

# FROM MUNICH TO PEARL HARBOR

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*Roosevelt's America and the  
Origins of the Second World War*

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the United States, he saved FDR from being forced to concentrate on an unwanted Pacific war, thereby salvaging the president's Germany-first strategy.

Despite this fateful convergence in December 1941, the Axis remained a hollow alliance. Although the German and Japanese navies wanted to concert their strategies, targeting British India from two sides, the two leaderships in Berlin and Tokyo went on to fight separate wars. The Allied partnership, for all its flaws, proved stronger and more effective. Within days of Pearl Harbor, Churchill was braving Atlantic storms en route to Washington to concert Anglo-American war plans. Although Hitler was at the gates of Moscow, U.S. aid was now beginning to flow to the Soviet Union. And, as the November crisis showed, the United States had also stuck by China. American perceptions of a cohesive totalitarian plot helped ease the United States into world war. But the reality of Axis divergence helped ensure eventual Allied victory.

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### From Munich to Pearl Harbor

IN THE INTRODUCTION I set out three main objectives: to provide an interpretive overview of U.S. policy from Munich to Pearl Harbor, to show how Roosevelt led Americans into a new global perception of international relations, and to suggest how some of the essentials of America's cold war worldview were formed in this period. Policy, perceptions, and precedents form the substance of this concluding chapter.

#### POLICY

Roosevelt's Washington was riven by bureaucratic politics. But, to a large extent, foreign policy was made by the president. That policy was mainly reactive—to the challenges posed by international events and to the limitations of domestic politics. These have been the two central themes of my account. Yet FDR's own inclinations mattered enormously because his interpretations of events and his assessments of politics often differed markedly from those of his advisers. Moreover his reactions were also shaped by certain basic assumptions about the United States and the world.

By the fall of 1937 the New Deal was on the defensive. The fiasco of Supreme Court reform and the onset of what Republicans dubbed "the Roosevelt recession" had squandered the

massive electoral victory of November 1936. The international scene also darkened dramatically during 1937, with Japan's brutal aggression in China and great-power involvement in the civil war in Spain. Unnerved by the depression and preoccupied by economic recovery, many Americans now believed that entry into the European war in 1917 had been a profound mistake. Successive Neutrality Acts from 1935 were an attempt to avoid that mistake again by minimizing the danger of U.S. economic and emotional entanglement in a future European war.

In the mid-1930s Roosevelt accepted the basic framework of the new neutrality. He shared the national aversion to another war. But he still believed that the United States should play a constructive role in world affairs. Although repudiating the League of Nations, he retained the essentials of a Wilsonian worldview, convinced that imperialism, militarism, and economic nationalism were at the root of most international problems. Influenced by his kinsman, Teddy Roosevelt, and by Wilson's experiences in 1917-1919, he also believed that great-power cooperation was essential to peace and security, particularly cooperation with Britain, the premier sea power.

In 1937-1938 he began to express these underlying ideas in more concrete form. His "quarantine the aggressors" speech in October 1937 was a globalist diagnosis of world problems, likening international lawlessness to a contagious disease. In private he talked of naval pressure and economic sanctions as instruments of quarantine, laying the intellectual basis for his attempted containment of Japan. In Europe, Roosevelt had less to offer, because the great-power structure was still firmly in place. At times in 1937-1938 he picked up the Wilsonian ideas of his close adviser, Sumner Welles, for a new international conference to establish principles of disarmament and freer trade. But during the Czech crisis of September 1938 he was largely a bystander.

Nevertheless the crisis proved a turning point in Roosevelt's

thinking, in several respects. Insider reports of the European summit conferences convinced the president that there could be no negotiation with Hitler. He never took that view of the other dictators, Mussolini and Stalin, let alone the leaders of Japan. Hitler's bloodless victory, handed to him by Britain and France, also shook FDR's assumption that the established powers of Western Europe would take the lead in stabilizing the Old World. Henceforth he envisaged a larger U.S. role in Europe, albeit well short of war. Privately he talked of a massive campaign of air rearmament to give him the clout he needed in international diplomacy.

