THE ITALIAN-ETHIOPIAN CRISIS OF 1934-1936 AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE FORMATION OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

by

EARL RAY NYMEYER, B.A.

A THESIS

IN

HISTORY

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December, 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the faculty of the Texas Tech Department of History for all of the help they gave me in completing this Thesis. I would especially like to thank Dr. David Snead and Dr. Aliza Wong for their personal attention.

I would also like to recognize the assistance and support of my family, especially my mother, Jacqueline Nichols, my wife, Julie, and my daughter Mandy, without whose support I could not have completed this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The interwar period was critical to American history because the end of World War I found the United States with a new international identity, a new set of international issues, and an inadequate foreign policy. The reformation of American foreign policy was a difficult process, and took place not in a vacuum, but in a crucible of political and social debate. The Ethiopian crisis of 1934-1936 consisted of a series of events in Africa that had international ramifications and contributed to this debate over American foreign policy.

The realignment of international alliances and relationships caused by the conflict between Italy and Ethiopia exerted pressure on the United States to change its foreign policies. The existing American foreign policies of this time were too weak to protect the United States from involvement in another foreign conflict, and needed to be adapted to the modern international situation.

The Ethiopian crisis was the event that most specifically illustrated to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the American Congress how flawed the existing policies were, and was the impetus for a change of those policies. The competition between different special interest groups within the American political system present a good example of how foreign policy was formed in the interwar period. The attempts to address the shortcomings of American foreign policies in the interwar period highlighted the shortcomings of the existing system of policy formation and also suggested alternatives to that system.

Every nation develops its foreign policy in order to define how it will conduct its relations with other countries. The formation of policy revolves around a few basic, essentially self-serving principles. Regardless of how any particular country clothes its motivations in high principles or moral values, altruism is normally not a significant factor in the formation of policy. American foreign policy was intended to promote the spread of democracy, assist and defend itself and its political allies, and protect it own interests.

The United States exhibited these same traits in the late 19th and early 20th century as it developed its foreign policy. The United States publicly proclaimed its motivations were "the peaceful maintenance of political, economic, and social independence of all nations of the world," "the maintenance of world trade for everybody—all nations—including ourselves," and the avoidance of "any entangling alliances."[1] These goals were motivated by high moral principles, and were as good as any one might choose. The problem was that the policies were statements of principles, and not plans of action supported by the economic, political, and military resources that might be necessary in order for the goals underlying these policies to be achieved. The American leaders who formulated and supposedly practiced these policies lacked the political fortitude that was necessary to support and defend them on the international level. World peace was a good thing, but there needed to be some sort of plan involved in order to

[1] *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World.* eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2003), 31.

achieve and enforce this peace. Stern looks and statements of disapproval did not work.

American foreign policies before the First World War were written primarily to improve the prospects for American trade overseas. While these policies worked to some degree, they were intended to expand American overseas trade through a system of government/business cooperation, and were not specifically developed to assist in the maintenance of the peace. American representatives, diplomats, and military personnel around the world sought, supported, and enforced trade agreements with other regions and countries.[2]

The situation in Ethiopia presents a good example of the foreign policy process. The first U.S. legation in Ethiopia was established in 1906 in order to improve trade prospects with that country.[3] American government officials handled a great deal of the communications between Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie and officials of the J. G. White Engineering Company concerning the details of a contract to construct a dam on Lake Tsana in 1929 and also facilitated the transfer of money between these two parties at one point.[4] Traditionally, American military officers enforced economic and trade agreements

---

[2] Document 180, Fiji, October 23, 1855. *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America* Vol 7 ed Hunter Miller (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 283; and Document 207, Paraguay, December 19, 1859. *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America* Vol 8 ed Hunter Miller (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1948), 203.

[3] *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1927.* Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 584.

[4] *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1933.* Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 863-877.

between American merchants and the people of the less powerful countries, especially in the Pacific Ocean regions. American traders could call for and receive assistance from the military in order to safeguard their commercial interests.[5] These intercessions were endorsed by the U.S. government but were not necessarily reciprocal in nature and did not further the quest for world peace. The peace policy was only a statement of morals, and foreign countries could expect no aid from the United States when it came to political matters, even when a specific issue directly addressed American concerns for world peace.

American foreign policy in 1934 was shallow and incomplete, based as it was on the broad generalities of "the good neighbor policy" and the high moral principles that Woodrow Wilson espoused in his Fourteen Points address at the end of World War I.[6] The moral and political honeymoon with prosperity and world power that the United States enjoyed in the 1920s ended because of a series of events that slowly but irresistibly forced it to equivocate its moral views, change its policies, and join in the real international political world. The foreign events that transpired between 1920 and 1935 presented the United States with increasingly difficult situations and emphasized just how the existing foreign policy was not sufficient to address those issues.

---

[5] Clark G. Reynolds, "American Strategic History and Doctrines: A Reconsideration, *Military Affairs* 39:4 (Dec., 1975), 185. Numerous other examples can be found of naval officers negotiating and enforcing treaties of commerce in foreign countries, see *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America* (ed. Hunter Miller) (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1948).

[6] "President Wilson's Fourteen Points, *"The Avalon Project* Yale law School available at http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wilson14.htm. Accessed 10-1-2003.

That American foreign policies in the interwar years were outdated and contradictory can be illustrated by an examination of the factors that led to the Italian military invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. The United States was unable to maintain a position of world power, an influence in world political events, or a strong international economic trade all at the same time once the fragile peace of post-World War I Europe began to crumble. President Franklin Roosevelt, Congress, American peace groups, and the attitudes of the American public, as expressed in newspapers and magazines of the period, all had some significant influence upon American actions in response to the Italian-Ethiopian crisis. American foreign relations, especially those of an economic nature, were shown to be inseparable from the political issues that arose in Europe. America could not maintain a neutral political position and still maintain the levels of foreign trade it desired because the changing alliances between the big European powers, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany required it to choose sides to one degree or another as each crisis popped up.[7] The United States was forced to examine more closely its existing foreign policies, redefine what it wanted those policies to achieve, and finally adopt a pragmatic, realistic approach to international relations. Most of the alternatives that were explored prior to 1941 were not totally successful, and ultimately the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 supplied the immediate motivation for the United States to rethink its foreign policy.

---

[7] Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919-1933* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 267.

Before that seminal event, other issues came to light that exerted some influence on American attitudes, and affected the formation of American foreign policy. The Italian-Ethiopian crisis was one such event. It was a catalyst that changed the balance of power in Europe, contributed to the failure of the League of Nations as a viable organization, and created new alliances that would become central to the Second World War. The resulting changes eventually forced the United States to realize that 19th century policies were not applicable to the 20th century.

This change in attitude did not come quickly and the United States learned from these events the hard way. Instead of changing its approach to the formation of foreign policies, the people and the government tried to shore up the old systems and standards, and failed. These lessons led to a realization that isolation was not an option in the modern world because commerce and politics were intertwined to such a degree that a country could not pursue one and ignore the other. High moral standards were just words without the willingness and the muscle to back them up.

It is important to understand the sequence of events that led to these revelations about American foreign policy. The events began in the late 19th century when Africa was being colonized by the European powers. The changing nature of European political alliances was also related to the African situation. Previous agreements and colonial possessions and territorial holdings in Africa by these European countries affected why and how the countries

involved in the Ethiopian war responded to each other, and to the war the way they did. Finally, the various factions that were and still are found in the American political system, particularly those who were active in the 1920s and 1930s, must be identified and examined in order to produce an overview of what America did, and how and why it took those specific courses of action.

American foreign policy in the 1920s was based upon "the ideas and conditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries." It proved itself inadequate to serve the "needs of the modern world" because it ignored the changes in the status of the United States within the world community.[8] Technology had increased the speed of communication between the continents, and the U.S. economic system had become dependent upon overseas markets. American policy in the 1920s did not address these issues, and tended to accept isolation as a viable alternative to involvement in international affairs. America could not sustain its economy without overseas markets, and economic growth and recovery could not have been accomplished under those older policies of nonentanglement.

There were several factions within the American system who tried to exert their influence on foreign policy during the interwar years, including internationalists, isolationists, and pacifists. The racial aspect inherent in the Italian-Ethiopian conflict also became a significant social issue because it was

---

[8] Congress, Senate. Text of Speech by Norman H. Davis, former undersecretary of State for President Woodrow Wilson, given on March 17, 1930. *Congressional Record 72 pt. II.* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1930), 11903.

seen as a contest between the black and white races. These various factions worked within the America political system to garner public support and thereby gain sufficient political strength to push their own policy agendas. A series of cooperative efforts between the isolationists and pacifists proved to be the most effective of all of the groups, and the Neutrality Act of 1935 was passed as a result. This was a hollow victory for America because the neutrality legislation did not succeed in saving the country from experiencing a replay of the First World War.

Under perfect circumstances, the formation of foreign policies would take place in a controlled atmosphere and be based upon a cold assessment of the facts and a cost/benefit analysis of current circumstances in order to reach the best possible solution. In practice, the formation of American foreign policy during this period took place under pressure from a variety of political and social groups, many of whose goals may have been to their liking, but were not in the best interests of the country. Political parties, economic benefits, and religious and racial issues all contributed to the tumultuous atmosphere of policy formation in the mid-1930s under President Roosevelt that resulted in a series of decisions that were not the best in the long run.

Figure 1. Map of Africa, 1935.[1]

[1] Boake Carter, *Black Shirt Black Skin* (Harrisburg, PA: Telegraph Press, 1935), 16.

CHAPTER II
BACKGROUND

The situation in Africa that boiled over into the Italian-Ethiopian war had its roots in the colonization of Africa by the European powers. The reactions to the events in the 1930s were connected to events in the late 1800s. As such it is important to have some background information about those events and their significance to the play of events in the early 1900s.

In the late 19th century, the continent of Africa was rapidly becoming a colonial bastion for European powers. The continent was divided into colonies, protectorates, or aligned areas that included almost the entire landmass of Africa. The exception was found in North-East Africa, which contained a large, unaligned area known as the Abyssinian Danakil,[1] Abyssinia,[2] or Ethiopia. This region was not defined by its own specific borders, but rather it existed as the unincorporated area that existed between the established colonies of: the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan to the West, British Uganda to the South-West, British East Africa to the South, Italian Somaliland to the South-East, British Somaliland and French Somaliland to the East, and Eritrea to the North. These coastal areas were acquired after construction began on the Suez Canal, which connected the

[1] "Abyssinian Danakil" was used to describe this region by a British geographer who traveled the area in 1927 and published accounts of his adventures. M. Nesbitt, *Hell-Hole of Creation: The Exploration of Abyssinian Danakil* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935).

[2] Abyssinia was not the name preferred by the leaders in this region, reportedly meaning "mixed race." It was replaced by "Ethiopia" as the proper title in diplomatic affairs. Other sources claim that the name came from the geographical feature known as the Danakil Abyss located in this region. Barry, Richard, "A Hail From Selassie," *New Outlook* (June 1935), 16.

Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea. When the Suez canal opened in 1869,[3] it allowed shipping to move through the Red Sea, giving "back to the internal sea all of its old importance"[4] with access into the Indian Ocean. The Red Sea coast of Africa was an important location for coaling stations and supplies for this shipping traffic, and a scramble for coastal property ensued. The Ethiopian region was located between the Western colonies and the Red Sea colonies, and "was one of the few parts of the continent not already subjugated by other European powers."[5]

Italy was a relatively new power in the late 19th century having been reformed from several smaller regions into one political entity in the second half of the 1800s. The ruling class in Italy was experiencing imperial urges in the late 1800s, and Italy began to feel out areas where it could expand and increase its size and power on a world scale. Prior to this period, Ethiopia had been relatively unmolested by the imperial European powers because of its location and it minimal natural wealth. The opening of the Suez Canal changed the value of the Red Sea coastal regions that were controlled by Ethiopia. Italy was concerned with establishing its own presence in the Red Sea region, and so

---

[3] Gabre-Sellassie Zewde. *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 117. "Ethiopia," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2003 available at http://encarta.msn.com © 1997-2003 Microsoft Corporation. Accessed 8-4-2003.

