

U.S. Neutrality

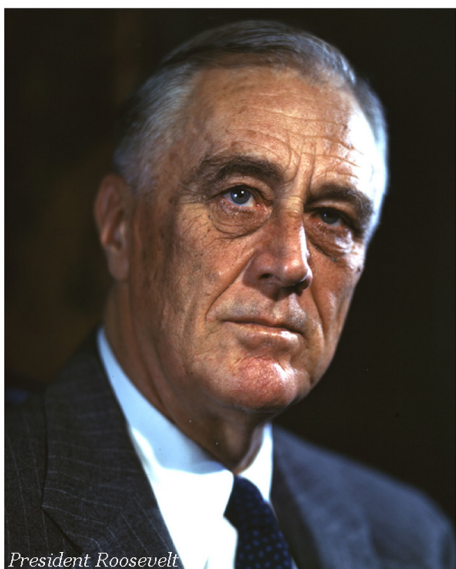
Roosevelt Bars Submarines, Lindbergh Stirs up Rumpus

The nation's firm resolve to keep out of war manifested itself on two neutrality fronts last week. As the Senate, nearing the end of debate, acted to tighten cash-and-carry loopholes and relax restrictions on steamships and aircraft in the prospective Neutrality Law of 1939, President Roosevelt spectacularly invoked the Neutrality Law of 1935-37 to bar belligerent submarines from entering American ports or territorial waters except through *force majeure*—"acts of God" and emergencies not due to warfare.

The President's action, following repeated warnings that submarines had been sighted off Maine, Florida, and Alaska, was unprecedented in United States history, and started a wide controversy over its juristic implications. The proclamation not only contravened sections of the Manual of International Law, on which the United States Navy has dealt in the past with belligerent submarines, but as well the 1928 Havana Convention on Maritime Neutrality, which grants temporary asylum to all belligerent warships for refueling and provisioning. As it is, German submersibles are barred, but as many as three surface warships (which in practice would be British and French) may enter American ports at once for a 24-hour stretch. In World War neutrality days the United States permitted submarines to visit ports for a similar period, the German undersea boat *Deutschland* notably making two trade calls (to Baltimore and New London) in 1916.

Critics who have constantly accused Mr. Roosevelt of a pro-Ally bias made much of the fact that he had omitted to bar armed merchantmen. The President blandly replied that lumping the two types of craft was like trying to add apples and pears, because in contrast to armed vessels submarines were an offensive weapon, hard to police and observe. Nevertheless, the Executive's action was generally approved. Keeping U-boats out of the Western Atlantic, the nation felt, was also keeping the war farther away.

Confirming this, Gallup polls (see page 31) showed that 95 per cent of Americans want to keep out of the war and keep American troops out of Europe, though 84 per cent want to see England and France win the conflict.

*President Roosevelt*

Fidgets

But the penchant for the dramatic continued to war with even Mr. Roosevelt's desire to avoid stirring the dying embers of the neutrality debate, making many an outspoken American fidget in a straitjacket of self-imposed objectivity. The national fidgets were evident in Ambassador Joseph C. Grew's blunt warning to Tokyo (see page 24). They were even more apparent in the reaction to Col. Charles A. Lindbergh's inauspicious debut on the political stage.

The flyer's second plunge into the neutrality battle a fortnight ago brought a few raised eyebrows because his radio plea for a ban on traffic in "offensive" weapons so closely paralleled that of former president Herbert C. Hoover. But Lindbergh's implied advice to Canada that she sever her ties with London and look to the United States for leadership evoked a storm of controversy the like of which has not been seen in recent years. "Nowhere on this soil," spluttered columnist Dorothy Thompson, "has the Nazi concept of imperialism been so clearly stated as in Colonel Lindbergh's second speech." "Unfortunate," agreed fellow-columnist Walter Lippmann, reflecting that probably no American in more than a hundred years had done more to disturb peaceful relations with Britons the world over.

What made the uproar all the more unfortunate, from Lindbergh's personal standpoint, was that the whole idea of his broadcasts apparently stemmed from motives no more sinister than a desire to run for the New Jersey seat in the United States Senate once occupied by his father-in-law, the late Dwight W. Morrow. That William R. Castle Jr., onetime Republican Assistant Secretary of State and close friend of Hoover, inspired and helped write the broadcasts, is generally known. That Hoover himself had a finger in the pie is taken for granted in Washington. That the whole sorry business turned out



Dorothy Thompson berated Lindy

to be poor political ammunition was nowhere better illustrated last week than by Mrs. Morrow's prompt and public repudiation of her son-in-law's thesis.

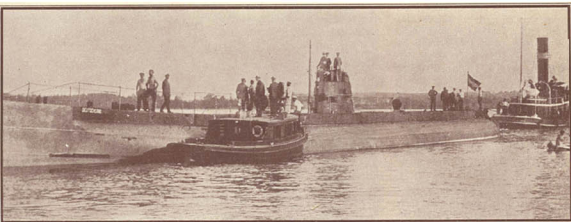
Despite their popular interest, these exciting by-products of the Neutrality issue gave no fillip to the lackluster Senatorial debate. Even pleas by Senators Burton K. Wheeler and Ernest Lundeen for Presidential intervention in the war—highlighted by the visit here of Paul van Zeeland, Belgium statesman, ostensibly for refugee conferences but also reported as carrying a mediation hint—failed to dent the battle lines. Bitter-end isolationists like Robert La Follette and Bennett Champ Clark fought on, in the shadows of their illustrious isolationist fathers. But the die was cast.

Shrewd Administration chiefs had preserved their strength by dropping the 90-day credit feature and allowing ship lines to carry nonmilitary cargoes to any ports in the Western Hemisphere below 30 degrees north latitude (which cuts through New Orleans and strikes Europe well below the Mediterranean) and to the Pacific and Indian Oceans, China and Arabian Seas, and the Bay of Bengal. Thus all European waters remained closed to American shippers. To Pan American Airways went the right to stop at Bermuda and Newfoundland.

Significance ~~~

Even granting that Mr. Roosevelt's distinction between submarines and armed merchantmen is tenable, he has a better reason for not wishing to exclude these surface craft from our ports. To do so would be to force France and Britain to call for their American goods in unarmed vessels, hence hamper efforts to help the Allies, which motive no one any longer denies is the Neutrality Bill's real purpose.

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German submarines must not again surprise Baltimore, as did the Deutschland in 1916

As for the embargo provision itself, isolationists have virtually conceded defeat in the Senate and swung their guns on the House, hoping to gain support, in part, from members who have been keeping close to rural home fires, where sentiment for embargo repeal is known to be not overly enthusiastic. Rep. John M. Vorys, Ohio Republican, will be watched carefully; it was he who introduced the Bloom Bill embargo provision, and he now talks of offering a new amendment whereby export of only airplanes, most sorely needed war supply by the Allies, would be allowed.