Roosevelt told his advisers in November 1938 that he wanted to "sell or lend" planes and other munitions to Britain and France. Here, at the level of gut instinct, was the essential theme of his policy toward Europe over the next three years. But FDR's attempt to mobilize consent for his ideas in the spring and summer of 1939 was an abject failure. His rhetoric was too alarmist; his attempts to amend the Neutrality Act were ineffectual. A strong bipartisan coalition had now been mobilized in Congress. Although formed around opposition to the New Deal, it was inspired by general suspicion of the president and his "dictatorial" tendencies. In mid-1939 FDR was unwilling to test its cohesion on foreign affairs by a head-on confrontation. Nor was the international situation propitious. War scares in Europe had come and gone. There seemed no clear and immediate danger to the United States.

Once war broke out in Europe in September 1939, however, the situation changed dramatically. American opinion turned more amenable to Roosevelt's policy of biased neutrality, and this time Democratic managers were more effective than in the summer. In November Congress repealed the embargo on selling arms to countries at war, and placed all trade with belligerents on a "cash-and-carry" basis. This benefited Britain, with a large navy and financial reserves, while preserving Americans' insula-

tion from direct contact with the belligerents. Although FDR made clear that his countrymen should not feel "neutral in thought," he still talked the language of legal neutrality. He reiterated his determination to keep America out of the war and his confidence that he could do so. But at that stage his presidency was scheduled to end in January 1941.

If Munich was the first major turning point in the evolution of Roosevelt's foreign policy, the fall of France was the second. In the autumn of 1939 it seemed reasonable to anticipate a long struggle, akin to that of 1914-1918. No one—certainly not Roosevelt, and not even Hitler—expected the stunning German successes of May and June, which left Britain alone, fighting for survival. Munich had cracked the American image of European power; the fall of France shattered it. U.S. policy was never the same again.

There were two plausible responses from the U.S. perspective. One was to accelerate America's limited rearmament and concentrate on defending the Western Hemisphere. A large body of opinion, spearheaded by the America First Committee, advocated this policy. The other response was to extend aid to Britain alone. Given the fate of France and the state of Britain's defenses, that was a real gamble. But, after some hesitation, FDR took the risk, against the preferences of the War Department and the inclinations of many in his administration. International events by themselves were not decisive: much depended on Roosevelt himself.

His motives for backing Britain were typically mixed. He believed that British resistance bought time for American rearmament. He undoubtedly felt some measure of kinship with Britain. And he could not envisage Europe, the cradle of American civilization, being dominated by alien values. But he responded to Churchill's pleas for U.S. destroyers only when he was confident of Britain's survival and was advised that he could act without congressional approval. Characteristically he also

tried to strengthen America's own defenses with bases in the Western Atlantic and an assurance that the British fleet would never be surrendered.

Although carefully balanced, the destroyers-for-bases deal of September 1940 was a milestone in U.S. policy. It signaled a new commitment to Britain Alone as America's front line. The RAF's success in the Battle of Britain helped validate Roosevelt's geopolitical gamble, while the new images of British heroism and egalitarian sacrifice during the Blitz confirmed the impression he wanted to convey of the country's ideological compatibility with the values of Americanism. The American image of Britain was changing from empire to democracy.

The destroyers deal also deepened the global divide. Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo responded with their Tripartite Pact, intended to deter the United States from further commitments to Britain in Europe or Asia. In private, unknown to Roosevelt, the Japanese retained the freedom to judge when and whether to enter a war with Germany. But the public appearance of Axis solidarity strengthened the American perception of a global totalitarian threat.

The summer of 1940 redefined American politics as well as the country's geopolitical position. The fall of France persuaded FDR to seek reelection instead of retirement. In November 1940 he became the first U.S. president to breach the no-third-term tradition. With four more years ahead of him, he enjoyed a freedom of political maneuver undreamed of in the dog days of 1939.

First fruit of the new politics was the Lend-Lease Act of March 1941. This implemented ideas that Roosevelt had enunciated, albeit vaguely, back in November 1938. The United States would lend munitions to those countries, particularly Britain but also China, whose survival was deemed to be in the national interest. It took FDR two months to secure congressional assent, but he could now claim that he had a legislative mandate for a policy that had previously been handled by executive authority.

Since the munitions had to be produced, the act was also a way of galvanizing domestic rearmament through substantial government investment.

But it was no use producing and lending supplies if they did not arrive safely. The United States had to help carry the goods as well as provide the cash. During the spring and summer FDR extended U.S. naval operations in the Atlantic, taking in Iceland in July and operating what became a "shoot-on-sight" policy from September onward. Ignoring some of his advisers, he did this without going to Congress, using his powers as commander-in-chief. From the autumn the U.S. navy was helping escort British and Canadian convoys across most of the Atlantic. In November the president secured repeal of some of the key remaining provisions of the Neutrality Act, including those that banned American vessels from entering British ports. But despite incidents with German U-boats, he remained wary of forcing the issue.

