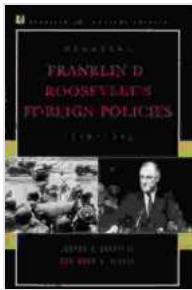


Debating Franklin Roosevelt's Foreign Policies: 1933-1945

Franklin D. Roosevelt's foreign policies were complex and evolving, shaped by a variety of factors including domestic economic concerns, the rise of fascism in Europe, and the outbreak of World War II. Roosevelt's approach to international affairs shifted over time, from a policy of isolationism to one of interventionism. This article will explore the key decisions and events that shaped Roosevelt's foreign policies, and will assess their impact on the course of history.



Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt's Foreign Policies, 1933–1945 (Debating Twentieth-Century America)

by Justus D. Doenecke

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Isolationism and the Neutrality Acts

When Roosevelt took office in 1933, the United States was in the midst of the Great Depression. Roosevelt's primary focus was on domestic economic recovery, and he initially pursued a policy of isolationism, seeking

to avoid foreign entanglements that could distract from his domestic agenda. In 1935, Congress passed the Neutrality Act, which prohibited the sale of arms to belligerents in a foreign war. The act was intended to keep the United States out of war, but it also made it more difficult for Roosevelt to provide support to countries that were fighting against fascism.

The Rise of Fascism and the Munich Agreement

In the mid-1930s, the rise of fascism in Europe posed a growing threat to international peace. In 1938, Germany annexed Austria and then demanded the Sudetenland, a region of Czechoslovakia with a large German-speaking population. In response to the threat of war, Britain and France signed the Munich Agreement with Germany, which allowed Germany to annex the Sudetenland. Roosevelt was critical of the Munich Agreement, which he saw as a betrayal of Czechoslovakia and a sign of appeasement towards Hitler.

The Outbreak of World War II

In 1939, Germany invaded Poland, triggering the outbreak of World War II. Roosevelt was now faced with a difficult choice: whether to intervene in the war or to remain neutral. Roosevelt believed that the United States had a moral obligation to oppose fascism, but he also knew that the American public was not eager to enter another war.

The Lend-Lease Act and the Atlantic Charter

In 1941, Roosevelt signed the Lend-Lease Act, which allowed the United States to provide military aid to Britain and other countries that were fighting against Germany. The Lend-Lease Act was a major turning point in

Roosevelt's foreign policy, as it shifted the United States from a policy of neutrality to one of interventionism.

In August 1941, Roosevelt met with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to sign the Atlantic Charter, which outlined the goals of the Allied powers in the war. The Atlantic Charter called for the self-determination of all peoples, the disarmament of aggressor nations, and the establishment of a new international organization to maintain peace.

The Casablanca, Tehran, and Yalta Conferences

As the war progressed, Roosevelt met with Churchill and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin at a series of conferences to discuss the war effort and the postwar settlement. At the Casablanca Conference in 1943, the Allies agreed to demand Germany's unconditional surrender. At the Tehran Conference in 1943, Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan once Germany was defeated. At the Yalta Conference in 1945, the Allies discussed the postwar division of Europe and the establishment of the United Nations.

The Potsdam Conference and the End of the War

In July 1945, Roosevelt died and was succeeded by Harry S. Truman. Truman met with Churchill and Stalin at the Potsdam Conference in July and August 1945. The Potsdam Conference was the last major meeting of the Allied leaders during the war. At the conference, the Allies agreed to divide Germany into four zones of occupation and to establish a new international organization to maintain peace, which would later become the United Nations.

Legacy of Roosevelt's Foreign Policies

Roosevelt's foreign policies were complex and controversial, and they continue to be debated today. Some historians argue that Roosevelt was too quick to intervene in World War II, while others argue that he did not do enough to stop the rise of fascism. However, there is no doubt that Roosevelt's foreign policies had a profound impact on the course of history. The United States emerged from the war as a global superpower, and Roosevelt's vision of a new international order based on self-determination and collective security helped to shape the postwar world.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's foreign policies were a reflection of his complex and evolving worldview. Roosevelt was a pragmatist who was willing to shift his approach to foreign affairs based on changing circumstances. He was also a man of principle who believed that the United States had a moral obligation to oppose tyranny and promote peace. Roosevelt's foreign policies helped to shape the course of history, and they continue to be debated today.

Further Reading

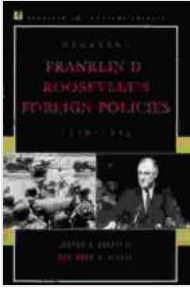
* [Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers](#) * [Franklin D. Roosevelt - History.com](#) * [Franklin D. Roosevelt - Encyclopedia Britannica](#) * [Franklin D. Roosevelt - Miller Center](#)

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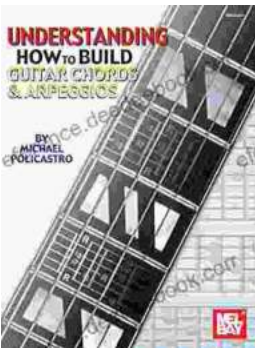
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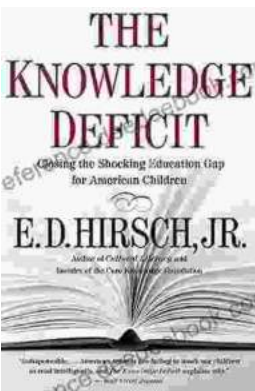


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