[4] Federico Chabod, *Italian Foreign Policy: The Statecraft of the Founders* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 245.

[5] Richard Drake, *Byzantium for Rome: The Politics of Nostalgia in Umbertian Italy, 1878-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 90.

began to encroach on Ethiopian territory, setting the stage for a significant conflict in the 19th century.

Following the unification of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861,[6] Italy saw herself as a significant western power and pursued international recognition as such.[7] By the late 1870s, Italy was becoming disenchanted with the distribution of territory in Africa among the European powers. The Italians had taken control of the port town of Assab[8] [also seen as Aseb] on the southern Red Sea coast in 1872 and had designs on Tunisia. The Congress of Berlin however, "recognized France's suzerainty" in Tunisia in 1878. "The Italians pronounced themselves humiliated" because of this perceived loss of international status and began to look for some way to gain a position among the great powers of the world.[9] Italy's Prime Minister Agostino Depretis also wanted to achieve some victory, of which gaining some territory in Africa would suffice, in order to distract from his "gloomy record of domestic failure" as well as to provide "a safety valve for the growing pressure of internal agitation."[10]

---

[6] *The New York Times Almanac, 2002.* ed. John W. Wright. (New York: Penguin, 2001). 593.

[7] Christopher Duggan, *Francesco Crispi 1818-1901: From Nation to Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 484, 503.

[8] The Italians took over the private commercial station in Assab in 1885, after Egypt abandoned it. Peter Gunn, *A Concise History of Italy, 188.*

[9] Richard Drake. *Byzantium for Rome: The Politics of Nostalgia in Umbertian Italy, 1878-1900.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 90; and *Bismarck, Europe and Africa: The Berlin African Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition* eds Stig Forster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[10] Ibid., 91.

Ethiopia specifically possessed several qualities that made it attractive to Italy as a target for this expansion. Ethiopia was an independent nation with no political or diplomatic ties to any western power. It had no central government, but there were several regional kings who were available to play off of each other. It bordered on the Red Sea areas controlled by Italy, and had never been occupied by any other power. Italy began to consider options at this time that would allow it to annex Ethiopia into the Kingdom of Italy while supplying a reasonable excuse for aggression in the eyes of the other important western powers.

Italy had business interests in Assab in the form of the Rubattino Shipping Company.[11] In 1884, "African tribesmen" near Assab killed Gustavio Bianchi, "an Italian scientist, and explorer."[12] This tragedy supplied the excuse the Italians needed, and they took action to punish the offenders and regain the honor they had lost because of the attack. An Italian punitive expedition was sent into Ethiopia in 1884 and 1885. In reality, the expedition was an act "not [of] revenge, but [of] imperialist motivation."[13] Italy took control of the town of Massawa, north of Addis Ababa on Africa's northern coast, somewhat removed from the scene of the attack on Bianchi. Regardless of motive, the Italian presence in Ethiopia at the time of the Berlin Africa Conference of 1885 probably had some influence on the attending western powers.

---

[11] Ibid., 90.

[12] Zewde, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia, 107*; and Drake, *Byzantium for Rome,* 91.

[13] Ibid., 93.

The conferees oversaw several territorial adjustments between African colonial powers that included an agreement that placed the bulk of Ethiopia within the Italian sphere of influence at that time.[14] This recognition by the other colonial powers fulfilled part of the Italian requirements, but there was still one significant obstacle to overcome. Many Ethiopians were not inclined to welcome these invaders without a fight.

Ethiopia was controlled by a number of regional leaders until the late 1860s, when one of these leaders, Menelik, gained power.[15] Menelik attempted to unify Ethiopia under one leader, and by the mid-1880s, had experienced some degree of success. Menelik either converted or conquered other warlords, and referred to himself as "Negus," king or Emperor, of Ethiopia by 1889.[16] Menelik was still consolidating his control of Ethiopia when this renewed European interest resulted in encroachments by the Italians into Ethiopia.

The earliest attempts by Italy to force Ethiopia to submit to its authority resulted in failures. In part because of these difficulties in Ethiopia, Francesco

---

[14] Seven western powers met to address free trade issues in Africa. Several of these adjustments and decisions were made without the knowledge or approval of the people directly affected, in this instance the Ethiopian people or government. *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition* eds Forster, Stig, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1988), v.

[15] Tewodros died by his own hand rather than submit to capture by British Forces in 1869. See Carter, *Black Shirt Black Skin*, 41; Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 159; and "Ethiopian Treasures," available at http://www.ethiotreasures.plus.com/pages/tewodros.htm, accessed 8-5-2003.

[16] Some of the ethnic groups that comprised the population of the unified Ethiopia were the Tigrayan and the Amhara of the more northerly provinces. The central Shewans, which were Meneliks' people, and the Kembata and Welamo peoples in the southern highlands. There were also the Kefa and other Oromo- and Omotic-speaking peoples included in this mix. These groups made up the bulk of the indigenous peoples found in Ethiopia.

Crispi replaced Agostino Depretis as prime minister of Italy in 1887. Crispi took a political as well as a military approach to the African problem and did have some success. He exploited political rivalries in East Africa between Negus Johannes and Negus Menelik, two of the most important Kings in Ethiopia, and developed an alliance with Menelik in 1889. Menelik was facing internal problems and did not possess the resources necessary to resist an Italian invasion; therefore, he opened negotiations with the Italians and entered into a treaty of friendship and cooperation with them in 1889. Known as the Treaty of Uccialli, (also seen as Wechale, Wichale, and Uccialli),[17] This was seen as an impressive diplomatic triumph for Italy.[18]

This treaty seemed to benefits both parties. Menelik received arms and loans from Italy that allowed him to further strengthen his position as a leader in Ethiopia, and in return he recognized Italy's right to occupy its new territory of Eritrea. There was, however, an aspect to this treaty that was not so friendly to the Ethiopians. Crispi had managed to surreptitiously establish a political protectorate over Ethiopia by devious means; there were two different versions of the treaty. Article 17 of the Italian version gave Italy authority over all business transactions between Ethiopia and any foreign powers, and required Italian approval of any resulting agreements. The Amharic version that was supplied to Menelik stated that Italy would act on behalf of Ethiopia in foreign affairs at the

---

[17] Paul B Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 161; and *Ethiopian Treasures*, available at http:/www.ethiotreasures.plus.com/pages/menelik.htm. Accessed 8-5-2003.

[18] Drake, *Byzantium For Rome,* 203.

pleasure of Emperor Menelik.[19] About six years later this disparity was discovered and Menelik, who was in a much stronger position in Ethiopia by this time, "renounced the treaty,"[20] repaid the loans, and generally broke off relations with Italy.[21]

Menelik publicly denounced the Italians and denied that any rights or authority they claimed over Ethiopia were valid. This bad publicity angered the Italians and damaged the Italian prestige. Additionally, Menelik allowed French business concerns to begin construction of a railroad that would connect Addis Ababa to the French port of Djibouti. This railroad would allow the Ethiopians to bypass the Italian controlled ports completely.[22] The French at Djibouti could then, upon completion of the railroad, gain control of Ethiopian imports and exports that formerly passed through the Italian port city of Massawa. These events angered the Italians, who retaliated by sending troops through Massawa in 1895.

General Oreste Baratieri led his mixed force of Italian and Eritrean forces into Ethiopia where he was able to capture the towns of Adigrat, Adowa, and Makalle in the opening stages of the war. Menelik was unable to respond immediately, and so the Italians met with little resistance initially. Feeling very confident, the Italians forces returned to Eritrea to celebrate, allowing Menelik the time to

---

[19] Duggan, *Francesco Crispi*, 604.

[20] Mulatu Wubnch, *Ethiopia: Transition and Development in the Horn of Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 14.

[21] Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1978), 399.

[22] Martin Clark, *Modern Italy 1871-1895* (London: Longman, 1984), 100.

assemble his army. Menelik finally responded by leading approximately 100,000 Ethiopians to Adowa,[23] (also seen as Adwa, and Aduwa), in northern Ethiopia where they met General Baratieri's 17,700 Italian and Eritrean troops on March 1, 1896. In the following battle, waves of Ethiopians overwhelmed the Italians and killed as many as 289 Italian officers, 4,600 European soldiers and about 2,000 Askari (Eritreans fighting for the Italians).[24] Menelik stopped the torture, mutilation (including castration),[25] and murder of the captured Italian troops that followed the Ethiopian victory and held the survivors in Addis Ababa until they were ransomed by the Italian government. Italy eventually paid 10 million lire in reparations for their safe return.[26]

In October 1896, Ethiopia and Italy signed the Treaty of Addis Ababa that forced Italy to recognize Ethiopia's independence and ended any Italian claims of a protectorate over Ethiopia. This treaty also established specific boundaries, on paper, between Ethiopia and Eritrea as dictated by Ethiopia.[27] Italy was allowed to maintain its presence and therefore its claim to Eritrea. Interestingly, one of the claims that Italy was to make later, that they were bringing civilization to

---

[23] Rubenson. *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence,* 399-410.

[24] The exact figures are not known. Different sources give ranges from 100,000 to 196,000 troops with Menelik and 17,700 to 25,000 troops led by Barateri in this battle. Likewise, the reader can find variations in the reported number of casualties suffered by the Italians. All sources agree that the Italians were decisively defeated at Adowa.

[25] Duggan, *Francesco Crispi,* 708.

[26] "The Battle of Adowa," available at http://www.rastaites.com/adowa.html. Accessed 8-5-2003

[27] Clark, *Modern Italy,* 100.

Ethiopia, seems to be supported by their handling of Eritrea during this colonial period. The Italian governors were able to maintain "a degree of unity and public order in a region marked by cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. Eritrea also experienced material progress in many areas before Ethiopia proper did so."[28]

These events settled the border and independence issues between Italy and Ethiopia for the time, and the outcome, while worthy of some notice in the United States, did not require any official response at that point. The United States had no real interest in Africa in the early 1900s, having been otherwise occupied with events elsewhere during the period when Africa was being overrun by the European powers. American imperial interests were focused in the western hemisphere and the Pacific Ocean region. Aside from North Africa and its location on the Mediterranean Sea, the United States had little interest in most of the African continent.[29]

American held an unofficial protectorate over one of the two independent black-controlled countries in Africa at this time, Liberia. The United States did have some economic interest in Africa in this period, and would dispatch emissaries and military personnel on occasion to areas in Africa in order to increase trade between these countries and the United States. One particular

---

[28] *Ethiopia,* Library of Congress country studies, available at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+et0028). Accessed 10-16-2003.

[29] Africa was "remote foreign territories....where [Americans] have no established interests or control." President Grover Cleveland's annual message to Congress, December 8, 1885. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1885* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1886), ix.

example of this was Commodore Shufeldt's world cruise on the *U.S.S. Ticonderoga* in the late 1870s, where he spent a great deal of time calling on ports in Africa, and exploring commercial possibilities in the Congo region.[30]

Ethiopia bought a small amount of American goods in the 19th century, and exported primarily animal hides and coffee to the United States. It did not represent a major trading partner and exhibited an internal political instability that lessened its attractiveness as an American economic partner.[31] The diplomatic concerns of the United States prior to 1903 were more focused on "established foreign trade sources" and did not expend much effort to establish relations with countries such as Ethiopia whose "economic and political feudalism had yet to see their last day."[32]

In 1902, Robert P. Skinner, the American Consul in Marseilles, began to lobby within the State Department for increased diplomatic relations with Ethiopia, which had "not even the semblance of official [American] representation" at that point. Skinner argued, unsuccessfully at first, that Ethiopia possessed "a vast population" that was "capable of absorbing our products."[33] He persisted in his efforts to arouse interest in the State Department for establishing diplomatic

---

[30] Kenneth J. Hagan, *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy 1877-1889* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973), 61.

[31] Telegram from Ralph J. Totten, Consul; General detailed as Inspector to the Secretary of State on May 26, 1926. *FRUS 1927 Vol. II, 584.*

[32] "The United States and Ethiopia: A Study in American Imperialism," *Journal of Negro History* 17 (1932), 141.