One reason why Roosevelt maintained an undeclared naval warfare in the Atlantic was the changed international situation. Hitler's invasion of Russia in June 1941 constituted the third great turning point of the years 1938–1941. It took some of the heat off Britain and therefore the United States. FDR decided to extend aid to the Soviet Union because its continued resistance diverted Hitler from Western Europe and the Atlantic. As in the summer of 1940 with Britain, he took a gamble—and one that was again strongly opposed by the War Department, still struggling with U.S. mobilization. But the gamble paid off. Russia's survival into the winter, despite massive losses, marked a major respite in the war in the West.

There were other reasons for Roosevelt's caution in the Atlantic. He judged that U.S. public and congressional opinion had, if anything, hardened against full belligerency since the Soviet entry. He also feared that if the United States formally declared war, Americans would demand that aid to Britain and

Russia take second place to the needs of U.S. forces. In addition he intended that America's main role in a war, declared or not, should be as the provider of arms rather than armies. His new passion for airpower reflected the hope that, in modern warfare, technology could replace manpower. Budgets were politically less contentious than body bags. FDR also feared that a formal war with Germany would precipitate Japanese belligerency in the Pacific. Although a mistaken reading of the Axis pact, that fear reflected his conviction that America faced a cohesive global threat. During 1940–1941 the administration's aim was to contain Japan without war, yet opinions differed as to which measures would deter and which would provoke. FDR was less in command of policy toward Asia, partly because he was preoccupied with Europe but also because the splits over Japan were more serious. Hull wanted to keep talking while reiterating Wilsonian principles. The "hawks," led by Morgenthau and Stimson, favored tougher economic controls.

Hitler's invasion of Russia in June 1941 removed a major restraint on Japanese policymakers. They decided to continue their "southward advance" and occupy the whole of Indochina. FDR responded by tightening controls over Japanese oil imports, but, perhaps without his full knowledge, administration hawks developed these into a full oil embargo. This pushed Japanese leaders toward a final decision for war. America's putative deterrents—the main fleet left uneasily at Pearl Harbor, the new buildup of airpower in the Philippines—were ineffectual and even counterproductive. In other ways, too, the implementation of U.S. policy was faulty. Roosevelt was fascinated by human intelligence—firsthand reports had decisively influenced his policy after Munich, the fall of France, and the invasion of Russia. Unlike Churchill, he was much less interested in signals intelligence and failed to ensure its proper provision and analysis. For that Americans paid a high price on December 7, 1941.

But Pearl Harbor was ultimately the result of mistaken as-

sumptions. Roosevelt's focus was on Europe: he naturally assumed that the powers of the Old World and the New were the movers and shakers of world affairs. Like most of his advisers, he underestimated Japan's desperation and its capacity. By December 1941 he was expecting a war in Southeast Asia but not a daring air attack on the U.S. fleet more than five thousand miles to the east. This plunged America into a Pacific war that the administration had tried to avoid and for which it was woefully unprepared. If Germany had not declared war on the United States, the whole balance of Roosevelt's Germany-first policy would have been upset. After the humiliation of Pearl Harbor, domestic pressure for a Japan-first policy would have become overwhelming. Hitler saved Roosevelt from that predicament.

#### PERCEPTIONS

Japan's attack and Hitler's declaration of war were just the latest of a series of unexpected international events going back to Munich that shook the foundations of U.S. policy. But, as I have suggested, FDR might have reacted very differently to these events, notably the fall of France and the invasion of Russia. In both cases he could have intensified a policy of Western Hemisphere defense, as many Americans wished. He did not do so, but nor did he challenge the proponents of hemisphere defense head-on. Instead he and his internationalist supporters gradually "educated" (in their phrase) the American public into a new globalist conception of international affairs. This developed at two levels—the geopolitical and the ideological.

