets of paper. This new outline should include information from your life *Be creative!*

**Con 8** (You are the second speaker on the eighth argument pair.) You are the Reverend Nathan Collins (an imaginary identity, but realistic for the times), a Protestant minister from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As an avowed pacifist, you view war and militarism of any kind as opposed to the laws of nature. Before you entered the ministry in 1923, you were a promising young attorney living in Rockford, Illinois. When the United States entered World War I, you were drafted to serve in the army. Because of your moral principles, you gained information about and sought C.O. (conscientious objector) status. Your draft board refused your application and you dejectedly went off to “boot camp,” bolstered only by a personal oath never to lift a weapon to kill a fellow human being. While fighting in the Battle of Argonne in France, you were wounded and sent home. More devastating than your wound was the fact that the very afternoon you were shot, you also shot at and killed a young German soldier. It infuriated you that regardless of your moral convictions, the U.S. Army’s “kill or be killed” philosophy had forced you to behave as you had. Such were the circumstances of war, circumstances you would bitterly have to live with the rest of your life. As you stride to the podium eager to condemn the recently enacted Selective Services Act, you will combine the same moral arguments you have held over the years with other observations about American military service.

**Argument:** What is the clearest sign of the Roosevelt administration’s intentions? The recent call for a military draft of our American boys!

- a. For four years Roosevelt has been claiming that “your boys will not fight in a foreign war.”
- b. But not even George Washington, our nation’s first and greatest military leader, asked his countrymen to draft their sons during peacetime. Only Roosevelt has done that.
- c. A draft at this time uses the same fascist and dictatorial methods that Hitler does.
- d. And what of the traumatic effect a military draft will have on the youth of America, youth brought up to respect peace, turn the other cheek, and praise the blessings of isolationism? Roosevelt answers their innocence with the development of training camps that will promote slavery, give your sons syphilis, and teach them how to kill!
- e. The draft represents to many European immigrants the oppression practiced on a continent from which they fled.
- f. Already countless young men across our nation—in colleges and in factories—are shouting a resounding “No!” to President Roosevelt’s call for induction.

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# UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS - 1

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*Cut apart on the broken lines.*

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Pro-1** (You will question speaker Pro 1.) You are an American History teacher at Lane Tech High School in Chicago. Like many generations before yours, you have been taught that isolation from foreign entanglements is as traditional as “baseball and apple pie.” These attitudes and perspectives you have passed along to your students. You take issue with the criticisms by Mr. Bullitt, who accuses isolationists of being naive and paranoid. As an extremely patriotic American you believe that the interventionists are too willing to compromise your country's values and ideals.

**Question for Pro 1** Mr. Bullitt, I am an idealist and proud of it. I firmly believe that this nation of ours was founded on idealism and has grown and been nourished on the principle that the United States should stand alone. What can motivate you to advocate such a drastic change in American foreign policy? Do you honestly believe that the American people will be so inspired by your radical remarks that they will give up 160 years of traditional isolationism?

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Con 1** (You will question speaker Con 1.) You are a distant relative of the late President Woodrow Wilson. You recall with bitterness the decline of his health as he spent the last years of his life futilely trying to persuade the United States Senate and the American people to accept United States entrance into the League of Nations. You shared with your uncle the desire to bring the country out of isolation and joined with him in a new American era of international involvement. It was not meant to be. Working through various internationalist groups, you have continued to speak out in favor of “breaking the antiquated yoke of isolationism.” With events in Europe and China as a springboard, you believe that now is the time to make your point.

**Question for Con 1** Mr. Borah, your father spent years misleading the American people with his antiquarian views of a 19th-century world we no longer live in. Isn't it time you grew up and cast off the mistakes of your father? Are you, his son, really performing your duty when you continue preaching the naive ideas of isolationism? Isn't it time that our nation awoke to the realities of the 1940s?

## UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS - 2

Cut apart on the broken lines.

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Pro 2** (You will question speaker Pro 2). You are a self-styled military strategist who has studied the military events in Europe with great interest. You view Hitler's failure to defeat England as the turning point in the war. You predict the war will be over in a matter of a few months, once England and Russia regroup to squeeze Germany into submission. You can't understand the fears that have been aroused by some of your fellow Americans concerning the global potential of fascist conquests. You base your feelings on several factors: 1) Hitler has shown no interest nor antagonism toward the United States; 2) Germany has failed to defeat England, thus demonstrating that Hitler is not capable of mastering all Europe; and 3) Hitler's previous conquests have already spread Germany's defenses too thin to be effective in the future.

**Question for Pro 2** I have made a careful study of the events in Europe. I have recorded facts and statistics. I have listened to Edward R. Murrow's broadcasts from Europe. I have read the speeches of Adolph Hitler. I am no dreamer. I can see what the horrors of war are doing there, but I see no connection between that war and the security of the United States. Why do you raise such unnecessary fears for Americans to ponder? Please offer me one tangible piece of evidence that the U.S. is in any danger from attack by the Axis forces?

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Con 2** (You will question speaker Con 2.) You are an American news correspondent who has just returned from an assignment in London. While stationed there, you witnessed with awe the strength and power of the German air force. Night after night London was "blitzed" by German bomber raids. This experience taught you several things about modern warfare. The most important was the realization that the speed and power of such aircraft as the Luftwaffe possessed could some day invade the United States. Hitler had proven countless times that he would never honor his pledges of peace as he proceeded to methodically carve up Europe. What is to stop this maniac from attacking the United States?