[33] Ibid., 142.

relations with Ethiopia late in 1902 with several letters and memos.[34] Finally, in 1903, Skinner's concerns seemed to have struck a chord when he pointed out how the projected Djibouti-Addis Ababa railroad could adversely affect American economic interests in Ethiopia. The French-controlled railroad could be in a position to set discriminatory prices on shipping American products that could have been "fatal to our now wholly unprotected trade" with Ethiopia.[35] Finally, with the blessings of President Theodore Roosevelt, Skinner traveled to Addis Ababa in 1903 with a military escort of United States Marines.[36] Following some amicable negotiations, Emperor Menelik and Commissioner Skinner signed a "Treaty of Amity, Reciprocal Establishments and Commerce" on December 31, 1903.[37] This treaty established a most favored nation trading status for the United States in Ethiopia, and Article 6 of that agreement created some degree of protection for the American trade in that country.

No permanent American legation was established in Ethiopia at this time. All Ethiopian diplomatic matters were handled through the American consulate in

---

[34] Paul B. Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 176-179.

[35] "The United States and Ethiopia: A Study in American Imperialism," 146.

[36] "Treaty Between The United States and the King of Ethiopia, To Regulate the Commercial Relations between the Two Countries," *FRUS 1904,* 298-300. Twenty-five Marines were detailed to protect the American Consul-General Skinner while he was negotiating this treaty in Addis Ababa in 1903 and 1904. Ellen C. Collier, "Instances of Use of United States Forces Abroad," *U.S. Naval Historical Center,* available at http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/foabroad.htm Updated 12 September 1997, accessed 10-29-2002.

[37] United States Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1904* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 298-300; and "The United States and Ethiopia: A Study in American Imperialism," 148.

Marseilles. In 1907, an American Vice-Counsel was installed in Ethiopia who in 1909 was replaced by a "minister-resident" position that lasted one year.[38] The vice-counsel position was again installed until 1913, when John P. Ward came to Addis Ababa to negotiate a Treaty of Commerce that was concluded on June 27, 1914. Following the conclusion of this stage of treaty negotiations, and in keeping with the general attitude of the American State Department concerning the importance of a delegation in Addis Ababa, the United States did not re-install any officials in Ethiopia. All diplomatic matters in the region were handled either by the British Legation in Addis Ababa, or the American Counsel at Aden.[39] The United States had no official representation in Ethiopia again until 1927, since the State Department considered an American legation in Addis Ababa to be too expensive to operate in relation to the amount of official business conducted there.[40]

This policy changed in 1927 when Addison E. Southard was appointed resident minister in Addis Ababa where he served until 1934.[41] The consulate was reestablished at this point because there was renewed hopes for trade

---

[38] Telegram from Ralph J. Totten, Consul; General detailed as Inspector to the Secretary of State on May 26, 1926, *FRUS 1927 Vol. II, 584.*

[39] The United States and Ethiopia: A Study in American Imperialism," 150; and Joseph E. Harris. *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia 1936-1941* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 3.

[40] Telegram from Ralph J. Totten, Consul General detailed as Inspector to the Secretary of State on May 26, 1926. *FRUS 1927 Vol. II, 585*; and Joseph E. Harris. *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia 1936-1941,* 3; and http://politicalgraveyard.com/index.html. Accessed 8-12-2003.

[41] Telegram from Secretary of State to Vice Counsel Park, on October 17, 1927. *FRUS 1927, Vol. II,* 594.

between the United States and Ethiopia and fear of renewed European interest in that region that could affect that trade. Southard's appointment marked the beginning of a period of continuous diplomatic presence in Ethiopia to the present time, with the exception of the interruptions caused by the war during the 1930s and 1940s.

The United States was in an unusual position at the end of the First World War in relation to the European powers. America was possibly the most economically powerful nation among the big four, Great Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, and was an important player in ending the war and in setting the post-war balance of power. The European powers, however, were content to let the Americans go home so that they could deal with their European issues without any real input from the United States. This attitude may seem arrogant, but can be better understood if one considers the message that the United States was sending after World War I. The actions of the American Senate in not ratifying the Treaty of Versailles and refusing to join the League of Nations contradicted the principles that Woodrow Wilson claimed were important to the United States. As far as the Europeans were concerned, if the American people themselves would not support their own president's plan, then the Europeans should not expect any assistance from America in the future. What value could

be placed on the high ideals Wilson voiced at Versailles when there was no action to back up those ideals?[42]

Great Britain, France, and, to a lesser extent, Italy believed that the United States had been too stringent concerning the collection of their war debts while being too lenient in dealing with conquered Germany. The prevailing opinion, of which England was a subscriber, was that the debt should have been forgiven, and the costs of the war shared between the allies. In 1922, Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur J. Balfour, sent a communication to Britain's European debtors that included a thinly veiled attack on American insistence upon collection of the debt of which "should not be forgotten, though it sometimes is, that our liabilities were incurred for others, not for ourselves."[43] In the United States the prevailing attitude was that the Europeans were ungrateful and "morally bankrupt," and Americans used this argument to justify their actions which were meant to avoid future "European Commitments" such as those that led to World War I.[44]

Prior to World War I, pacifists in America began to form political action groups in order to promote their ideology. In a similar vein, some Americans began to argue after the war that the United States should adopt a strict policy of isolation in order to avoid future foreign conflicts. American isolationist congressmen and

---

[42] Gordon A. Craig, *Europe Since 1815,* second edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 556.

[43] Benjamin D Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period: The Golden Age of American Diplomatic and Military Complacency* (Westport: Praeger, 2001), 50.

[44] Ibid., 25.

private pacifist groups such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom argued that the Europeans were incapable of getting along with each other, and continuous flare-ups were in the nature of the inhabitants of that continent. To become involved in alliances and political issues with any European country would only drag the United States into another war, and so should be avoided.

The question of war debts, "mainly due to the United States"[45] lingered throughout the 1920s and culminated in the general breakdown of the systems instituted to keep all the European economic systems liquid.[46] The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 further complicated the international situation by damaging trade and causing an increase in nationalistic policies all over the world, especially in the developed countries. Within this international context, domestic social and economic matters became even more the primary focus of all the western powers, the United States included.[47] Actions such as the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930, only served to increase the severity of the worldwide depression and strain international relations.[48]

---

[45] Cordell Hull, *Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 171.

[46] *FRUS 1919, The Paris Peace Conference,* "Inter-Allied Agreement" on the Expert's plan (Dawes Plan) September 1, 1924, 899. Ibid., "Relating to the New (Young) Plan" January 20, 1934, 927. The Dawes Plan of 1924 provided loans to Germany. The Young Plan of 1928 reduced payments on war debts; and Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Elusive Quest: The American Pursuit of European Stability and French Security 1919-1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 202-219.

[47] The Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930 was an attempt to protect domestic industries by placing high import duties on foreign goods. This resulted in like responses in foreign countries placing similar duties on American goods and served to retard trade. Ibid., 360.

The pivotal event that brought many of these difficulties to the forefront was the Italian-Ethiopian war that began in earnest in October 1935. Following a ten-month period of rhetoric and military build-up that had began the previous December. Eight months of fighting followed, and Mussolini declared victory over Ethiopia in March 1936. Throughout this period, speculation on what would come of the crisis abounded, and while various alternative solutions were offered, Mussolini had his mind set on "the total conquest of Ethiopia, by war"[49] and was not receptive to peace overtures from the British, the French, the Americans, or anyone else. Revenge for the 1896 defeat, "the Adowa Complex,"[50] and the creation of his Italian Empire were his primary motivations, and he would not be deterred.[51]

The attempts by other powers to mediate and forestall the military conflict in Ethiopia before and even after the initial invasion in 1935 all failed to produce results for various reasons. Mussolini believed that there was no real opposition to his plans for the conquest of Ethiopia, and so these countries did not represent

---

[48] Edward L. Ayers, et al *American Passages: A history of the United States, Vol II since 1863.* (Ft Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), 834; and Benjamin D Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period: The Golden Age of American Diplomatic and Military Complacency* (Westport: Praeger, 2001), 74.

[49] The Italians were embarrassed by their earlier defeat, and there were veterans of the Adowa defeat in Italy who undoubtedly were anxious to take revenge on the Ethiopians for the treatment they received at the hands of the Ethiopians in that battle. Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism, 1919-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995) 142.

[50] Angelo Del Boca. *The Ethiopian War 1935-1941* trans. P. D. Cummins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 3.

[51] *Social and Political Philosophy: Readings From Plato to Ghandi,* eds. John Somerville and Ronald E. Santori (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 439.

a threat to Italy significant enough to affect his plans. England and France were not willing to risk military opposition at this point because Italy's friendship was more important to them than was Ethiopia. Italy, Great Britain and France made up the primary defensive alliance against further German aggression. France and Great Britain were able to influence the European community to abstain from taking any real action during the crisis because they were so important to the maintenance of peace in Europe. When the other European nations looked to those two countries for guidance on their own responses, they generally followed suit by taking no action to stop Italy. England and France were not willing to confront Italy with anything other than words, and as such the efforts to protect Ethiopia were indecisive and ineffective, as well as slow in coming. This led to the unusual and often confusing political relationships that made up international relations in the interwar period. The United States was not interested in Ethiopia as an economic partner, and had no political interests in that region of Africa. The most problematic aspect of this developing situation was that the precarious balance of peace was being threatened. The principles of democracy and freedom were being challenged, and the Allied alliance of the First War breaking apart. These circumstances threatened American interests by heightening concern over the international economic situation and by seeming to prove that the post-war efforts at building a new world order were failing.[52]

---

[52] Robert H. Ferrell, *American Diplomacy in the Great Depression: Hoover-Stimson Foreign Policy, 1929-1933* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 252.

CHAPTER III

PRESIDENT WILSON AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Prior to American involvement in World War I, President Wilson naively maintained his peace approach to international affairs and promoted the concept of neutrality "in fact as well as in name during these days that are to try men's souls" as his answer to the threat of a foreign war. He believed that America could attain a lofty position of world leadership and guidance by being aloof and "impartial in thought as well as in action" in order "to do what is necessary and disinterested and truly serviceable to the peace of the world."[1] This concept of moral, but not physical, involvement in European affairs "formed the core of the foreign policies Wilson pursued during the rest of his presidency."[2]

These policies actually crippled the United States because they disavowed any preparedness for war and even inhibited any preparation for the maintenance of the peace. Maintaining a strong military force and additional preparations for war would be in conflict with the neutral in thought and deed concept, and this in turn served to weaken the United States' international influence.

---

[1] John Milton Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1983), 273.

[2] Ibid., 275.

The military, and the navy especially, had to be the "power behind" American foreign policy.[3] The opinions and policies of the United States as a self-appointed peacekeeper held no weight when they were backed with a small, weak military. International policies and agreements that were "devoid of enforcement machinery" did not deter aggression.[4]

Theodore Roosevelt had written earlier that foreign countries "are certain to trample on whoever gets in the way...*unless it is dangerous to do so.*"[5] The European perception of the United States mirrored that of Theodore Roosevelt in that it was not dangerous to ignore the United States' calls for peace.[6] America was unwilling and unable to take action, and was therefore unlikely to intervene in the hostilities. Lacking the military preparations and the demonstrated will to apply this force in Europe resulted in American calls for world peace receiving little attention from overseas combatants.

Regardless of the dreams of a more perfect world that seemed to motivate these ideals, the fact remains that some mechanism must exist to compel compliance to these peace principles beyond the inherent goodness of the peace concept. "Peace" is a goal, and not a workable policy position. It was not then,

---

[3] Robert Seager II, "Ten Years Before Mahan; The Unofficial Case for the New Navy," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 40:3 (December 1953), 492.

[4] Selig Adler, *The Uncertain Giant 1921-1941: American Foreign Policy Between the Wars* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 91.

[5] Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest,* 277.

[6] Ibid., 282.

and would prove to be in the immediate future, to be unworkable as a plan for action, or an accurate description of national policy.