Franklin Roosevelt, like TR, was a disciple of Admiral Mahan. He was alert to the significance of sea power in world affairs and, for most of his life, an advocate of Anglo-American naval cooperation. Munich opened his eyes to airpower. This then became an obsession. He believed that the bomber had made America's oceanic barriers obsolescent and had invalidated

the concept of a secure Western Hemisphere. German subversion in Latin America might enable Hitler to build air bases within range of U.S. cities. If he gained control of West Africa or European colonies in the Caribbean, these might become jumping-off points for an attack on the United States. Hence the importance of the British Isles and the British fleet. They had become, for Roosevelt, America's front line. Given the new geography of power in the air age, the front line might well prove the last line of defense.

In keeping with his cautious view of U.S. opinion, Roosevelt stuck with the traditional conceptual framework of a discrete Western Hemisphere. He simply stretched it farther and farther eastward. By 1941, however, pro-administration intellectuals such as Walter Lippmann were promulgating the concept of an "Atlantic Area." This offered a new "mental map" to conceptualize Roosevelt's expanded definition of U.S. interests. Also entering circulation was the concept of "national security"—a term used by the president himself though particularly associated with Edward Mead Earle of Princeton. Unlike traditional concepts such as "defense," national security was active rather than passive—a combination of diplomacy and strategy to preempt trouble rather than simply respond to attack. This was what FDR was doing as he pushed the Western Hemisphere eastward by extended naval patrolling or the occupation of Iceland.

Although the Atlantic was deemed the center of danger, Roosevelt and his allies saw the threat as global in scope. From the spring of 1940 the main U.S. fleet was kept halfway across the Pacific at Hawaii in an attempt to deter Japan. By the fall of 1941 the United States was reinforcing the Philippines rather than planning their evacuation. Moreover the administration saw the Atlantic and Pacific challenges as interconnected. The Tripartite Pact of September 1940 strengthened its fears of an interconnected Axis, and the combined declarations of war in December 1941 served to confirm them.

on a divide between the "fascists" and the "anti-fascists" which the Comintern expounded as part of the Soviet attempt to build a Popular Front against Hitler. The Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 exploded that idea. In the United States the term "totalitarianism"—already in use to cover Germany, Italy, and Japan—was now extended to embrace the Soviet Union as well. This helped Roosevelt set out a stark bipolar ideological divide. The totalitarians, seeking to bring all of society under the control of the state, were depicted as antithetical to the basic freedoms embodied in the United States.

There were other ways of conceptualizing the world, however. Wilsonianism was an amorphous ideology, but one of its central tenets was the condemnation of imperialism. Britain, France, and Russia were three of the world's leading empires, and Wilson's ambivalence about them was reflected in his description of the United States in 1917 as an "associate" power rather than an "ally." Roosevelt shared some of that ambivalence, but the crisis of 1940 was far worse than 1917. British imperialism became a minor concern. During the Blitz of 1940–1941 the administration and a sympathetic media helped portray Britain in a more favorable light. The erosion of class barriers under Hitler's aerial pounding was taken as evidence of a social revolution. The new image of Britain was that of democracy, not empire—a country belatedly moving toward the American way.

The repackaging of Stalin's Russia after June 1941 was much more difficult. On security grounds, Roosevelt welcomed the Soviet Union to the American camp, and most Americans concurred. For the moment the language of totalitarianism was dropped. But the idea lurked under the surface of political discussion. Roosevelt's efforts to turn the USSR into a proto-democracy, particularly by talking up freedom of religion, were not convincing. There seemed a danger in the summer of 1941 that agreements between Britain and the Soviet Union might preempt Roosevelt's vision for a postwar world. In August,

Each Axis power sought an empire of its own, built around the principles of self-sufficiency. The Roosevelt administration was convinced that, to survive in such a world, the United States would have to change fundamentally its trading patterns and set itself on a permanent war footing, even if it remained nominally at peace. The term for this, already used by academics such as Harold Lasswell, was "the garrison state." The administration argued that the United States could avoid such an outcome only by preempting Axis imperialism through aid to countries such as Britain and China. In direct contrast, noninterventionist critics argued that a policy of hemisphere defense was the answer. In their view it was Roosevelt's "war policy" that would turn America into a garrison state.

Although a new geopolitics was at the heart of FDR's reconceptualization of U.S. foreign policy, it was not axiomatic. As Lindbergh and others insisted, the air age had the potential to make the United States stronger, not weaker, if air rearmament for *defense* was given priority. Moreover the Axis were much less cohesive than Washington believed. Although the secret protocols of the Tripartite Pact were unknown to the administration, it was clear, for instance, that Japan had been totally surprised in August 1939 and again in June 1941 by the zigzags of Hitler's policy toward Russia.