**Question for Con 2** Mr. Lindbergh, I am one of your biggest fans. I was just a kid in Peoria when you made your historic flight to Paris 13 years ago. It was your amazing accomplishment that aided me in the formulation of this question: How can a man such as yourself, a man of great vision, not see how technology has progressed to the point where time and distance between Europe and our country are no longer a factor? Do you honestly believe that we are safe and secure from the wars of Europe?

# UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS - 3

*Cut apart on the broken lines.*

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Pro 3** (You will question speaker Pro 3.) You are an Irish-American who feels no love lost for the British based on the harsh struggle between those two countries. You react with disdain to Lord Randall-Smythe's comments that England is fighting for some "higher cause" such as democracy or to maintain European balance of power. You view England as a decaying, opportunistic, self-centered country which, only now that it is under siege by the Germans, is publicizing its close ties to the United States in hopes of receiving support. To you there is no surer symbol of England's demise than her cowardly policy of appeasement toward Hitler.

**Question for Pro 3** I have a difficult time just sitting here listening to these sob stories of how warm and cozy British-American relations are and how England in your eyes is so benevolent. But I believe you are forgetful of some things. What distinguishes Hitler's control by force of Europe and England's control of Ireland? What distinguishes the brand of imperialism practiced by the Axis nations and that practiced by England? You plead with America not to sell England out and yet England sold out Czechoslovakia.

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Con 3** (You will question speaker Con 3.) Your name is Vladmir Sevestovic. You fled your native Czechoslovakia in 1938. You have listened with great sadness to the account of Europe by Senator Johnson and you can't believe he is describing the same continent and people you just left.

**Question for Con 3** It is true that Europe has experienced a large share of turmoil in its recent history. But senator, I feel you are overlooking several important matters: The continent of Europe is made up of many diverse national and ethnic groups, many of whom are proud and competitive people. From time to time there have been disputes, yet always they have been solved. The same continent which you say is decadent gave your country the gifts of government, art, and civilization. With all of these contributions to the American way of life, can you honestly forsake these people? Is there some deeper hatred that you bear that has not been made public here?

# UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS - 4

Cut apart on the broken lines.

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Pro 4** (You will question speaker Pro 4.) You are Raymond Moley, a professor at Columbia who organized President Franklin Roosevelt's first administration during the 1932 campaign. You were appointed assistant secretary of state. Politically you are a Democrat, yet in foreign affairs, an isolationist. This is a point of constant friction with your fellow State Department colleagues, for they tend to be internationalists. You were able to sell the president on the idea, in 1932, that the U.S. should make domestic economic recovery the number one priority and let foreign policy take a secondary position. Given the times, Roosevelt agreed, but as the American economy grew stronger and events in Europe began to consume more of the administration's time, there was a dramatic shift of emphasis toward foreign affairs. This shift deeply concerns you. Your presence in Chicago is viewed with some disgust by Roosevelt people, though your relatively low rank in the administration will not be considered as a policy statement by newspapers covering the debate.

**Question for Pro 4** There are many issues that confront the American people, as with the peoples of many nations. However, it is the responsibility of every government to set priorities for the conduct of a nation's business. President Roosevelt, in hand with the American people, has dedicated himself to overcoming the hardships of our massive economic depression. It was the primary reason we voted him our president in 1932 and 1936. Can you, in good conscience, advocate the destruction of the mandate delivered by the American people not to rest until the job of full economic recovery has been achieved? Or are we to be continually interrupted from this task by the bluff and jitterism promulgated by you warmongers?

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Con 4** (You will question speaker Con 4.) You are an adviser to Cordell Hull, secretary of state. Like many members of the State Department, you have been trying to inform members of Congress for two years of the dangerous swamp that foreign affairs has become. Your efforts have met with stiff opposition, especially from isolationist members who tend to remain oblivious to foreign affairs. They act like if they don't think about foreign problems the foreign problems will go away. What especially riles you is the constant theme that the United States has too many domestic problems to embroil itself in Europe's war. It is on this topic that you will address Mrs. Pearson.

**Question for Con 4** Mrs. Pearson, I believe that you are grossly over-estimating the amount of time it takes for our nation to recover economically. Every economic indicator points to an eventual full recovery. Knowing these facts to be true, your persistence in dwelling on economic affairs mystifies me. It's almost as if you isolationists are using the dead issue of the Great Depression as an excuse not to deal with the more pressing matter of American defense and the European war. Isn't your true intention to detract American attention from foreign affairs by playing on their fear of an economic backslide? Isn't such a strategy dishonest?

# UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS - 5

*Cut apart on the broken lines.*

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Pro 5** (You will question speaker Pro 5.) You are Miss Dorothy Detzer, a strong advocate of isolation and an international spokesperson in opposition to the munitions industry. You believe, like the Nye Committee, that the munitions manufacturers played a decisive role in drawing the United States into World War I. You believe we must put tighter restrictions on the munitions industry.

**Question for Pro 5** I recognize that we must have an arms manufacturing industry, but I take issue with the uncontrolled freedom these companies have in the sale of weapons to practically anyone who is able to purchase them. To me, such practices are disreputable and un-American. Do you believe that the federal government should “nationalize” (take control of) the arms industry? If not, can you offer a solution to the problem of illegal sales of weapons to foreign countries and mercenaries?