Pacifism was not a new concept in America. President Wilson represented the pacifist faction's ideals before America's entry into the First World War. Wilson supported policies prior to 1917 that were intended to keep America out of European wars and conflicts. Wilson was able to sell his program to the American people, and he had a significant amount of public support to achieve his goals. Wilson resisted American involvement in the problems in Europe until events forced him to change his approach, and only then did he enter the war on the side of the allies. Wilson came to accept that "continued armed neutrality would result in much of the destruction of war without the advantage of being able to influence the war's conduct and aims."[7] Wilson, interestingly enough, moved easily into the interventionist role, and supported active participation in the war by America as the most direct method to achieve a peace that would last "for more than a few minutes."[8] Thus, he would pursue world peace and promote his version of liberal democracy by assuming the role of the interventionist.[9]

Likewise during this period, the pacifists had established a position against American entry into the war and resisted any move to join the allied effort until

---

[7] Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest,* 323.

[8] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in Buffalo to the American Federation of Labor," *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* ed Arthur S. Link et al. Vol 45, November 11, 1917-January 15, 1918 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 14.

[9] Internationalist and interventionist were interchangeable descriptions at this point in time, perhaps the appellation internationalist was less derogatory than interventionist. The terms were used accordingly to label people and policies as either good or bad, intervening thought to be the worst policy choice by many people.

the issue became not one of pacifism but one of patriotism. After Wilson changed his position, took his message to the public, and succeeded in mustering public support for American entry into the war, many pacifists began supporting the war, or at least avoided opposing the war in any public venue in order to avoid prosecution and persecution. By the spring of "1917 most of [the peace movement] leaders had joined the war effort." Their passionate hatred for war was re-directed as a hatred of evil, and "they identified [this evil] with one nation-Germany. Peace was held at bay by Prussianism, they said; victory became the prerequisite of progress."[10] The high principles of these groups were foiled by the realities of world, and thus the first major test of the national policy of pacifism/isolationism in the 20th century ended in failure. The remaining pacifists were silenced by the groundswell of patriotic fervor for the war effort, and by the restrictive laws passed that limited their free speech.[11]

Wilson insisted that " The United States must be neutral"[12] in world affairs which fulfilled at least part of the agendas of both groups. This message rang true to the voting public, and these "high-flown, sentimental, quasi-religious expressions about America's mission and example to the world" were common in Wilson's public messages. Playing to his political party's base of support, Wilson

---

[10] Charles Chatfield, "World War I and the Liberal Pacifist in the United States,"The *American Historical Review* 75:7 (December 1970), 1921.

[11] The Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 placed dissenters in danger of criminal prosecution for criticizing the Government or the war effort. Edward L. Ayers, et al., *American Passages* Vol II, 771.

[12] Quoted by Cooper in *The Warrior and The Priest,* 274.

engaged in "rhetorical flourishes" to pay "lip service to "idealism" in order to placate his constituents and maintain his political power. Wilson was forced to admit that pacifist isolationism was not consistent with his goals or the good of the nation in 1917. He had been forced to move incrementally toward intervention in Europe by the circumstances, and was finally forced to choose direct involvement over "the possibly lesser, but also less promising evil of staying out" of the war.[13]

Wilson's dogged adherence to the pacifist principles was responsible for the formation of the flawed foreign policy that reduced the United States' effectiveness in efforts to prevent the war, and ultimately helped to drag the United States into the war when there were no reasonable options left.[14] The lack of military preparation, caused by the neutral thought and deed principle, was an important factor in this chain of events.[15] Wilson was unrealistic in his early belief that a policy of pure neutrality would keep the United States clear of foreign troubles.

---

[13] Ibid., 323.

[14] Congress, Senate, transcript of speech by Norman H. Davis, Former Undersecretary of State for President Wilson, March 17, 1930. *Congressional Record* 72 pt. 2 (17 June 1930), 11902.

[15] Wilson stated in his address to Congress on December 7, 1915 that American policy had always been to maintain a military no larger than is "necessary in times of peace," in order to explain his request for funding "for a more adequate defense." *FRUS 1915,* XII-XIII.

Wilson was able to abandon his earlier policies and do a policy about-face when he determined that America needed to become involved in the First World War.[16] Wilson's earlier "ringing declarations about promoting peace, freedom, and justice"[17] still appeared in his statements, but the focus of these remarks underwent a significant change. He came to accept that "continued armed neutrality would result in much of the destruction of war without the advantage of being able to influence the war's conduct and aims."[18] His earlier pacifist principles lacked the substance of workability and realism that was reflected in his shift to intervention. Once again the public was stirred by the message of national morality and superiority, and in turn gave significant approval and support for the new course of intervention, just like they had supported his earlier pacifist-neutral/isolationist position.

This example shows how "Wilson's idealistic rhetoric,...won over many anti-interventionists in both parties, at least temporarily,"[19] and he was able to make this quantum shift in policy without losing the support of the electorate. Wilson utilized the power of the American constituency by campaigning to gain public support for his new foreign policy position and was successful in convincing

---

[16] "April 6, 1917, America officially changed its position from being a neutral to being a belligerent in the First World War, *FRUS 1917 Supplement 2: The World War* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1935), 951.

[17] Cooper, *The Warrior and The Priest,* 269.

[18] Ibid., 323.

[19] Ibid., 314.

many of the same people who had supported him as a pacifist to support him as an interventionist.

If the United States had been more active in international affairs prior to 1917, the First World War may have been less costly to the United States, and to the European countries as well. The United States may have been able to assist England and France without committing so many people to the fray, and in doing so spared many American lives and shortened the duration of the conflict as well. The peace may have been won by abandoning neutrality and pursuing war much earlier than it actually was.

The post–war world was more complicated, and should have been more of a concern to the Americans. The factors that led to American involvement in World War I were even more pronounced after the war. These newer factors had, of course, greatly affected the ability of the United States to remain neutral. Circumstances had changed to the point where almost every significant event involving the European powers needed to be evaluated as a possible matter of concern to the United States. However, the speed of communication and the interdependence of the twentieth century world economic system was significantly different from the system of the late nineteenth century. These critical differences were ignored by the isolationists in their arguments.

American foreign policy in the interwar wars did not present a logical, cohesive position. It was "indecisive, directionless, and often short sighted" in its

scope and effectiveness.[20] The Americans were primarily interested in improving their own economy, and their foreign policy focus was on improving trade and collecting the war debts owed to them. Wilson spoke of making the world safe for democracy in the First World War, and stated that all nations had the same rights to "political independence and territorial integrity" regardless of their size or strength.[21] Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, Americans constantly talked about world peace, self-determination for nations, and the spread of democracy, but there was little or no action to back those words. The United States had returned to a politically isolated foreign policy by 1933.[22] In the minds of many Americans, the inevitable future European quarrels could and should be ignored.

The central question addressed by the United States in the interwar period was "whether the United States would continue its wartime role of international participation [in European Affairs] or revert to its former tradition of platonic nonentalglement."[23] The answer to this question was couched in terms that meshed with the existing pre-war framework of political isolationism and free trade, issues that were in themselves contradictory in the 20th century context.

---

[20] Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Years,* 1.

[21] Congress, Senate. Text of address by Norman H. Davis, former undersecretary of State for President Wilson to Democratic Women's Luncheon Club of Philadelphia, delivered on March 17, 1930. *Congressional Record* 72, pt. 2 (27 June 1930): 11902.

[22] Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Elusive Quest: The American Pursuit of European Stability and French Security 1919-1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 359.

[23] Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period,* 15.

As economic conditions worsened in the 1920s, Americans became more preoccupied with domestic matters, and returned to an isolationist position on foreign policy issues.[24] Again as the European political situation worsened in the 1930s, the United States should have taken more of an active role in world affairs than it did. If the domestic political system had been more inclined to open discussion and had been focused on the good of the nation as a whole, then better decisions could have been made. Even before the economic conditions worsened in the late 1920s, Americans had returned to many of their pre-war isolationist attitudes.[25] As economic conditions worsened, the domestic situation became the primary focus of essentially all American policy, both foreign and domestic. Actions could have been undertaken that would possibly have lessened the severity of the Second World War, and possibly reduced the damage sustained by the United States, and the rest of the world as well. The problem was that the American legislative system was encumbered with special interest groups who were able to influence American foreign policy to favor their own individual ideals. These factions ignored the best course of action for the majority of the population, not to mention the best course of action for the nation.

The post-war economic boom and the new position as a world power lulled Americans into a false sense of security. The groups who claimed that the

---

[24] "Our Policy Neutral in Africa, says Walsh'" *New York Times* (September 15, 1935), 5.

[25] The proposed neutrality legislation in 1935 best illustrates this return to an isolationist attitude. The New York Post called for President Roosevelt to support neutrality legislation in editorials on July 24 and August 20, 1935. Congress Senate, text of editorial. *Congressional Record* 79 pt. 11 (26 July 1935), 11902. Congress Senate, text of editorial. *Congressional Record* 79 pt. 13 (21 August 1935), 13943.

American people could return to a simpler time through a policy of political isolation from European affairs were playing on that sense of security. What they did not include in their arguments was the fact that while these new circumstances brought benefits to the United States, they also brought additional responsibilities as well. Americans failed to realize that in order to safeguard their new position they would need to modify their pre-war policies, and as a result they failed to do so.

Unfortunately, with the end of World War I and the return to peacetime, "the United States turned its back... on the League of Nations" and returned to the old system of reliance on the equality of powers to sustain peace in the world.[26] This shortsighted attitude by the United States reflected the "fools paradise"[27] that Americans enjoyed during the immediate post-war period.[28] While they showed concern over foreign events, the Americans steadfastly maintained their right to choose independent action over cooperation. Even a seemingly genuine concern over the plight of "underdog Ethiopia... rarely led them so far as to support effective action" because of this overpowering desire of most to avoid African, as well as European affairs.[29] Their fear of becoming involved in foreign

---

[26] Bemis, "The Shifting Strategy of American Defense and Diplomacy," in *Essays in History and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee* eds Dwight E. Lee and George E McReynolds (Worchester, Mass.: Clark University Publication, 1949), 9.

[27] Congress, Senate, Text of speech by Norman Davis, former undersecretary of State for President Wilson, on March 17, 1930. *Congressional Record* 72 pt. 2 (27 June 1930), 11903.

[28] Bemis, "The Shifting Strategy," *9.*

[29] Harris, *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis,* 42.

affairs caused these factions to be unwilling to support the League of Nations in order to achieve even part of their goals.

CHAPTER IV

THE BALANCE OF POWER AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Hopes for a continuing post-World War I peace relied heavily upon the League of Nations and the power of the allies. Africa was not central to this issue except as a European colonial issue. There were some attempts to bring Ethiopia under the control of one or more of the imperialist powers in the late 1800s, but Ethiopia had successfully resisted these earliest attempts. Ethiopia existed in relative peace with Italy and other Western powers from 1896 until Menelik's death in 1913. The world situation and the domestic situation in Ethiopia would undergo changes after the turn of the century that would affect this stability.

Menelik's successor, Emperor Lij Iyasu was deposed in favor of his aunt, Empress Zauditu, in 1916. Tafari Makonnen, her cousin, was named as regent and heir apparent, and he succeeded to the throne as Haile Selassie I in 1930.[1] Ethiopia did not possess any direct access to the Red Sea, and was not rich in easily exploitable resources that would attract foreigners into the country in great numbers. The geographical makeup of the country ranged from heavy jungle to arid desert, and travel was difficult.[2] Thus, Ethiopia remained a relatively low

---

[1] "War," *Time* 27:1 (January 6, 1936), 16.

[2] For an interesting cross sectional description of the country, see L. M. Nesbitt's *Hell-Hole of Creation: The Exploration of the Abyssinian Danakil* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935).

priority to European powers. It consisted mostly of isolated regions of Africa that "seemed unimportant at that time" and did not concern many world powers.[3]

The 1896 Italian defeat at the hands of the Ethiopians weighed heavily upon the national conscience in Italy, and even before the rise of Benito Mussolini to power in 1922 the African question became an issue for the government of Italy. In 1911, Giuseppe Giolitti, the Italian Minister of the Interior and leading force of the Italian government under Prime Minister Giuseppe Zanardelli instigated a war with Turkey, and succeeded in gaining the African territory of Libya in the Treaty of Lausanne in October 1912.[4] Italian use of treaties and international agreements to their best advantage was becoming an established pattern at this point, as illustrated by their actions after the outbreak of World War I.

