Neutrality, Internationalism, Isolationism, and World Leadership 1914 – 1941
Byrd Center Summer Workshop Outline
Presenter: Dr. Charles M. Flanagan – Charles.flanagan@nara.gov
Length of session: 60 minutes

Resource link: www.Archives.gov/legislative
Guiding Question: Which principle prevailed in U.S. foreign policy between 1914 and 1941: avoiding foreign entanglements or providing world leadership?

Topic 1 American Neutrality, 1914 – 1917: Documents 1 – 3
1. Untitled, Clifford K. Berryman, The Evening Star, Washington, DC 8/19/1914 NAID 6011069
3. Drafting the Third Note to Germany,” Clifford K. Berryman, The Evening Star, Washington, DC 7/17/1915 NAID 6011124

Topic 2 America’s Decision for War, 1917: Documents 4 – 6
5. President Woodrow Wilson’s Message to Congress, April 2, 1917
   https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Wilson%27s_War_Message_to_Congress

Topic 3 Post-War Challenges, 1918 – 1919: Documents 7 – 9
9. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's Personal Copy of his "Reservations" of the Treaty of Versailles (Excerpt) NAID 5678178

Topic 4 Idealism Shattered, 1929 – 1939: Documents 10 – 12

Topic 5 America Attacked, 1941
13. Annotated Draft of Proposed Message to Congress Requesting Declaration of War Against Japan 12/7/1941 NAID 593345
This cartoon illustrates the argument for American neutrality at the start of World War I. Read more about the history of this cartoon.
"The Way of the Neutral is Hard"

*The Evening Star*
February 13, 1915
NAID 6011098

This cartoon is about the difficulty for the U.S. to maintain neutrality in the face of a German submarine blockade of America’s chief trade partner, Great Britain. Read more about the history of this cartoon.
Cartoon 25

"Drafting the Third Note to Germany"

The Evening Star
July 17, 1915
NAD 6011124

This cartoon is about freedom of the seas and German atrocities, showing Uncle Sam denouncing the German submarine blockade and the sinking of the passenger ship Lusitania. Read more about the history of this cartoon.
"Ruthless Warfare at Sea"

The Evening Star
February 1, 1917
NAID 6011191

This cartoon is about freedom of the seas and U.S. preparedness for war in response to Germany's policy of unrestricted submarine attacks. Read more about the history of this cartoon.
The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind.

It is a war against all nations. American ships have been sunk, American lives taken, in ways which it has stirred us very deeply to learn of, but the ships and people of other neutral and friendly nations have been sunk and overwhelmed in the waters in the same way. There has been no discrimination. The challenge is to all mankind. Each nation must decide for itself how it will meet it. The choice we make for ourselves must be made with a moderation of counsel and a temperateness of judgment befitting our character and our motives as a nation. We must put excited feeling away. Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only the vindication of right, of human right, of which we are only a single champion.
With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking and of the grave responsibilities which it involves, but in unhesitating obedience to what I deem my constitutional duty, I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the government and people of the United States; that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has thus been thrust upon it; and that it take immediate steps not only to put the country in a more thorough state of defense but also to exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the Government of the German Empire to terms and end the war.

We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling towards them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old, unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or of little groups of ambitious men, who were accustomed to use their fellow men as pawns and tools. Self-governed nations do not fill their neighbour states with spies or set the course of intrigue to bring about some critical posture of affairs which will give them an opportunity to strike and make conquest. Such designs can be successfully worked out only under cover and where no one has the right to ask questions. Cunningly contrived plans of deception or aggression, carried, it may be, from generation to generation, can be worked out and kept from the light only within the privacy of courts or behind the carefully guarded confidences of a narrow and privi-
Cartoon 31

“Reporting for Duty”
The Evening Star
April 2, 1917
NAID 6011220

This cartoon illustrates constitutional war powers, showing the House of Representatives and the Senate "reporting for duty" to Uncle Sam as they convene to debate a declaration of war.
Read more about the history of this cartoon.
"In the World Spotlight"

*The Evening Star*

October 8, 1918

NAID 6011512

This cartoon suggests that the world is looking to the U.S. to lead in shaping the post-war international order. Read more about the history of this cartoon.
“The New Peril”

The Evening Star
January 10, 1919
NAID 5011546

This cartoon illustrates the idea that Bolshevism threatens civilization and that the Russian Revolution has spawned a new danger that threatens peace throughout the world. Read more about the history of this cartoon.
2. That the United States declines to assume, under the provisions of Article X, or under any other Article, any obligation to preserve the territorial integrity or political independence of any other country, whether a member of the League or not, or to employ the military or naval forces of the United States, or to adopt economic measures, for the protection of any other country, whether a member of the League or not, against external aggression or for the purpose of coercing any other country, or for the purpose of intervention in the internal conflicts which may arise in any other country, and no mandate shall be accepted by the United States under Article XXI, Part
This cartoon is about internationalism and the power of treaties to reduce the threat of war, in this instance by outlawing war. Read more about the history of this cartoon.
"It's a Good Act, but It's Hard on the Spectators"

The Evening Star
August 20, 1939
NAID 6012197

This cartoon shows Germany, depicted as Adolf Hitler, as an aggressor destabilizing the world and alarming France, Great Britain, and the U.S. Read more about the history of this cartoon.
This cartoon suggests that isolationism is short sighted, showing leading supporters of the policy willfully blind to danger. Read more about the history of this cartoon.