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Con 5** (You will question speaker Con 5.) You are a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News*, who during the 1930s covered the Nye Committee Hearings in Washington, D.C. Although you reported your stories objectively, you personally did not like the manner in which the Nye Committee conducted its investigation. In effect, you concluded that Senator Gerald Nye was more interested in exposure and bold headlines than clear explanations as to any wrong doing by arms manufacturers. You could see, however, that in 1934 when the Nye Committee was active, the world was at peace. As a result, it was easy to look in hindsight at the causes of World War I. And at that time our country was isolationist. But as the events of Europe and Asia have become even hotter, you have become curious as to why isolationists would use a World War I approach when circumstances have changed so drastically. You wonder why the munitions industry is again under attack.

**Question for Con 5** Mr. Nye, I was present in 1934 when you exposed the American munitions industry as being a leading cause for our country's entrance into World War I. In its place and time the work your committee performed is something history will probably remember as an unpleasant but necessary duty. However, I cannot for the life of me understand the relationship between then and now! Do you honestly believe that the United States government, made up of men who are chosen to serve our best interests, would allow a promise of economic profit to stand in the path of national security? Like my countrymen, I despise war, but if war should just happen to occur, would you deny the right of the private sector to engage in the business they are trained to do?

# UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS - 6

Cut apart on the broken lines.

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Pro 6** (You will question speaker Pro 6.) You are a writer who is working on an unofficial biography of Franklin Roosevelt. In your research you have had very informative conversations with several people close to the president. Among them were Vice Admiral R.T. McIntire, Franklin Roosevelt Jr., and even Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, herself. Whenever the question of the war in Europe came up, you were amazed to learn that Roosevelt believed that the United States would eventually be drawn into the war, and that he had arrived at this assessment as early as August 1939, more than a year ago. Each interviewee failed to pursue this line of questioning, yet concluded that the president's assessment was based on government information and secret service reports. Throughout the campaign President Roosevelt has continually proclaimed his intentions to keep the country out of war; such actions you consider to be openly deceitful. Thus, you will address your question to Professor Langer concerning the people's right to know the sensitive state of American foreign involvement.

**Question for Pro 6** I believe Mr. Roosevelt is playing a dangerous game with the American people. Promises to stay out of war are followed by a military draft. First he calls our nation neutral. Then he creates legislation that makes us non-belligerent. I'm here to tell you that he is tampering with the mood of the American people by taking such a vague, vacillating position on the war in Europe. What does he know that we aren't allowed to know? As the representative of all the people, don't you think he has a responsibility to inform us of any matter that directly affects our security?

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Con 6** (You will question speaker Con 6.) A Chicago cab driver, you are a dedicated follower of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. You become extremely upset when anyone criticizes Mr. Roosevelt and especially when people make claims, as Wendell Wilkie has, that the president is maneuvering the country toward war. You are a very sensitive man who appreciates the difficult times and decisions that FDR is experiencing and believe that many of his critics search endlessly for any means to attack him, most of the time unjustly.

**Question for Con 6** President Roosevelt has done the best job possible in guiding our country in foreign affairs. He has leveled with the American people. I believe that Mr. Roosevelt hates war as he says, but at the same time he is not a blind fool. He can see, as your Mr. Wilkie can't, that our country is facing real danger. He has warned us of this danger and tried to prepare us for any possible eventuality. Is it a betrayal of the American people to secure them from attack? Have the enumerable warnings of approaching war by President Roosevelt been done to deceive anyone? Would you rather have him play the role of a cockeyed optimist and tell the American people they have nothing whatsoever to be concerned about?

# UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS - 7

*Cut apart on the broken lines.*

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Pro 7** (You will question speaker Pro 7.) You are a charter member of the America First Committee. You view with grave apprehension the repeal of the 1935 and 1937 Neutrality acts in favor of the more recent legislation which offers limited aid to the Allies. Such actions represent acts of war to you and your fellow isolationists. You believe that there is nothing to stop the Roosevelt administration from continuing to involve the United States deeper and deeper in the problems of Europe and Asia. You feel that eventually FDR will lead us directly into combat.

**Question for Pro 7** It is difficult for me to accept without reservation the legislation that Congress has recently passed. President Roosevelt has failed the country, for he is bent on exposing us to the horrors of war now raging in Europe. There seems to be no stopping him. Now he has taken discretionary authority in deciding whom to give American war materials to and when. Either he does not know or he does not care about the position in which he has placed our nation. Do you believe that Mr. Roosevelt knows Adolph Hitler so well that he can predict with all certainty that that maniac will not be enraged by our aid to England?

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Con 7** (You will question speaker Con 7.) You are a Waukegan school teacher who teaches American government and history courses. In your classes you discuss current topics. Among those has been the recent neutrality legislation which aids England. Most of your students seem to feel that such acts are necessary to protect the United States and preserve England. They also think that isolationist arguments opposing recent legislation are empty and in some ways hypocritical. You were so enthused by their interest that you promised your classes that you would attend this debate and, if they wanted you to, read a prepared question that they created. Your classes overwhelmingly agreed.

**Question for Con 7** I am here today representing the government classes of Waukegan Senior High School. The students have asked me to read to you the following question: Do you believe that it is possible, as the isolationists suggest, that the American people honestly believe that their country can proclaim themselves politically in isolation from the rest of the world, and yet at the same time remain economically internationalist?

# UNCOMMITTED QUESTIONS - 8

Cut apart on the broken lines.

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Pro 8** (You will question speaker Pro 8.) You are a father of two boys, ages 24 and 21. Last week your sons registered at their draft board in compliance with the recent Selective Service Act which required them to do so. When they returned home, you questioned them as to what had transpired at the draft board. Your youngest son commented that the officer on duty laughingly told all potential recruits that being drafted wouldn't mean anything as it was only a precautionary measure. This statement upset you, because you don't consider a year out of your sons' lives spent training to kill other human beings as a casual occurrence. Thus, you are here today to ask a question concerning the purpose of the draft.