In 1914, the Italians were part of the Triple Alliance with the Austrio-Hungarian Empire and Germany. However, at the start of the war Italy chose to remain neutral while it negotiated with both sides in order to reach an agreement that would most benefit it. The British and the French made the best offer and the Italians chose to join the war effort against Germany during World War I believing that by joining the winning side they would be rewarded with land and colonial holdings at the conclusion of the war.

---

[3] James Dugan and Laurence Lafore, *Days of Emperor and Clown: The Italo-Ethiopian War 1935-1936* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1973), 31.

[4] Gunn, *A Concise History of Italy*, 196.

Italy signed the secret Treaty of London on April 26, 1915 and entered the war shortly thereafter.[5] At the end the war, Italy was one of the "Big Four" powers that were involved in the process of setting the requirements for reparations and defining the settlements contained within the Treaty of Versailles.[6] Vittorio Orlando represented Italy at the conference and intended to ensure the fulfillment of the Treaty of London. The other three powers were not as generous with territorial concessions at the end of the war as they were with their promises to Italy during the war, and Orlando's demands were rebuffed by President Wilson and the other western powers. Orlando ultimately walked out of the meetings because of what he perceived as the mistreatment of Italy at the hands of the other victorious powers. The Italians became disillusioned with the victorious countries at this point, and perhaps this could have been the specific point where President Wilson and the United States lost the ability to influence Italian international actions in the future.[7]

Benito Mussolini's rise to power was based, at least in part, upon this claim of mistreatment by the United States, France, and Great Britain at the Paris Conference. He reminded the Italian people that Italy had been treated unfairly by the allies at the end of World War I. Mussolini used this claim as a justification

---

[5] Alexander De Grand, *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 18.

[6] Daniel M. Smith, *The American Diplomatic Experience* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 303.

[7] Morgan, *Italian Fascism,* 28-29.

for not cooperating with those powers who opposed his Ethiopian aggression.[8] Mussolini pursued an imperialistic foreign policy so he could fulfill his promise to restore Italy to the greatness of the old Roman Empire. Following Mussolini's appointment as premier in 1922, he consistently defined that return to greatness as requiring Italy to increase her colonial holdings in Africa. Africa was chosen as the target of this aggression based upon two factors: Italy's limited resources, and the availability of unclaimed lands in Africa. Ethiopia was the obvious choice.

Ethiopia shared borders with Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, and as an independent country lacked any foreign alliances or protectors that would cause Mussolini pause in his quest for empire. Italy initially involved herself in numerous diplomatic agreements with the European powers and with Ethiopia while working to fortify her colonial position in Africa through the late 1920s and early 1930s.

By 1934 the European powers were handling their security issues with a minimum of input from the United States. The balance of power that was established in post-war Europe depended upon support from the members of the League of Nations in order for them to be able to enforce the peace. Woodrow Wilson had intended the League to provide the means to maintain that balance, but its ability to do so was predicated on the commitment of its members.[9]

---

[8] De Grand, *Italian Fascism,* 94.

[9] Erik Goldstein, *The First World War Peace Settlements, 1919-1925* (New York: Longman, 2002), 34.

America's failure to follow through by making a commitment to the League, after defining and initiating the program, was a bad start.

The "uneasy Allied alliance" of the four powers in World War I was originally created in order to combat a common enemy. When the war ended, the alliance became less critical.[10] After the war, the U.S. Congress and a significant portion of the American public opposed the investment of time, money, and military capitol that membership in the League required in order to fulfill its intended function. The loss of a primary member thus weakened the organization and caused problems within the League.[11]

One important role that the United States had played at the Versailles Conference had been the role of mediator between the other three,[12] and later on two remaining powers at the conference after Italy walked out.[13] Once America abandoned the League, France and Great Britain no longer had that settling influence to help mediate the often "competing material and moral" conflicts between them.[14]

For example, France believed that they were vulnerable to future aggression and wanted to modify the League into a real deterrent to possible aggressor

---

[10] Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period,* 18.

[11] John H. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of the Haile Sellassie Years* (Algonac, Mich.: Reference Publications, 1984), 27.

[12] Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), 138-139.

[13] Whitney H. Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs: An Account of American Foreign Relations 1934-1935* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935), 13.

[14] Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period,* 27.

nations. They tried to "put teeth into the Covenant" through the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance of 1923 and the Geneva Protocol of 1924. Together these acts would have required military responses to aggression against any member nation, automatically, following the determination of "aggressor" status that the original League charter required. Great Britain was against these acts and blocked their passage in the League.[15]

England held a belief similar to that in the United States in that it believed that it had been used by France and Belgium to fight a war that was not of their making in World War I.[16] It was because of this attitude that Great Britain refused to sign any agreement that would entail automatic military obligations on their part in future Eastern European conflicts. The French, on the other hand, were the closest geographically to Germany, and after suffering two invasions within fifty years were looking for some substantive guarantee of protection from future aggression.

This conflict between Great Britain and France caused the French initiatives within the League to fail, and so France began to look outside that organization for some alliances that would guarantee their security. Great Britain and Italy, who both harbored doubts about the effectiveness of the League, also began to seek friends on their own, outside of the League.[17]

---

[15] Craig, *Europe Since 1815,* 680.

[16] Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs,* 3.

[17] Craig, *Europe Since 1815*, 559.

After World War I France entered into mutual security agreements with Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.[18] These agreements damaged the efficiency of the League because France was no longer a disinterested party when one of its allies became involved in some dispute that was mediated by that body. As an example, in 1923 a dispute between Poland and Lithuania over possession of the Vilna region was referred to the League for arbitration. France used its power in the league to block any action that did not favor Poland in the dispute, and Poland did finally prevail.[19] The understanding that political alignments outside the League could influence decisions within the League degraded its reputation and reduced its effectiveness.

In 1922, Italy, France, and Great Britain allied themselves together in a combined action against revolutionaries in Greece. This action was a failure, and both Italy and France left Britain to conclude negotiations with the victorious rebels on its own. This one excursion may have been a failure, but the three powers were developing a history of alliances through these agreements.[20] The Locarno Pact was another result of this quest for security outside of the League.

---

[18] Goldstein, *The First World War Peace Settlements,* 30. This affiliation included the Little Entente, a loose alliance formed in 1920–21 by Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Its specific purposes were the containment of Hungarian revisionism (of the terms of the World War I peace treaty) and the prevention of a restoration of the Hapsburgs. The three nations were drawn together by three bilateral treaties of defensive and economic alliance. This combination eventually became closely bound to France by financial and treaty obligations, and Poland sometimes cooperated with it but did not enter the alliance. *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition. *2001*.

[19] Craig, *Europe Since 1815*, 560.

[20] Ibid., 553.

The alignment of Italy, Great Britain, and France created under this agreement was reflected in the reactions of France and Great Britain toward Italy's aggression in Ethiopia in the next decade.

Under the Locarno Pact of 1925, France, Germany, and Belgium pledged to respect each other's international borders as established at Versailles, and further to disavow war as a means to settle any disputes between one another. Great Britain and Italy pledged "to guarantee this so-called Rhineland Pact."[21] France, Great Britain, and Italy were essentially allied against Germany under this agreement. These three countries were gaining recognition as holding the greatest amount of power and influence in Europe and it was left to them at this point to maintain an alliance of power in order to check any German aggression. Again on February 17, 1934, these three countries combined to issue a joint declaration affirming the independence of Austria in response to complaints of "Nazi propaganda and attacks on Austrian independence,"[22] further illustrating their perceived need to combine their resources in order to limit any revival of German military and political power in Europe.

Adolf Hitler's March 15, 1935 public repudiation of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles forced these powers to once again affirm their alliance in a mutual-assistance agreement formed at Stresa.[23] This reoccurring threat from

---

[21] Ibid., 563.

[22] Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs,* 318.

Germany reinforced the need to maintain a strong alliance, and taken in combination with the earlier joint actions, the interests of Italy in Ethiopia can be seen as being less important of an issue than the threat posed by Germany.

Italy had a claim on Ethiopia dating back to the agreements reached at the Berlin Africa Conference of 1885 and had established their presence in Africa with the blessings of the European community at that time. Italy's occupation of the port city of Massawa in February 1885 was performed under Great Britain's sponsorship.[24] Another event in World War I that enforced Italy's claim to Ethiopia occurred in 1915 when the English and French offered concessions under "Article XIII of the Treaty of London," in return for Italy joining in the war effort against Germany. This treaty addressed "the [future] partition of Abyssinia by Great Britain, France and Italy" after the war. Informed public opinion in 1935 held that "the recent settlement of differences between Italy and France and of the Franco-British conversations in London at the beginning of February [1935] was an understanding that Italy should further extend her colonial domain at the expense of Abyssinia."[25] Italy's claim to Ethiopia was predicated upon her relationship with the European powers, especially Great Britain and France, and this relationship continued to be a factor in the post-World War I world where

---

[23] April 11-13, Representatives of Great Britain, France, and Italy met at Stresa to discuss European security problems and agreed to pursue a common policy with regard to Germany's rearmament and an Easter security pact. Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs,* 317.

[24] "Italy's Colonial Empire," *Current History* February 1935, 543-548. This article discusses the taking of Massawa by Italy in Feb 5, 1885, by leave of the British who chose them over Abyssinians or French occupiers.

[25] "Italy Mobilizes Against Abyssinia," *Current History,* March 1935, 718.

Great Britain, France, and Italy found themselves involved in a series of new alliances in order for each to protect its individual interests.

The willingness of France and Great Britain to take a strong stand against Italy was tempered by their long history of alliances with Italy, and their urgent need to be ready to counter any new German aggression. The individual relationships Great Britain and France had formed with other countries caused the Ethiopian crisis to become a confusing issue for those countries as well. The conflict between the principles of democracy and freedom that the First World War was supposedly fought over were in opposition to the actions of the leaders of these world powers, and difficult choices had to be made. Most countries would not take action contrary to the wishes of the great powers, and it seemed to the rest of the world, at least in 1934, that the powers were supporting Italy's actions in Africa.

Meanwhile Italy, under Mussolini's leadership, continued its expansionist policies in the Mediterranean. Italy had gained control of Trent and Trieste in the post-war conference at Versailles in 1919, but wanted more. Italy tried to acquire Fiume and Dalmatia at the Versailles meeting, but was thwarted by resistance from the European powers who also had interests in those areas. Africa was once again the most promising area for Italian expansion, and Mussolini began planning for another Ethiopian campaign as early as 1924.[26]

---

[26] Angelo Del Boca, *The Ethiopian War 1935-1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 14.

One essential aspect of this planning was to increase the men, materials, and physical resources in Africa that would be needed in an African campaign. Because of the unspecific nature of the Ethiopian borders, Italy was able to systematically encroach in the area between Eritrea and Ethiopia, especially at Walwal, [also seen as Ual Ual]. Walwal was a desert oasis that was traditionally used by all people who found themselves in that area, and the presence of people of different nationalities at this oasis was not immediately cause for alarm, the tradition was that the water found there was available to everyone. An "Anglo-Ethiopian boundary commission...was working in the Ogaden desert near the intersection of Ethiopian, Italian (Somalia), and British (Somaliland) frontiers, when on November 23rd the party encountered an Italian military post at Walwal."[27] The Italians had been drilling wells and building permanent structures at Walwal when they were discovered. Ethiopian troops became involved in a skirmish with them on December 5, 1934 that resulted in casualties on both sides.[28] Mussolini seized upon this incident as the excuse to put his plans for invasion of Ethiopia in action. Italy made demands on Ethiopia that were purported to compensate them for the insult and the losses suffered when the Italian troops were "attacked." Mussolini claimed that the oasis was part of Italian Somaliland, while the Ethiopians claimed that it was located 60 miles inside their borders. The Walwal oasis was recognized by other parties such as the English

[27] Chargè George to Secretary of State December 6, 1934 from Addis Ababa. *FRUS 1934* Vol. II, 765.

