

## Vieth, “Diplomacy of the Depression”

How did FDR’s views change over time? Why did they change?

How did FDR *conduct* foreign policy?

How did FDR’s personality, social standing, and the political context in which he worked combine to shape his foreign policy?

- appease New Dealer/isolationists in Congress
- try not to look radical, so steer course of least resistance (don’t do anything to alarm the public that you might be leading the nation into war)

Expedience = economic nationalism; political isolationism

What role did Congress play in influencing US foreign policy?

Senator Nye – embargoes on trade and arms would prevent American involvement in war

Neutrality Acts (unintended consequences?) Italy-Ethiopia, Spanish Civil War

Ludlow Amendment → plebiscite on war; takes foreign policy out of the President’s hands

USS *Panay* incident → strong sentiment for peace even though US vessel is bombed

Quarantine speech → anti-Japanese; but isolationist opposition reacts sharply to FDR’s speech so he backs off

As war approached in Europe, why was FDR hard pressed to get the US to do *anything* to help Britain and France? Why was he in a politically

weak position in 1939? (court packing, Democratic purge, exec reorganization.)

How did US foreign policy influence Hitler's policies in 1939? (not at all)

How have historians assessed FDR's foreign policy of the 1930s?

Beard – deceitful

Gleason – patient, wise not to get ahead of public opinion; perhaps overly cautious; underestimates public support for more decisive leadership

Recently – another Chamberlain; weak appeaser of Germany

Dallek -- restrained