**Question for Pro 8** Young men from all 48 states are boarding trains right this minute to be sent to boot camps in Arkansas or California. Parents like myself are sad and will miss their sons. In one sense we're proud, but we're also perplexed. If our boys will never fight in foreign wars as Franklin D. Roosevelt has told us hundreds of times, why are they being drafted? Why are they being trained in the strategies of fighting on European soil? I have a right to know.

**Directions:** You who have been chosen to ask the question below should first reveal your 1940 identity briefly sketched below. Then you should ask your question. You will have a maximum of one minute to speak and ask your question. **Note well:** *You don't have to use the exact words given here, although you should present the core of your identity and the question's substance. Please—practice at home what you will say at school so that you do not have to take this printout with you when you rise to speak.* Use your imagination. Dress for your part and strive to look and act as if you are living in 1940.

**Q-Con 8** (You will question speaker Con 8.) You are a widow who lost your husband in World War I. It is a sad but familiar story, but you have committed yourself to the cause of your country, regardless of the necessity of the cost in human lives. You trust your government to make the best decisions in the interest of national security. You miss your husband, but you believe as he did that he was fighting to preserve his country. You take issue with the remarks made by the minister on the grounds that he is being unrealistic and shortsighted about what it takes to keep our nation safe from attack. A military draft seems logical to you as a first measure of defense.

**Question for Con 8** I can remember like it was yesterday the letters I received from my husband in France before he was killed in World War I. He wrote often of the patriotic duty he was performing for his country and the importance of it. He would comment that it was an unpleasant job but someone had to do it. Reverend Collins, I ask you this: In the event that our nation should be drawn into the European war, or worse yet be attacked, whom would you suggest should fight for our country?



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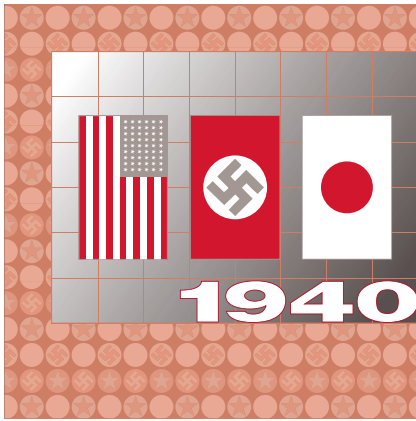
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# THE AMERICAN NEUTRALITY DEBATE: 1940

A re-creation of the conflict preceding World War II, debating whether or not the United States should end its neutrality

And while I'm talking to you mothers and fathers, I give you one more assurance. I have said it before, but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.

—President Franklin Roosevelt, October 30, 1940

With these words President Roosevelt—only one week before the 1940 presidential election—reassured Americans that their nation would stay out of the wars then raging across Europe and Asia. The average citizen might have concluded that our country was committed to American neutrality. But was it?

Historians have argued for more than 40 years about FDR's true motivation. Were such statements merely campaign rhetoric to soothe American voters' edginess? After all, no president had ever won an election by advocating war. Did Roosevelt know in his heart that events either in Europe or Asia would eventually draw the United States into World War II? Was he simply avoiding the inevitable clash of opinion by not stating the facts as he really knew them? Or did President Roosevelt honestly believe that the U.S. somehow could avoid involvement by continuing its traditional policy of neutrality and isolation?

## PURPOSE

You are about to re-create a debate sponsored by the America First Committee, the leading 1940 advocate of American isolationism. The major issue will be: *Should the United States Intervene in the European War?* Although the time and place of your debate are fictitious, you will speak the facts, attitudes, and ideas that actual Americans used in 1937–1940 as they debated war issue across the country. By role-playing a real or imaginary 1940 person at this debate, you will understand how opposing elements in American society assessed our nation's vital interests while anxiously reading news of Axis successes in Europe and Asia. You will learn that today, just as Americans did in 1940, our citizens and statesmen constantly contemplate the fate of other nations where democracy is in crisis and wonder to what degree America should get involved.

## BACKGROUND ESSAY

When Americans awoke on the morning of December 7, 1941, many were shocked by the horrible event that had taken place while they slept. The Japanese Imperial Air Force had bombed the American military base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Within 24 hours the United States would be at war with Japan, Germany, and Italy—the Axis powers. The American transformation from peace to war was not an overnight occurrence, however. Granted, even the most ardent supporter of U.S. intervention in the war was shocked when he “awoke” to the harsh reality of Pearl Harbor. But the actual shaping of modern American attitudes was a process that had been taking place in the 20 years following World War I.

**Post World War I** In 1919, disillusioned with the outcome of the peace negotiations that ended this war and foreseeing new European troubles, the vast majority of Americans desired a return to traditional isolationism. They wanted to ignore European power politics. These Americans viewed U.S. involvement in the just ended “Great War” as only a temporary departure from sanity. They wanted “normalcy.” So they welcomed domestic tranquility and the “Golden Playtime of the 1920s.”

Little notice was given to United States foreign policymakers who were working at the international level. They were working to reduce armaments through measures such as the Washington Conferences of 1921–22 and the very idealistic Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. The latter tried to outlaw war as an



### Questions for you to consider:

*How many years had it been since World War I ended?*

*What does it take to get democratic citizens willing to fight a foreign war?*

*How was the Great Depression affecting patriotism?*

*Be sure you examine a world map so that you know exactly where the nations are located that relate to all these questions disturbing Americans in the late 1930s.*

instrument of national policy. During the 1930s such armaments agreements proved to be nothing more than paper decrees as Japan invaded Manchuria, Hitler marched into the Rhineland and Austria, and Italy devastated an undermanned Ethiopian army.