[28] Charles H Wesley, "The Significance of the Italo-Abyssinian Question," *Opportunity* (May 1935), 150.

and the Americans as being "clearly within the latter's [Ethiopian's] territory under any interpretation of the 1896 Treaty of Addis Ababa.[29]

Similar conflicts were known to have happened in African colonies due to the indefinite nature of colonial boundaries and the existing enmity between various ethnic groups within these regions. Other colonial powers had encountered similar shooting incidents in their African holdings that they traditionally handled as local problems. Often seen as localized problems between native troops, such incidents were not considered international in nature. Italy, however, was not content to treat this as a regional event and chose to label it as an attack on Italian territory, which if it was, could have been reasonably called an act of war.[30] Ignoring the League of Nations charter, to which both Italy and Ethiopia were signatories, along with several other agreements including the 1928 Treaty of Friendship between Italy and Ethiopia,[31] as well as the attempts by other countries to mitigate the incident, Mussolini began deploying his forces for war in Africa.

Following the delivery of a list of outrageous demands to Ethiopia[32] which were "considered quite impossible,"[33] and which Selassie could not accept,

---

[29] Cable from American Ambassador to Great Britain, Bingham, to the Secretary of State on October 15, 1934 *FRUS 1934* Vol. II, 760.

[30] "The News-Week Abroad," *Newsweek* 6:4 (July 27, 1935), 12.

[31] This treaty specifically provided for arbitration and conciliation of disputes between the two countries. Wesley, "The Significance of the Italian-Abyssinian Question," 149.

[32] The Italian demands included: an admission that Walwal was in "Italian territory"; "Governor of Harrar to proceed to Walwal, present excuses, render honors Italian flag"; Ethiopia was to render "payment for Italian killed and wounded and damage done forts and expenses

Mussolini proceeded to build up his African resources and deploy combat troops and equipment to Italy's African possessions, with the primary base of operations located in Massawa, Eritrea

Selassie appealed to the international community, both within the League of Nations and outside, but failed to elicit any outside intervention or assistance that would have forestalled an Italian invasion. The Ethiopian government protested in writing to the League of Nations on December 12, 1934, and again on January 15, 1935. The League, however, took no action other than referring the matter back to the two countries, "with the understanding that [Ethiopia} may bring the dispute before the League in May [1935] if no settlement" could be reached by that time.[34] This was a stalling tactic by the League, and Italy and Ethiopia pursued the matter outside the League for some time before breaking off negotiations.[35] No other nation was able or willing to risk offending Mussolini by exerting pressure on him to alter his course, and on October 3, 1935 Italian forces invaded Ethiopia.

---

incurred by Colonial government;" "Ethiopian commanding officers to be arrested, rated, sent to Walwal with governor of Harrar and thereafter punished;" and "surrender of a certain Italian criminal refugee in Ethiopia." Detailed in a cable from American Chargè George in Addis Ababa to Secretary of State on December 12, 1934. *FRUS 1934* Vol. II, 768.

[33] Chargè George in Addis Ababa to Secretary of State on December 12, 1934. "Ethiopian government expected to delay two or three days and then refuse." *FRUS 1934* Vol. II, 768.

[34] Wesley, "The Significance of the Italian-Abyssinian Question," 150.

[35] As soon as Ethiopia appealed to the League, Great Britain and France pushed both parties to suspend action within the League and explore possibilities in some other forum. They did not want this incident to be a test of the League at this point. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay,* 35.

Great Britain and France both attempted to mediate the crisis, not so much in defense of Ethiopia, but to avoid a spread of a war onto the European continent. Sir Samuel Hoare of the British foreign office and Pierre Laval, French foreign minister offered Mussolini part of Ethiopia in exchange for a cessation of aggression. The Hoare-Laval agreement of November 1935 offered Mussolini a significant portion of Ethiopia and other concessions if he were to desist in his war, but Mussolini refused.[36] This secret carving up of Ethiopia without her permission or knowledge also caused problems for both France and Britain, who were both publicly criticized for the incident after the details of the offer were made public. Great Britain was forced to publicly "disown the deal arranged by its own foreign minister" in 1935.[37]

Italy invaded Ethiopia in October 1935, and following eight months of fighting declared victory over Ethiopia in May 1936. Mussolini claimed that "Ethiopia is Italian,"[38] and that King Victor Emmanuel III was the emperor of the newest Italian colonial acquisition. Haile Selassie sought and was granted exile in England.[39]

---

[36] Henderson B. Braddick, "A New Look at American Policy During the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1935-36," *The Journal of Modern History* 34:1 (March 1962), 67; and Geoffrey Warner, *Pierre Laval and the Eclipse of France* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), 98.

[37] Morgan, *Italian Fascism,* 142.

[38] Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 236.

[39] Haile Sellassie was the first Emperor in Ethiopian history to have the option of exile, and he exercised that option when Italian forces closed in on the capitol city of Addis Ababa. Zewde Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1974* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991), 160.

The greatest opposition to Italy's conquest occurred not because of the injustice of the invasion, but rather because these fragile European alliances were not always permanent and were sometimes fragmented by other issues. The often conflicting interests of the three powers caused them to constantly look outside their group, and act independently in matters where they believed their interests would be best served.

Britain had entered into a naval parity treaty with Germany in 1935 without consulting France, Italy, or any League members. This unilateral move "to 'break the fetters' of the Washington and London Naval Treaties" and to give Germany permission "to violate the Treaty of Versailles"[40] was a serious blow to the League and created resentment between Great Britain and France. Germany had reached an agreement with Great Britain that would allow them to build up naval forces beyond those set in the Treaty of Versailles. England was pleased to have averted an uncontrollable arms race with Germany, but France was threatened by the obvious resurgence of German military power. France argued that this type of agreement ran counter to the principle of the current security agreements in Europe. The process of maintaining the peace in Europe rested on accords reached not "between two nations only but with several."[41]

This "rift among the great powers offered a unique chance for the realization of Italy's African aspirations," and Mussolini chose this time of greatest

---

[40] "Great Britain: Parliament's Week," *Time* 26:2 (July 8, 1935), 16.

[41] "International: Odyssey & Hell Hole," *Time* 26:2 (July 8, 1935), 15.

uncertainty and least cooperation among the three European powers to invade Ethiopia.[42] This invasion took place amid rumors of French approval through reported "secret intimations from...Pierre Laval" to Mussolini.[43] This action by France angered Great Britain, which responded by taking an opposing position to France in supporting, at least in part, Ethiopia's cause before the League.

In theory, the conflict between Italy and Ethiopia was ideally suited for the League. France, Italy, and Great Britain were charter members, and interestingly enough, so was Ethiopia. Settling conflicts between the members was to be the forte of the organization. Membership implied a willingness to bring problems in front of the body and to accept the arbitration and judgment of that body in return.

One ironic aspect of Ethiopia's acceptance into the organization was that France had sponsored Ethiopia's membership in the League in 1923. France had done so "against the desires of both Italy and Great Britain" in order to safeguard their interests in the railroad from Addis Ababa to Djibouti. This conflicted with Italian economic interests because of the amount of foreign trade that traveled on this road to French Somaliland, around two-thirds of the total Ethiopian foreign commerce, now bypassed Italian ports.[44] France was able to bring Italy around to support the membership application in 1923 apparently though assurances of future support in other matters, conceivably similar to

---

[42] *The Diplomats 1919-1939,* eds. Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (New York: Atheneum, 1953), 513.

[43] Craig, *Europe Since 1815*, 705.

[44] Robert Gale Woolbert, "Italy in Abyssinia," *Foreign Affairs* 13:3 (April 1935), 499.

those events occurring in Ethiopia in 1935.[45] England was opposed to this move because of its colonial interests in Africa, and its fear of setting the precedent of recognizing countries that were subject to European "influence" as independent. Italy aligned itself with France, and Ethiopia was admitted into the League in 1923.

A change occurred in 1935 when France was aligned with Italy against Ethiopia, and Great Britain was championing Ethiopia's right to exist as an independent nation. Following London's lead, between October 7 and 11, 1835, the League of Nations voted to adopt a series of political and economic sanctions against Italy that would go into effect on November 18.[46] The League sanctions included a ban on the shipment of arms, ammunition and implements of war, embargoes on loans and credit to Italy, embargoes on the importation of Italian goods, and the cessation of sales of "transport animals" as well as various types of raw chemicals and materials such as rubber to Italy.[47] This seemingly severe response occurred only after ten months of Italian posturing and only then in response to Italy launching her invasion on October 3, 1935. The sanctions took effect after Mussolini had completed the bulk of his military preparations and had began his invasion, and so had little effect on his plans.

---

[45] Del Boca, *The Ethiopian War,* 13.

[46] Craig, *Ethiopia Since 1815,* 706.

[47] The League of Nations proposed the following embargoes to its members: arms embargo, economic sanctions, prohibiting imports from Italy, embargoing certain exports to Italy, as well as proposing compensatory arrangements for damages. *FRUS 1935,* Vol. I, 695-698. Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians,* 228.

France and Great Britain were at odds over the latter's unilateral actions with Germany in 1935 and the former's tacit support of Italy's actions in Ethiopia, thus, the invasion further polarized France and Great Britain, souring their alliance. Britain would not take military action independently from France, and so no real action, aside from the belated trade embargoes, was forthcoming. The League's economic sanctions were too little, too late. The sanctions were "comparatively mild economic sanctions,"[48] and they did not include a cessation of the sale of oil to Italy, which was a vital commodity at this stage in the war, and so did not appreciably hinder the invasion.[49]

In March 1936, Germany's reoccupation of the Rhineland region took precedence over Ethiopia in matters of international stability.[50] Ethiopia was not as important as Italy's military alliances with France and Great Britain concerning the curtailment of German expansion.[51] Great Britain and France allowed their difference of opinion on the matter of Ethiopia to fade into the background, and attempted to concentrate on containing Adolf Hitler in Germany.

The reactions by the allies in Europe to the Ethiopian crisis gave the United States some cause to reconsider its policies at this point. The basis for U.S. foreign policy had been freedom and democracy, and the seemingly simple idea

---

[48] Ibid., 227.

[49] Nathaniel Pfeifer, "RIP Ethiopia," *Opportunity* 14:1 (January 1936), 21; and Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy,* 137.

[50] Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period,* 140.

[51] Del Boca, *The Ethiopian War,* 22.

of maintaining the peace by getting along with everyone. For Franklin Roosevelt this was a difficult time because he was forced to change his priorities as president.

In spite of the aggressive foreign policy ideals that he professed prior to his election in 1932, President Roosevelt was forced to alter his priorities because of the difficulties he encountered in his first two years in office. In 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the presidency believing that another war involving the United States was not very likely because of the balance of power in Europe, and America's new position of world leader. He was so confident in his assessment of the threat posed by other countries that he did not believe that the United States needed a 140,000-man standing army; therefore a significant reduction of that force would free up resources that he could dedicate to his domestic recovery programs.[52] In addition, Americans believed that the United States was sufficiently isolated from the hot spots in the world by two great oceans, and under such circumstances did not need such a large standing force of armed men.

Roosevelt did pursue various economic and political agreements on the international scene,[53] believing that he possessed "sufficient world standing to influence world events,"[54] and that he could make a difference both at home and

---

[52] Robert Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford Press, 1979), 36.

[53] Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message to Congress January 3, 1934. *Works of Franklin D. Roosevelt* available at http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1934a.htm. Accessed 10-3-2003.

[54] Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, 43.

abroad, but his primary focus from the beginning was on "the establishment of a sound national economy"[55]. To this end he introduced various "new deal" programs, hoping that one or more of them would be the key to curing the nation's economic sickness. Many of these domestic recovery programs had not succeeded as he had hoped, and had been abandoned by 1934. Also the international situation was becoming more and more unstable, so at the end of his first two years in office, Roosevelt had began to modify his policy approaches.