The president's new foreign policy was in fact founded on ideology as much as geopolitics. FDR's speeches in 1940 and 1941 were replete with statements of ideals and values. Roosevelt believed, and was at pains to say, that the Axis stood for principles inimical to those of America's liberal capitalist democracy rooted in Christian values. Ideologically his Wilsonianism remained profound. It provided the basis for major wartime statements such as the Four Freedoms. But FDR was applying Wilsonian values to new international circumstances.

In the late 1930s the most influential ideological conceptualization of world affairs emanated from Moscow. This centered

therefore, Roosevelt pinned Churchill down to a major statement of war aims—the Atlantic Charter. This eschewed secret treaties of the sort that the administration feared might be brewing in London and Moscow. It also committed the evasive British to a Wilsonian agenda. Churchill ensured plenty of loopholes, but in a broad sense he had signed up to American goals. Although Moscow revived the concept of an anti-fascist coalition, Washington continued to describe the emerging alliance in the language of democratic values. Roosevelt did not talk of making the world safe for democracy, but that was his intention.

“World” is the operative term, for the new geopolitics and ideology constituted a statement of American globalism. This can be seen clearly in the evolution of the term “Second World War,” which we now use without a moment’s thought.

In the 1920s and 1930s the British had referred to the European conflict of 1914–1918 as “The Great War”—a term first used of their titanic, quarter-century conflict with France in the era of Napoleon. A few, notably Winston Churchill, situated the Great War within what he called “The World Crisis,” but the term “World War” was largely a German and American invention. For the Germans it connoted a war in which the British and Americans were involved, unlike the continental European conflicts of the Bismarck era. From an American viewpoint, Europe was at least three thousand miles from Washington, D.C., and the conflict of 1914–1918 also had reverberations in Asia and Africa as well as reordering the Near East. The term “World War” was therefore apt. It lodged in American political terminology, even though Wilsonian globalism was soon discredited.

For much of the 1930s FDR considered it essential to distance himself from Wilson. He accepted the basic framework of neutrality legislation and came close to saying that U.S. belligerency in 1917 had been a mistake. In 1938, 1939, and 1940 his more forward policy in Europe was presented as an effort to *avoid* war, not to enter it. But by the spring of 1941 his line had begun to

change. He had redefined America’s national security to include much of the Atlantic and (more covertly) the Pacific. He was citing the Tripartite Pact as evidence of a global conspiracy, and the looming invasion of Russia accentuated the global ramifications of the European conflict. In the spring of 1941 he therefore began talking publicly about “this second World War”—picking up a phrase that had been bandied about in the United States and China in the mid-1930s. At the same time, by aiding Britain and Russia, by pressuring Japan and not abandoning China, he inserted the United States into the widening conflict at critical points. Because of its hinge position as an emerging power in the Atlantic *and* the Pacific, the United States was crucial to the fusion of the separate regional conflicts. Of course it was in large measure decisions made in Berlin and Tokyo that turned the European war of September 1939 into a global conflagration by the end of 1941. But Roosevelt’s discourse and his policies also contributed. In both respects one can say that “the Second World War” was partly an American construction.

#### PRECEDENTS

During the cold war, World War II slipped from the gaze of many U.S. diplomatic historians. Understandably, their prime concern was Soviet-American relations. Roosevelt figured to the extent that scholars debated whether or not he was an “appeaser” who had laid the basis for Soviet hegemony in postwar Eastern Europe. U.S. entry into the war was largely irrelevant to this debate. Although conspiracy theories about Pearl Harbor persisted, the general consensus about World War II as “the good war” discouraged close analysis of U.S. intervention.

The cold war is now history, however. As it recedes into the distance, one can look past it and discern more easily the meaning of World War II. From this vantage point the redefinition of U.S. policy and discourse about foreign affairs in 1940–1941 may

be seen as an important and neglected stage in the emergence of America as a superpower and in the delineation of its cold war worldview. Of course 1941 was not 1945 or 1950. The transformation of the Soviet Union from ally to enemy occurred slowly in the mid-1940s; the formation of a vast peacetime defense establishment was a product of the Korean War more than World War II. But key concepts had been formed, basic practices established, in 1940–1941, *long before* they were applied to the Soviet Union.