**The 1930s** The American reaction to such aggression was true to tradition. We made an all-out effort to isolate ourselves from the possibility of entrance into another war. Inspired by the conclusions of the Nye Committee in 1934–1935, the prevailing opinion of most Americans was that we had been naively lured into World War I by warmongering munitions manufacturers who considered profit above human lives.

**The neutrality laws** Between 1935–1937 rumors of American involvement in the European war were set aside when Congress passed a series of neutrality laws. These measures prohibited the export of arms and munitions to belligerent forces and forbade Americans from traveling on belligerent ships. Now there was an “official” barrier between the United States and the nations at war, a barrier seeming to separate American interests from those of the Europeans, not by an ocean, but by a universe.

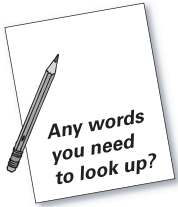
**Events in Europe** Events in Europe during 1937–1938 did little to alter American feelings toward neutrality. England and France maintained a policy of appeasement toward Hitler. They allowed him to occupy Czechoslovakia based on his promise not to acquire any further territory. However, the outbreak of World War II shattered the complacency of western Europeans and Americans. Germany’s surprise invasion of Poland in 1939 and the relative ease with which Hitler crushed France convinced many Americans that the Nazis could indeed win the war. Furthermore, if England, which by May of 1940 “stood alone” against German aggression, should fall, what was to stop the Axis from world domination?

**FDR reacts** These Nazi successes combined with the Japanese sweep southward through China spurred President Roosevelt to pledge “to opponents of force the material resources of this nation.” Roosevelt traded 50 “over-age” destroyers to England in exchange for naval and air bases on British territory (the British West Indies, Newfoundland, and Bermuda). England desperately needed the destroyers to combat German submarines; the United States needed the bases as defensive outposts. The so-called Destroyer-Naval Base deal of 1940 was more than a moral decree. Our government was committing itself to a gradual movement from neutrality to non-belligerency (i.e., indirect involvement in the European war). For the second time in the 20th century, the base of United States isolationism had been cracked.

**Drifting toward war** Thus, the United States was embarking on a course of action that would prove irreversible as war drifted closer to America’s shores. Throughout 1940, while the Roosevelt administration moved swiftly from a policy of limited assistance to England to all-out aid short of war, the American public never ceased debating whether FDR was a great leader or a great betrayer. This period of time produced two opposing groups, *interventionists* and *isolationists*. Both claimed to speak for the sentiments of most Americans.

**The isolationists** Who were the isolationists? The regional stronghold of isolationism was the Midwest. Politically, its strength lay with the Republican Party, who had a small, but influential, membership led by senators William Borah, Robert Taft, and Hiram Johnson. These political personalities were joined by many other individuals from all walks of life. Names such as Charles A. Lindbergh of aviation fame, Robert E. Wood of Sears and Roebuck, and Socialist Norman Thomas brought their separate viewpoints to the effort of isolationism. The isolationists, or *noninterventionists* as some of the less conservative of their number were called, believed that their philosophy was a more honest measure of the nation’s mood in 1940. They cited opinion polls that showed 80 percent of Americans opposed declaring war on Germany. Adding fuel to their fire, isolationists charged that President Roosevelt was deceiving the American people by continually pledging to keep the country out of war, even though by 1940 he had developed policies that could only be interpreted as acts of involvement.

Another popular isolationist argument centered on the bitter feelings many Americans held toward the nations of Europe because these countries had not paid their World War I debts to the United States. Failure to repay debts, the rise of dictators, and traditional European politics “of the sword” demonstrated once again to the isolationists that Europe was a dying continent. Finally, it would be nearly impossible to dissuade an avid isolationist to abandon his/her conviction to stay out of foreign affairs. After all, great strength and security could be drawn from tradition: the United States had grown up embracing the twin principles of isolation and pacifism; one more European or Asian war was not going to alter these feelings.



**The interventionists** To the interventionist, isolationism in 1940 was unthinkable, impractical, and down-right dangerous thinking. The world of 1940 was much more interdependent than even a decade earlier. If the United States were to isolate itself now, it would be shirking American responsibility to defend our real borders, which actually extended to Europe and Asia.

Leading the interventionist cause was President Roosevelt and Cordell Hull, his secretary of state. Although FDR never came out in favor of American involvement until early in 1941, with the secret information he had available to him, Roosevelt knew better than any other American how precarious the British position in Europe was. The president, convinced that America's defensive perimeter included Europe, worked to educate the American public about this conviction. Aided by such men as Kansas newspaper publisher William Allen White and his Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, President Roosevelt set upon a course to "orchestrate" public opinion to prepare itself for the harsh possibilities of United States' involvement in foreign wars.

Thus, the primary task of the interventionists as a whole was to educate the American people to the realities of fascist aggression and power politics in 1940. Equally important was the fact that American security was affected by events in Asia and Europe.

**The debate** The lines of debate were well drawn by October 1940, and the combatants on both sides were ready to deliver their arguments forcefully and eloquently. Key questions were on the lips of many Americans:

- Will the Axis powers defeat England and China and then look to the western hemisphere for their next conquest?
- Has the United States recovered sufficiently from the worst economic depression in its history, only to prepare for involvement in a major war?
- Is President Roosevelt "willfully" moving the United States toward war, or is he trying to keep the country neutral?
- If the United States continues to aid England, will the Germans consider our actions as a sign of open belligerency and attack us?