Especially in matters of foreign policy, his new approaches reflected the "simple political realism"[56] that while he might make a difference with his domestic programs, his attempts to intervene in international affairs were ineffective, and his options were severely limited. He could only make progress on his programs with the cooperation of Congress, not independently of them. Roosevelt was forced to accept the influence and input of the radical isolationists in Congress, such as William Borah and Gerald Nye, and reprioritize his foreign policy plans. Likewise, Roosevelt was beginning to realize that in spite of "our own peaceful and neighborly attitude toward other nations,"[57] the United States possessed little influence with European governments and was more of an observer than a primary participant in the European political theatre.[58]

---

[55] Franklin D. Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, March 4 1933, Works *of Franklin D. Roosevelt* available at http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1933a.htm. Accessed 10-3-2003.

[56] Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy,* 16.

[57] Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message to Congress January 4, 1935. *Works of Franklin D. Roosevelt* available at http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1935a.htm. Accessed 10-3-2003.

The existing American foreign policy was coming into conflict with the political realities of the world in the 1930s because it was, as Roosevelt's secretary of State Cordell Hull described it, "slipshod and piecemeal" with "no definite or adequate" system of goals or objectives.[59] Hull was describing the policy situation before Roosevelt came into office, but was, sadly, also providing a reasonably accurate description of the foreign policy in effect in 1934. Pre-World War I issues and the ideals of isolationism dominated the foreign policy structure, and no significant changes had taken place during the post-war period to change that position.

The central question addressed by the United States in the interwar period was "whether the United States would continue its wartime role of international participation [in European Affairs] or revert to its former tradition of platonic nonentalglement."[60] The answer to this question was being couched in terms that meshed with the existing pre-war framework of political isolationism and free trade, issues that were in themselves contradictory in the 20th century context. The main foreign policies in effect in 1934 were: the Five and Nine Power treaties, the Good Neighbor policy,[61] the Kellog-Briand Anti-War Pact, and the

---

[58] Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy,* 59.

[59] Hull, *Memoirs,* 128.

[60] Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period,* 15.

[61] "In the field of world policy I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor-the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others-the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in a with a world of neighbors." Franklin D. Roosevelt, Inaugural address, March 4, 1933. *Works of Franklin D. Roosevelt* available at http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1933a.htm. Accessed 10-3-2003.

Stimson Doctrine of Nonrecognition.[62] The common thread that ran through all of these policies was that each required the United States to refrain from doing something, from not building battleships, not becoming involved in foreign political affairs, not using war to settle international disputes, and not recognizing the conquests made by other countries. While several could have, and one actually was, applied to the Ethiopian conflict, none actually *did* anything. All of these policies were passive in nature, and while it was easy for the United States to *refrain from doing* one thing or another in response to foreign events, none of these policies actually served to further the stated international goals of the United States, such as the protection of democratic principles and the maintenance of world peace.

Roosevelt's personal policies also reflected this lack of specificity. He had campaigned in 1932 on a democratic platform that included "peace with all the world, ...the settlement of international disputes through arbitration, ...[and] the sanctity of treaties" between nations. The American economy was central to his policy as outlined in the 1932 presidential campaign, and the post-war economic issues were given equal billing along with world peace and treaties in the Democratic platform. This platform reinforced how important the repayment of international debts were, saying that such financial obligations should be addressed with "good faith," and "good will."[63] Seemingly aimed at the America's

---

[62] Stimson note to Japan, *FRUS Japan 1931-1941 Vol. 1, 83.*

[63] Hull, *Memoirs*, 153.

debtor nations, this section could have been interpreted as a message to the American voters that Roosevelt would not support forgiving of the war debt and that he would keep trying to collect the money that was owed to the American people, an issue that was dear to the hearts of many Americans. It was also a message to foreign debtors that the United States was still expecting prompt and complete repayment of those war loans. These ideals were laudable, and they undoubtedly rang true to the voters, but they did not explain how this would be accomplished. These promises did not include any plans or programs that would have translated into some viable form of foreign policy.

After his election, Roosevelt made little progress toward refining his foreign policy beyond the glittering generalities he seemed so fond of using. At his inauguration Roosevelt pledged that the United States would be a "good neighbor" to every nation in the world,[64] and later he stated that the United States would strive to "uphold the sanctity of international treaties."[65] These sounded good, but once again lacked the substance necessary for them to translate into an actual policy, which becomes clearer as October 1935 approached.

After World War I, the United States had refused to join the League of Nations but did participate in some common issues as a non-member in order to further what were believed to be America's best interests. Otherwise, involvement in the League was avoided. American opinion held "the idea of membership or the

---

[64] Ibid., 167.

[65] Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy 1932-1945,* 14.

assumption of financial responsibility" as counter to American ideals of neutral isolationism at this time.[66] One aspect of the American version of 'nonentalglement" was peculiar in that while the country actively avoided political and military alliances, it was extremely active in economic matters.

Foreign trade was important to the domestic economy, and between 1913 and 1929 the United States used the government's influence and resources at home and overseas in order to increase American exports throughout the world to twice their previous levels.[67] America was deeply invested in Europe, with foreign investments alone amounting to over $80 billion.[68] Americans were deeply concerned with the international economy and were not afraid to become involved in foreign economic matters. The United States developed and instituted both the Dawes Plan in 1924 and the Young Plan in 1928[69] in an effort to keep the European economy fluid, without any real assistance from the countries involved. The principles of isolationism did not apply to matters of international trade and the economy.

Cordell Hull, future secretary of state under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, claimed that he was acutely aware of this need for foreign markets in 1929. He wrote in his memoirs that "If American plants today were unloosed at full

---

[66] Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period,* 46.

[67] Ibid., 45.

[68] This total included loans to Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

[69] "Inter-Allied Agreement" on the Expert's plan (Dawes Plan) September 1, 1924, "Relating to the New (Young) Plan" January 20, 1934, *FRUS 1919, The Paris Peace Conference* 899, 927.

production capacity, they would flood all domestic markets within ninety days, and many artificial parts of our economic structure would tumble and fall."[70] Hull claimed to have warned that the failure of the United States to "develop foreign markets"[71] would lead to the economic woes of the United States during the mid and late 1920s, especially the unemployment crisis. These critical foreign markets were mostly found in Europe, and the major European countries could not fight a war and continue in the free market trade of American goods at the same time. Americans could not suddenly stop commercial trading with the European markets with no negative consequences, and because of this they were at the mercy of the foreign leaders and the power struggles in Europe.

The American idea of world order and stability revolved around forming strong economic ties with the rest of the world, and by paying lip service to the idea of non-entanglement and ignoring the political aspects of international relations. In Africa, the United States wanted the benefits of protected trade, but did not want to assume any liabilities through alliances with Ethiopia. When John H. Kasson represented the United States at the Berlin Africa Conference in 1885, his goal was to protect these free trading rights while limiting any American responsibility in internal African affairs to "commercial and humanitarian considerations," which would exclude any "political entanglements."[72] America left the conference

---

[70] Hull, *Memoirs,* 133.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Milton Plesur, *America's Outward Thrust: Approaches to Foreign Affairs 1865-1890* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), 156.

securely uninvolved with any of the parties while maintaining their high moral position with the stated "humanitarian concerns." This position remained unchanged through to Franklin D. Roosevelt's' administration.

Roosevelt had taken the high moral position of supporting international agreements and treaties during his 1932 campaign. This was a fine theoretical position, but Roosevelt was unwilling to take any action when he was faced with an opportunity to put his ideals into practice. The Kellog-Briand Pact[73] was clearly one such international treaty that could have been invoked in the Italian-Ethiopian crisis, according to Roosevelt's stance. All the interested parties, including Ethiopia, were signatories to this treaty. Article 10 of this pact stated that the signatories would respond in support of any country that was the victim of aggression of this nature, although the pact did not specify what the response would be.[74]

Haile Selassie tried to take advantage of this section when he asked the United States for assistance in "effecting compliance with the Pact of Paris" on July 3, 1935, but Roosevelt, conflicted between his official public position of political isolation and his moral obligations, avoided making a commitment in response to the request.[75] Secretary of State Hull informed Selassie that the United States was "interested ...in the maintenance of peace in all parts of the

---

[73] Signed at Paris in August of 1928. Hull, *Memoirs,* 128.

[74] "Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928," *The Avalon Project at Yale Law School* available at http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/kbpact/kbmenu.htm. Updated 9-23-2003, accessed 9-23-2003.

[75] Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs,* 323.

world," was "gratified" that the League of Nations had been informed of the "controversy," and hoped that the League would be able to "arrive at a decision satisfactory to both" Ethiopia and Italy. After indirectly referring Ethiopia back to the League, Hull went on to reaffirm how important the Kellog–Briand Pact was to America "and the other [signatory] nations" in maintaining world peace.[76]

Missing from this lengthy missive was any concrete statement of policy or promise of action. Hull avoided assuming any responsibility other than affirming U.S. moral support for the ideals of the pact. Roosevelt did alter foreign policy by defining what would constitute American interests requiring action by the United States. Departing from the "sanctity of international treaties," doctrine, Hull announced that the issue would provoke no response from the United States. "The American government...[would] take an interest only when American citizens were receiving unfair treatment" in foreign countries, and as such would not invoke those articles of the Kellog-Briand Pact that would theoretically result in some action to stop Italy.[77]

If Roosevelt had been looking to Britain or France for clues as to what would be a reasonable response by the United States, he would have had difficulty in interpreting what he was seeing.[78] Britain, France, and Italy were working closely together to address the security issue they were facing in 1935 when they met at

---

[76] Statement to the press by Secretary of State Cordell Hull on September 12, 1935, *FRUS 1935.* 746-749: also "Secretary Hull's Statement on the Italo-Ethiopian Dispute, September 12, 1935", in Shepardson *The United States in World Affairs,* 307-310.

[77] Harris, *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis,* 36.

[78] Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy,* 159.

Stresa to form a protective alliance against German aggression.[79] Ethiopia was a lesser concern that had been within the "sphere of influence"[80] of these three powers on and off since the 1890s. Great Britain and France needed Italy more than they needed the United States in order to maintain the balance of power against resurgent German militarism, and the current public relationship they had seemed to indicate that they were not ready to dissolve their alliance over the fate of this minor nation.[81]

Taking the high ground, Roosevelt was able to solve this political and moral dilemma by condemning the events in Africa while eschewing any actual American involvement. Roosevelt's most decisive action came on October 6, 1935 when he declared that "war now unhappily exists between Ethiopia and the Kingdom of Italy," and with that declaration invoked the Neutrality Act that Congress had passed on August 31, 1935.[82]

This neutrality legislation reflected the struggle in the United States government between the Isolationists in the Congress and the more internationalist Roosevelt administration. Roosevelt had "preferred legislation that would permit considerable executive discretion." Such discretionary provisions would allow the president to use sanctions "against aggressor states"

---

[79] Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs,* 232.

[80] G.N. Uzoigwe, "The Results of The Berlin West Africa Conference: An Assessment," in *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa,* 545.

[81] Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs,* 238.

[82] Ibid., 313.

and in essence take sides as a neutral. Congress, however, preferred an act that applied "to all belligerents alike," and passed legislation that limited Roosevelt's ability to use sanctions as weapons in foreign conflicts.[83]

At the same time that resident Roosevelt invoked the Neutrality Act, he also relieved the responsibility implied by Hull's earlier pledge to protect American citizens from mistreatment by issuing an executive order that declared that persons who traveled on "vessels of either of the belligerents," or traveled to warring countries, did so at their own risk.[84]

That Roosevelt felt he should take some position on this matter was related to the unique American political position regarding Europe. The United States liked to think that it was a world power, but was not willing to take the steps necessary to fully claim that position. The United States and Great Britain were the closest in culture, politics and history, and would have been the most obvious allies in the new world order, but America wanted to withdraw back into a modified isolationist position, and confine themselves with matters in the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific region. This did not fulfill the ideological principles voiced by Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, or Franklin Roosevelt's interventionist leanings, but it did tend to satisfy the political trends at home.

America's choice to remain isolated from European matters earlier in its history had been justified by geographical locations. Great Britain and the United

---

[83] Wayne S. Cole, "Senator Key Pittman and American Neutrality Policies, 1933-1940." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 46:4 (March 1960), 652-653.