The new globalism was particularly influential. As early as 1943 Walter Lippmann was writing about “the Atlantic Community.” That term became fundamental to U.S. strategy after 1949 with the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The basic concepts of Atlanticism—about the geopolitical and ideological significance of a friendly Western Europe for the United States—were outlined in the months before Pearl Harbor. By this time the term “national security” had entered the vocabulary of Roosevelt and other internationalists. In due course, historians such as Daniel Yergin and Michael Hogan would depict the national security state as the defining structure of America’s cold war. Moreover the concept of totalitarianism, though sublimated after Russia entered the war, had already been firmly lodged in American thinking. Roosevelt’s attempt to detach the USSR from it did not succeed, and by 1947 the Truman Doctrine equated Stalinism with totalitarianism once again. Atlanticism, national security, and totalitarianism all became part of the cold war worldview of bipolarity. But that bipolar framework was established by Roosevelt, not Truman. In speech after speech in 1939, 1940, and 1941, FDR depicted a world polarized between the forces of light and darkness. Bipolarity was not a product of the cold war but a precedent. Roosevelt had predisposed Americans to think in terms of a world divided into two ways of life.

The new globalism was only one of the legacies of these years.

Roosevelt’s bypassing of Congress on some crucial issues in 1940–1941 was another harbinger of things to come. The destroyers deal was couched as an executive agreement, exploiting Supreme Court decisions in the 1930s. The president conducted his undeclared naval war in the Atlantic under his powers as commander-in-chief. Here were the origins of what would later be called the Imperial Presidency, enabling Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon to wage a massive, undeclared war in Vietnam.

An important facet of the Imperial Presidency was a vast network of military intelligence. Here the era of 1938–1941 also set precedents, albeit more of a negative kind. Roosevelt’s neglect of signals intelligence had contributed to the Pearl Harbor debacle. Although he continued to be more interested in spies than signals, the handling of sigint was transformed over the next few months. Roosevelt also recognized the need for a more integrated management of intelligence: hence the Office of Strategic Services established in June 1942. True to form, he refused to give OSS real autonomy, and bureaucratic turf wars continued to bedevil U.S. intelligence gathering and analysis. But OSS was the precursor of the cold war CIA.

Roosevelt’s conception of war was also significant. After November 1938 he imagined airpower as a potent deterrent, a way of averting war. That doctrine was applied in earnest in late 1941 with the reinforcement of the Philippines by B-17s. He also envisaged airpower as a war-winning weapon—one that might even obviate the need for large and politically sensitive armies. The War Department contested that idea in its “Victory Program,” rightly predicting the need for large land forces slogging their way across Western Europe. Although exaggerated, FDR’s hopes for airpower were a foretaste of things to come. B-17s became the prime instrument of wartime strategic bombing; the research into atomic energy that FDR commissioned in October 1941 laid the foundations for the atomic bomb. After 1945 cold

war strategy centered on aerial bombing, especially using nuclear weapons. Roosevelt was the pioneer of technowar: massive fire-power applied with the intent of minimizing U.S. casualties.

Modern war was total war, requiring the mobilization of the whole of society. By aiding the Allies Roosevelt sought to avoid "a garrison state"; the political scientist Aaron Friedberg has argued that what actually emerged was a "contract state"—one that was less burdensome and directive than the totalitarian system and relied on contracts rather than coercion to harness private resources. Both the enhanced mobilization of resources and the contract mechanism were pioneered in the era between Munich and Pearl Harbor.

One early example was the decision for a peacetime draft: the Selective Service Act of September 1940. Truman tried to dispose of the draft in 1947 but then restored it in 1948 as the cold war deepened. Thereafter it was part of American life for three decades. Yet FDR had rejected the idea of Universal Military Training for all citizens, as advocated by Henry Stimson and other veterans of the World War I Plattsburg movement. That would have entailed a more radical militarization of American life. A second example was the galvanizing of American industry for air rearmament. Roosevelt's targets of 10,000 planes a year (November 1938) and 50,000 a year (May 1940) were pulled, as it were, from the air, and soon had to be brought down to earth. But in 1942 U.S. industry produced 48,000 planes, and in 1943 another 86,000. Dreams were exceeded by reality. In 1938 FDR had talked of building planes in government plants paid for by New Deal programs, but by the summer of 1940 he accepted that rearmament on such a scale would depend on private industry operating on favorable contracts.