These and other important issues raged hot and heavy across the United States in the period of time 1937–1940. It is necessary to point out, without prejudicing the entire debate that will take place, that the majority of Americans believed by late 1940 that their country would eventually be drawn into war. But few people conceived of Pearl Harbor being the provocation because, regardless of whether one was an isolationist or an interventionist, most had thought the issue of war or peace would be America's to decide.

To give you a first-hand impression of the depth and feeling that leading Americans possessed at this time, excerpts from two articles, one by an isolationist (Senator Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri) and one by an interventionist (writer Robert E. Sherwood), are presented. As you read each carefully, strive to understand and feel the emotions and attitudes these men present. If your efforts prove successful, you will be better prepared to debate and learn from the issue of American neutrality in 1940.

Senator Clark  
was a forceful champion of the isolationist cause. He had thousands of followers throughout the United States.

**PRO-ISOLATION ... Senator Bennett Champ Clark ... Harper's Monthly, December 1935**

Is there a way to keep America out of war?

If there is such a thing as intelligence left in the craniums of mankind, a thing so monstrous as another modern World War must be avoided. There certainly is no moral justification for war between civilized nations. No moralist or philosopher worthy of the name in modern times has ever been able to defend it. The veriest jingo in the United States does not dare to stand upon any public platform and attempt to justify war as such. The peoples of the whole world abhor it.

Yet it is apparent to any student of international affairs that the postwar era has come to an end, and that the world is once again in that precarious condition in which the bad temper of a dictator, the ineptness of a diplomat, or the crime of a fanatic may let loose irremediable disaster...

At present the desire to keep the United States from becoming involved in any war between foreign nations seems practically unanimous among the rank and file of American citizens; but it must be remembered there was an almost equally strong demand to keep us out of the last war. In August 1914, few could have conceived that America would be dragged into a European conflict in which we had no original part and the ramifications of which we did not even understand. Even as late as November 1916, President Wilson was reelected because he "kept us out of war." Yet five months later we were fighting to "save the world for democracy" in the "war to end war."

... If we have learned anything at all, we know the inevitable and tragic end to a policy of drifting and trusting to luck. We know that however strong is the will of the American people to refrain from mixing in other people's quarrels, that will can be made effective only if we have a sound, definite policy from the beginning.

Such a policy must be built upon a program to safeguard our neutrality. No lesson of the World War is more clear than that such a policy cannot be improvised after war breaks out. It must be determined in advance, before it is too late to apply reason ....

Some of us in the Senate, particularly the members of the Munitions Investigation Committee, have delved rather deeply into the matter of how the United States has been drawn into past wars and what forces are at work to frighten us again into the traps set by Mars. As a result of these studies, Senator Nye and I introduced the three proposals for neutrality legislation ....

Senator Nye and I made no claims then, and make none now, that the neutrality proposals will provide an absolute and infallible guarantee against our involvement in war. But we do believe that the United States can stay out of war if it wants to and if its citizens understand what is necessary to preserve our neutrality. We feel that the temporary legislation already passed and the legislation we shall vigorously push at the coming session of the Congress point the only practical way....

Robert Sherwood was one of our nation's most articulate spokespersons during this troubled time.



### PRO-INTERVENTION ... **Robert E. Sherwood, writer** ... *New York Times*, June 10, 1940.

We Americans have naturally wished to keep out of this war—to take no steps which might lead us in. But—

We now know that every step the French and British fall back brings war and world revolutions closer to us—our country, our institutions, our homes, our hopes for peace.

Hitler is striking with all the terrible force at his command. His is a desperate gamble, and the stakes are nothing less than domination of the whole human race.

If Hitler wins in Europe—if the strength of the British and French armies and navies is forever broken—the United States will find itself alone in a barbaric world—a world ruled by Nazis, with “spheres of influence” assigned to their totalitarian allies. However different the dictatorships may be, racially, they all agree on one primary objective: *“Democracy must be wiped from the face of the earth.”*

The world will be placed on a permanent war footing. Our country will have to pile armaments upon armaments to maintain even the illusion of security. We shall have no other business, no other aim in life, but primitive self-defense. We shall exist only under martial law—or the law of the jungle. Our economic structure will have to be adjusted to that of our gangster competitors. We shall have to change ourselves from easy-going individuals into a “dynamic race.”

“Government of the people, by the people, for the people”—if Hitler wins, this will be the discarded ideal of a decayed civilization.

*Is this “Alarmism”?* Then so is the challenging scream of an air-raid siren, warning civilians that death is coming from the skies. We have ample cause for deepest alarm. It should impel us, not to hysteria, but to resolute action ....

We can and should and will devote ourselves to a vast program of defense. But we must not try to fool ourselves into thinking that security can be bought.

We can help by sending planes, guns, munitions, food. We can help to end the fear that American boys will fight and die in another Flanders, closer to home.

The members of our government are your servants. In an emergency as serious as this, they require the expression of your will. They must know that the American people are not afraid to cast off the hypocritical mask of neutrality, which deceives no one, including ourselves.

*Send a postcard, a letter, or a telegram, at once*—to the President of the United States, to your Senators and your Congressmen—urging that the *real* defense of our country must begin now—with aid to the Allies!

The United States of America is still the most powerful nation on earth—and the United States of America is you!

Here is where your debate will take place.



