

History 474a
Devine
Spring 2022

Study Questions for Mark Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy”

Reading for Tuesday, April 5th – pp. 128-156

1. Why did Hitler’s military victories between April and June 1940, when France fell, shock Americans and significantly change American thinking about the what course to pursue moving forward? (pp. 128-130)
2. Even after the fall of France, why did FDR have to remain cautious in advocating for aid to Britain? What role did public opinion and his own concerns about re-election play in shaping his course of action? (pp. 130-131)
3. What main problems did the British face after the fall of France? How did FDR propose to help Churchill solve these problems? According to Stoler, how did FDR’s solutions radically expand (and abuse) presidential power while setting dangerous precedents for the future? (pp. 131-137)
4. How did U.S.-Japanese diplomacy between 1933 and 1941 show that both nations had misunderstood the “psychology” of the other? If neither country wanted a war with the other, why did they nonetheless end up going to war? (pp. 138-143)
5. Why does Stoler argue that further “appeasing” the Japanese to avoid war was not a viable option for FDR? (pp. 144-145)
6. Why does Stoler find the “back door to war” theory unpersuasive? How does he go about debunking it? (pp. 145-147)
7. How did FDR’s focus change once the U.S. officially declared war on Germany and Japan? What new priorities did he have? (pp. 147-148)
8. What did the US, the USSR, and Great Britain agree on? What were their most significant disagreements? How did these disagreements reflect the three nations’ different goals, experiences, and motivations? (pp. 149-150)
9. How did the postwar plans of the US, the USSR, and Great Britain differ? Though FDR seemed willing to make compromises, why did the other two powers prove unwilling to do so? (pp. 151-153)
10. In 1942, why did FDR back Operation TORCH rather than a cross-channel invasion of France? Why did Stalin, US allies in the Pacific theater, and some of FDR’s own generals disagree with this decision? (pp. 155-156)