An active policy of national security, even if operated on a contract basis, also required an activist state. During the 1940s the U.S. government gradually assumed a far greater role in the macro-management of the economy. The New Deal had

breached the norms of balanced budgets, but in a limited and temporary way. The deficit spending that got under way seriously with lend-lease marked a major shift in the U.S. political economy. Expanded after Pearl Harbor, this military Keynesianism legitimated government spending and helped promote economic recovery. It also had larger political significance. As the historian Alan Brinkley has argued, the era of "reform liberalism" was waning. Since the Progressive Era, American reformers had been preoccupied with economic structures, especially the danger of monopolies. Now their focus shifted to fiscal policy and the gospel of growth. The pioneering application of Keynesianism to national security rather than social security helped ensure acceptance of this radically new economic philosophy.

The 1930s were a time of depression, economically and psychologically. The war years were an era of boom and renewed confidence. The historian Mark Leff has observed: "War is hell, but for millions of Americans on the booming home front, World War II was also a hell of a war." The years 1940–1941 are the cusp of that transition. Rearmament and full employment (in war industry and the armed forces) boosted economic recovery, which in turn inspired a new confidence. This was enhanced by the astounding collapse of the European powers, which had dominated world politics and haunted the American imagination for centuries. It was a time of threat, yes, but also a time of promise. For internationalists, the New World had an opportunity and a duty to reform the Old, to redeem the West and the Rest. Here was a decisive moment in the ideologizing of what Henry Luce called the American Century.

Roosevelt, Lippmann, and Luce were not Lindbergh, Wheeler, and Vandenberg. The active proponents of the new American globalism were a minority in 1940–1941. But, as historians have shown, the reshaping of U.S. policy in the early cold war was also the work of a small minority of Washington insiders who managed to build a consensus around what they wanted.

In the summer of 1939 a small group of obdurate congressmen, particularly in the Senate, were able to stymie Roosevelt's attempts at neutrality revision. In the summer of 1940 even smaller groups of determined internationalists promoted the destroyers deal and the peacetime draft. They helped give a cautious president the intellectual arguments and political momentum he needed to shift policy and change attitudes. Despite all the larger international, economic, and social pressures, the making and re-making of foreign policy is disproportionately an elite activity.

There was also continuity in America's foreign policy elite in the 1940s. Some of those who helped create the national security state in the early cold war had participated in the policy reorientation of 1940–1941. They included the diplomats Dean Acheson and Averell Harriman; Robert Lovett, Robert Patterson, and John J. McCloy in Stimson's War Department; and James Forrestal as Knox's undersecretary of the navy. For all these policy-makers—the so-called Wise Men of America's cold war establishment—the eighteen months before Pearl Harbor constituted a turning point in their careers and their outlook.

That moment is also embodied in the architecture of America's capital. At the beginning of 1939 the Department of State, the War Department, and the Navy Department were all accommodated in a single building immediately west of the White House. In the summer of 1939 the War Department moved down to the Munitions Building on Constitution Avenue. As its civilian employees swelled to manage rearmament and the draft, so the department colonized another twenty buildings all over the District of Columbia. The Navy and State departments were also expanding, albeit less dramatically. In early 1941 the army was allocated a new federal office building, near completion, in a southwest backwater of the city known as Foggy Bottom. But Henry Stimson considered it too pokey: the façade, he said, looked like the entrance to a provincial opera house. On August 14—just as the Atlantic Charter was being broadcast to the

world—Congress voted appropriations for a new, purpose-built War Department across the Potomac. On September 11—the day FDR delivered his “shoot-on-sight” radio address about the attack on the *USS Greer*—construction began on this massive, five-sided edifice, a mile around its perimeter.

Roosevelt was deeply unhappy. In August he had moved the site three-quarters of a mile downriver to avoid impeding the view of the nation's capital from Arlington National Cemetery. Nor did he like the design, proposing unsuccessfully a square, windowless monolith with artificial light and ventilation. After the war, he said, when the military had shrunk back to its proper size, the building could be used for storage. As we now know, it wasn't. Over the next decade the Pentagon became the permanent home for an integrated Department of Defense, the State Department took over Stimson's reject in Foggy Bottom, and the president's new National Security Council moved into the old State-War-Navy building. None of this FDR had imagined, let alone desired. But this architectural footnote is another reminder that Franklin Roosevelt helped lay the foundations of America's national security state.