**Your debate's scenario** The 1940 debate over American neutrality will take place in mid-October in a large conference room at the elegant Edgewater Beach Hotel on the shores of Lake Michigan in Chicago, Illinois. Since Chicago is considered the “American Capital of Isolationism,” this city is an appropriate locale. The debate is being sponsored by Robert E. Wood, who heads the America First Committee—which some people consider to be the “official voice” of isolationism and strict American neutrality. Here is the resolution you will debate: *Resolved—America should actively aid the Allies in their fights with Germany and Japan.*

*Are the issues inherent in these eight arguments dead, or are they still alive?*

As a student, you have a responsibility to copy down one or more examples each speaker uses to support the pro or con argument. So that you are prepared for such note-taking prior to the debate beginning, do the following:

- Here is an example of how you will fill out all four sheets' eight sides prior to the debate's beginning.

*Include the argument number.*

**Con 1:** Our country should continue pursuing its traditional policy of isolation. This tradion made us the great "Fortress America" we are.

*In the empty space you will later write specific details spoken by the two speakers and questioners.*

## THE 8 ARGUMENT PAIRS

1

**Pro 1:** The year is 1940 not 1840. Instead of living in a peaceful world we live in a world engulfed in warfare. As a result, isolationism is no longer a viable American foreign policy.

**Con 1:** Our country should continue pursuing its traditional policy of isolation. This tradition made us the great “Fortress America” we are.

2

**Pro 2:** The European war is not a local war. We are naive if we believe that the affairs of Europe do not influence us economically, culturally, politically, emotionally, and in other ways.

**Con 2:** Although we recognize the inherent evils of fascism, it is totally impractical to imagine an extension of the war in Europe to our shores.

3

**Pro 3:** We cannot forsake the British and the French. They are our closest international brethren.

**Con 3:** The recent conflict in Europe demonstrates once again that Europe is decadent and evil.

4

**Pro 4:** The recovery of the United States from the depression is no longer an issue.

**Con 4:** The United States is still recovering from and preoccupied with economic recovery.

5

**Pro 5:** The argument that our government is being controlled by mercenaries who only desire to make profits from sales of war materials is false.

**Con 5:** We detest these corporate “merchants of death” who would like nothing better than to see a European war stretch to our distant shores. As a result they could sell the instruments of war and make large profits.

6

**Pro 6:** President Roosevelt has not deceived the American people. Don’t believe his critics who say he has misled Americans into believing that the United States can totally avoid involvement in the European war.

**Con 6:** President Roosevelt has deceived the American public with his devious policies. He has every intention of involving the United States in the European war.

7

**Pro 7:** The neutrality legislation of 1939 and 1940 is an honest appraisal of American attitudes. Because American security is at stake, we must quickly abandon earlier, more isolationist legislation.

**Con 7:** Recent neutrality legislation is a basic betrayal of American isolationist principles and strict neutrality. Such legislation leads our country even closer to war.

8

**Pro 8:** It is essential for the U.S. Congress to extend the military draft—indefinitely.

**Con 8:** What is the clearest sign of the Roosevelt administration’s intentions? The recent call for a military draft of our American boys!



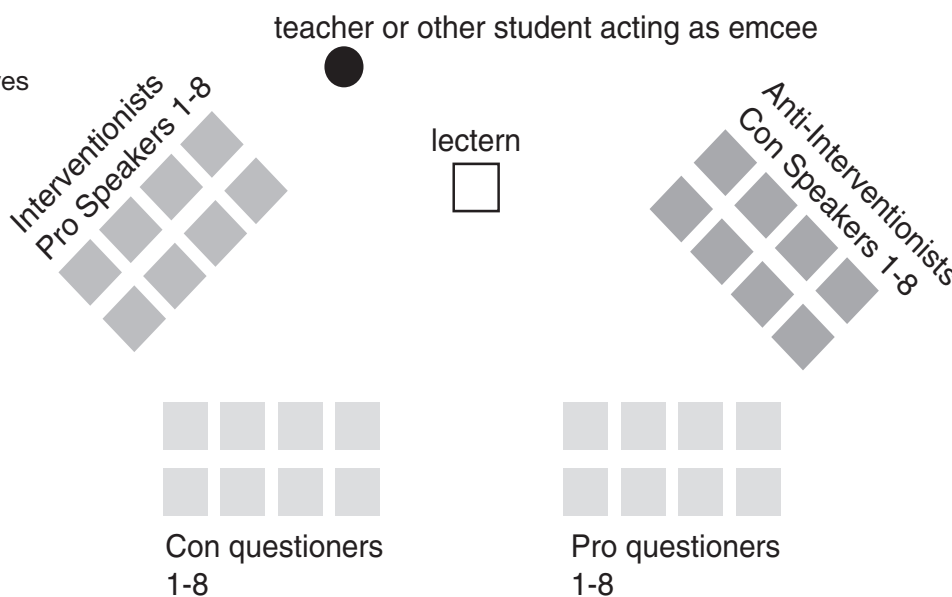
## PROCEDURE

### Day 1

1. After reading the earlier sections of this Student Guide, you will be divided into three groups: 1) eight interventionists who will present the pro arguments on The 8 Argument Pairs (see page 6); 2) eight anti-interventionists who will present the con arguments on The 8 Argument Pairs; and 3) the remaining uncommitted, who will ask questions of the 16 speakers.
2. Separated into three areas of the classroom, members of each group will receive different hand-outs. Then by teacher assignment or by pulling numbered slips, each member will be assigned a numbered role to play. For example, one student must be identity Pro-1; one person must be identity Con-1; one uncommitted questioner will be Q-Pro-1, etc.
3. Your teacher will stop by your group and give you suggestions on how to blend your identity information into any speech you give or question you ask/answer.
4. Your teacher will next have you read Your Note-Taking Responsibility and The 8 Argument Pairs sections of this Student Guide. Make sure you realize that you are to prepare both sides of the four sheets of paper *before* the re-creation begins.
5. As homework you should do two things: 1) prepare both sides of the four sheets for tomorrow's note-taking; and 2) study your role information and practice the two-minute speech you're going to give or the one-minute question you're going to ask (practice it two or three times—no more or you'll sound like a broken record).
6. Special suggestions to both debating groups: Meet together with your respective group outside class either at school or in someone's home. Use large sheets of butcher paper or cardboard to make posters or political cartoons containing slogans or popular expressions appropriate to the issue of neutrality or intervention in 1940.

### Days 2-3

1. You should seat yourselves as follows for the re-creation:



*Please take considerable notes, writing down what is said and your reactions to what is said during this mini-unit. You will then gain a great deal from this historical re-creation.*

*Research shows us that when persons write as they are learning, they retain considerable knowledge—and for a long time period.*

2. Your teacher will make a few comments about the American neutrality dilemma in 1940.
3. Your teacher now introduces speakers Pro-1 and Con-1, who then give their speeches. (The teacher will use some system to alert you if you are exceeding your allotted two minutes for your speech.)
4. Next is the question period on the first argument pair. The first uncommitted questioner, identity Q-Pro-1, rises, introduces himself/herself, and asks a one-minute question of speaker Pro-1, who answers in no more than one minute. The remaining questioner, Q-Con-1, asks his/her one-minute question of speaker Con-1, who answers in one minute.
5. Once debate has concluded on the first argument pair, the teacher will ask you to examine the notes you have written down from the speakers' speeches and responses to questions. Then decide which speaker did the better job of debating and place a large check mark by either the pro or con argument to signify that you feel this person won this portion of the debate. Your teacher will tally students' votes after The 8 Argument Pairs has been debated.
6. The procedures in numbers 3, 4, and 5 will be followed for the other seven argument pairs.
7. Once the debate is concluded, your teacher tallies by hand voting which debater was more effective in each argument pair. If five or more debaters from one side "win," their side "wins" the debate.

## Day 4

1. **Debriefing Activity 1:** In an activity group of four to six members discuss the following five items. Appoint a recorder to take notes.
  - a. List the four strongest arguments used by American **isolationists** to justify their advocacy of American non-intervention in foreign wars in 1940. After you have accomplished this task, discuss among your activity group the merits of each listing.
  - b. List the four strongest arguments used by American **interventionists** to justify their advocacy of American intervention in foreign wars in 1940. After you have accomplished this task, discuss among your activity group the merits of each listing.
  - c. Given the present world situation, during which American popularity and influence abroad are at an all-time low, should the United States seriously consider any of these four foreign policy options?
    - Reassert American power more forcefully and consciously spread democratic ideals all over the world.
    - Maintain strong relationships only with democratic allies such as England or Canada and be hostile toward communist nations.
    - Except for economic transactions and diplomatic recognition, maintain a status of nonintervention in affairs of undeveloped or emerging nations as in Central America or Africa.
    - Because we are experiencing the problems that we are in foreign affairs, our government should declare a strict isolationist policy comparable to Switzerland's and should make no alliances whatsoever.
  - d. Discuss what our contemporary foreign policy should be in the following situation: A right-wing, anti-democratic dictatorship in South America is being threatened by revolutionary activity by a socialist-communist group that is supported behind the scenes by an established communist government. Although not a close ally of the right-wing government, the U.S. has been the primary source of military and economic aid to the dictator as he has combated the communist influence. Now all reports indicate that the right-wing regime is in dire danger of being ousted by the revolutionaries. **Question:** *What should be the United States' approach to this situation?* (Your suggestions might be based on past American foreign policy decisions with similar characteristics: 1978–1979 in Nicaragua; 1965 in the Dominican Republic; 1964–1965 in Vietnam; 1976–1977 in Iran.)
  - e. Discuss the military draft in the 1990s. What should the United States do? What are the pros and cons of a military draft and its possible variations (registration, alternative service, two-year mandatory service for all males/females between a certain age)?
2. **Debriefing Activity 2:** It could be said that 20th-century American history has been the evolution of U.S. foreign policy from almost total isolationism to internationalist status. Accompanying this evolutionary process has been the frequent dilemma faced by recent presidents when they had to identify our nation's "vital interests" around the world; for example, President William McKinley's advocating annexation of the Philippine Islands in 1900; or Lyndon Johnson's committing American troops in Vietnam; or Franklin Roosevelt's defining of American status in Europe's war of 1940. Listed below are current world "hot spots" where events have caused frequent debate in our country concerning the extent of U.S. commitment to relieve the problems associated with each area. After you have discussed the current circumstances in each "hot spot," rate each one as **VIP** (Vital Interest Priority), **MI** (Marginal Interest), or **LNO** (Little or No Interest). Also, offer reasons why you made the assessment that you did.

### "Hot Spots"

- |               |          |          |                   |
|---------------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| • Afghanistan | • Iraq   | • Israel | • Central America |
| • South Korea | • Taiwan | • Turkey | • Lebanon         |

**Special note:** If your group feels unable to rate each "hot spot," possibly your teacher will assign your group's members to work in study pairs to research and rate two or three of the above "hot spots." You could then report back to your group and, eventually, to the whole class.



*Adopt the scholar's attitude during your debriefing. How?*

*Question one another by asking persons to define words as difficult to define as **Vital...** **Marginal...** **Little...***