[84] Telegram from President Roosevelt to Secretary of State Hull on October 5 1935. *FRUS 1935,* Vol 1, 800.

States shared a general "outlook and ...desiderata of...policies" that were similar, "the fact that the paramount American interest [was] geographically so remote from the paramount British interest [was] sufficient to explain why the United States [did not] take the position of an equal partner with Great Britain in maintaining the status-quo in Western Europe." American interests were located elsewhere and so could therefore be excused from more direct involvement in Europe.[85]

America had little real influence in Europe because it had failed to take a hand in recent political and security matters, being primarily concerned with economic matters. Roosevelt wanted to make a statement or offer some guidance to the Europeans that would help the situation, and possibly even avoid an armed conflict, but he also feared that a failed attempt would damage his international and domestic prestige. On the other hand, Roosevelt had to accept the possibility that he could make a mistake that would damage his political career, if he tried to intervene. Roosevelt took the safe political course and "abandoned his idealistic beliefs in peace pacts and adopted a policy of strict isolation."[86]

Likewise, President Roosevelt was faced with a dilemma concerning his possible responses to the Ethiopian crisis. American interests in African matters could be summarized as the maintenance of world peace, the support of democracy, and the sanctity of international treaties. Based upon these

---

[85] Walter Lippmann, "Britain and America: The Prospects of Political Cooperation in the light of their Paramount Interests," *Foreign Affairs* 13:3 (April 1935), 363, 366.

[86] Vera Micheles Dean "The Breakdown of Collective Security," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 14:37 (July 12, 1935), 1.

principles it would have been a simple choice; America was bound to support Ethiopia and oppose Italy. This situation did not lend itself to these simplistic solutions; however, there were other factors to consider. Ethiopia was a very minor trading partner, while Italy and the United States shared substantial international trade.[87] Any policy decision made against Italy could damage the American economy because of the loss of that trade. Conversely, Ethiopia's geographic location and lack of industrialization limited the amount of trade that country could engage in with the United States. From an economic standpoint, American needed to protect its trade with Italy.

The international political situation also complicated matters. America had ties with the allies that were formed in World War I. The United States could reasonably be expected to look to those European powers in matters of primary concern to the European community, and the Ethiopian crisis involved all three of those great powers in 1934. The central powers were themselves divided over the Ethiopian issue, and they vacillated on their responses to it. The United States would have been forced to choose from among the European allies, who were themselves not presenting a very clear picture of the purposes for their particular policy stances, or even the permanence of those positions.

---

[87] Italy was experiencing a trade deficit of about 50 percent of her trade with the United States in 1934, and there were negotiations at this time that were intended to increase sales of Italian goods to America to lower this deficit. Cable from American Ambassador Breckinridge Long in Italy to American Secretary of State, May 12, 1934. *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1934. Vol. II, Europe, Near East, and Africa* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1951), 584.

Under these circumstances, Roosevelt needed to uphold America's high standards in the rest of the world, promote and protect domestic economic interests, maintain a friendly relationship with each of the big three European powers, and continue a working relationship with his political opposition in congress. Unable to easily achieve all four of these goals simultaneously, Roosevelt's only remaining, and least offensive course of action was to take as little action as possible. He tried to follow the lead of the League and the major powers, and avoid choosing sides while attempting to keep any decision he made from causing any more damage to the domestic American economy than was absolutely necessary.

CHAPTER V

THE FACTIONS OF INFLUENCE IN INTERWAR AMERICAN POLITICS

These previously described foreign issues all had some bearing on what policy Roosevelt would eventually choose to adopt, and by themselves would have complicated the situation enough. There were, however, other forces on the domestic front that increased the complexity of the matter more. Factions within the American political system, both political and social, were active in exerting influence upon his decision at this point. These groups can be divided into three broad categories, pacifists, isolationists, and internationalists. All three of these groups were successful in that they were all able to exert some influence on the formation of American foreign policy after World War I, but also unsuccessful in that they failed in their ultimate goal to prevent American involvement in another war.

The specter of future wars on a scale similar to the First World War was sufficient to cause many persons to pause and reflect on the causes of the war. Indeed the skillful resurrection of the ghost of World War I was the tool of choice for many of the special interest groups that had a stake in U.S. international policy matters between 1917 and 1941. The pacifists, isolationists, and internationalists "shared the popular disillusionment concerning American participation in the First World War." In order to avoid an event like this in the

future they made serious efforts to analyze the causes for American involvement in the fighting. The pacifists and the isolationists concluded that the causes were, "(1) Huge private loans by American firms to Britain and France; (2) armament firms which were in a position to profit from a bigger war; (3) Allied propaganda; and (4) an unneutral and naïve American president, Wilson, who was blamed for believing that (a) the outcome of the war had implications for the future of the United States, and (b) that the war might conceivably be turned to constructive ends" from which the United States and the world would benefit.[1] Internationalists believed that the peace could best be protected by taking part in the League of Nations and other "international accord[s]."[2] With the establishment of this general framework of factors, the policy-making process proceeded in the United States. The president, the Congress, and the people all contributed, and in the process, engaged in a struggle for control over foreign policy decisions.

President Roosevelt's executive branch reflected a progressive, internationalist attitude, believing that "the United States...could no longer escape the effects of foreign problems," and needed to become involved in matters that threatened "American security and self interest[s]."[3] There were

---

[1] *John C. Donovan.* "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy." *World Politics* 3.3 (Apr., 1951), 300.

[2] Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message to the Congress, January 4, 1935. *Works of Franklin D. Roosevelt, available at* http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1935a.htm. Accessed 9-20-2003

[3] Harris, *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis,* 20.

also groups outside the government, "pressure groups [such as] the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, the Fight for Freedom Committee, the America First Committee, and the Foreign Legion"[4] who campaigned for a more active American role in international affairs. Those persons who supported Roosevelt's idea of internationalism included Salmon O. Levinson, a wealthy Chicago lawyer who had originally proposed to "outlaw war" as an answer to the isolationists arguments.[5] Congressman Sam D. McReynolds, Democratic chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1932, Charles Warren, former assistant Attorney General of the United States,[6] Senator Key Pittman, and international businessmen such as J.P Morgan and the du Pont's.[7] This faction saw the League of Nations as "the best opportunity for protecting American interests" through "international law."[8]

The internationalists were supportive of the theory that many foreign issues held the potential of increasing and growing to the point that they would engulf the entire world if the United States did not intervene. Because of the international economic status of the United States, they believed that some

---

[4] Wayne S. Cole, "American Entry into World War II: A Historigraphical Appraisal." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 43.4 (Mar., 1957), 613.

[5] Donald F. Drummond, *The Passing of American Neutrality 1937-1941* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1955), 26.

[6] Ibid., 38-40.

[7] These businessmen supported internationalist organizations with donations, and were some of those identified by the Nye Committee as internationalists because of their overseas business affairs during the First World War.

[8] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 300.

action was necessary to fulfill the newly acquired position of world leader that the U.S. had gained, and to prevent those inevitable regional conflicts from growing and gaining momentum to the point where they forced another war on one or more of the large powers.[9] They believed that taking a hand in the affairs of nations overseas, in the form of guidance, leadership, and friendship was a necessary part of the process of being involved and would contribute to the avoidance of the most horrible of all consequences, war. Internationalists supported, among other principles, arbitration, and international organizations such as the Hague Court and the League of Nations. Internationalists believed that membership in these type of organizations helped to establish the collective security that would replace the precarious balance of power that was barely in control in Europe in the post-World War I years. They avoided the "extreme of the isolationists" in not insisting that the United States must keep out of war at any costs, rather they felt that America should " avoid armed hostilities," but not at the expense of their economic practices or legal rights. They supported the "participation in the creation of an orderly international system" in order for the United States to "obtain the assurance of peace."[10]

---

[9] These fears were reflected in the commentary of the day, such as; "War looms on the horizon of Europe again..." in Boake Carter, *Black Shirt Black Skin* (Harrisburg, PA: Telegraph Press, 1935), 136; and voiced by President Roosevelt in his public addresses, "The Republican leaders ...have isolated us from all the other human beings in all the rest of the round world. I propose an invitation to them...to sit at the table with us, as friends, and to plan with us" for the cooperative future of the world. Franklin D. Roosevelt nomination address on July 2, 1932. *Works of Franklin D. Roosevelt* available at http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1932b.htm. Accessed 8-20-2003.

[10] John W. Masland, "The "Peace" Groups Join Battle," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 4:4 (December 1940), 673.

Some significant businessmen and persons of wealth supported this movement, if not directly then through other private organizations, who in turn received financial support from the likes of the "Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the League of Nations Association, the World Alliance for International Friendship, and the Catholic Association for International Peace."[11] Other support for the internationalist ideology came from Senators Key Pittman, Joseph T. Robinson, Tom Connally, Robert F. Wagner, and Claude Pepper.[12] President Roosevelt was not without significant support for his ideas, but he did face opposition in the United States Congress from a coalition of pacifists and isolationists.[13]

Pacifism, in this case "the desire to keep out of war and... prevent...the continuance of war" was the most common position among the public, the government, and the factions of influence in the American system.[14] This was an unassailable position because the idea of being opposed to war was an easy principle to adopt. In this context, to oppose pacifism would be to support war as a tool of policy, and no one, especially in the period immediately after the First World War, wanted that. There were several levels within the pacifist movement, however, that complicated this relatively simple ideology. The most severe of

---

[11] Ibid., 666.

[12] Cole, "Senator Key Pittman and American Neutrality Policies," 647.

[13] Wayne S. Cole, "American Entry into World War II: A Historigraphical Appraisal." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 43:4 (Mar., 1957), 613.

[14] Telegram from Ambassador Long in Italy to secretary of state Hull on November 21, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 822.

these levels, those who opposed war for any reason, set the standard for activism by pushing for an extreme form of isolationism that would, they believed, insulate the United State totally from any future wars. The people within this group "believed that the people were more pacifist" than the government, and thought a greater extension of popular control in diplomacy was necessary" to curtail "executive, economic, or even congressional" actions that might stray from the pacifist program.[15]

In the late 1910s, pacifist groups such as the Woman's Peace Party and the WIPLF began using mass mailings of postcards to develop a base of support for their cause.[16] The use of this appeal directly to the public became the basis for the later struggles for political control through mailings, radio, newspapers, and public events such as the Nye Committee hearings of the 1930s.[17] The basic pacifist beliefs were generally represented in all of the more vocal factions in the 1930s. The differences between the groups were defined by how the proposed to achieve their goals of peace for America.

The pacifists and the isolationists had essentially combined forces in order to pursue their goals, and in the persons of senators and congressmen, such as Gerald Nye, Craig Vandenberg, Hiram Johnson, William Borah, and Philander

[15] Ernest C. Bolt Jr., *Ballots Before Bullets: The War Referendum Approach to Peace in America 1914-1941* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 144.

[16] The 1917 survey consisted of 100,000 post cards with two questions: "1. Should we enter the war in order to uphold our legal right to go into a war zone? 2. Do you believe that the people should be consulted by referendum-in any event short of invasion-before congress declares war? Ibid., 49.

[17] "Only the radio, used as the...primary means of publicity in the thirties," would be more effective than the postcard mailings in the pacifist cause. Ibid., 50.

Knox[18] took the initiative to influence the public. They held public hearings and gave public speeches that developed public support for their version of strict neutrality legislation[19] without any real opposition from Roosevelt.

Even while the pacifists and isolationists represented a wide range of positions, and held some separate minor views expressed within these movements,[20] they shared one main goal: "the United States ought to enact legislation which would automatically rule out the mistakes of 'last time' "[21] They were able to combine forces in order to gain this common goal. Their combined activities comprised the bulk of the policy battle, and resulted in the formation of guidelines for foreign affairs and trade agreements that attempted to limit United States involvement in foreign affairs once again.

This coalition opposed "any policy that might involve the Unites States in foreign political obligations" such as treaties and alliances in order to avoid future conflicts like the First World War.[22] Isolationists advocated isolating the United States from international conflicts and thereby avoiding American involvement in foreign wars at any cost. The active arm of this movement included Senators

---

[18] Drummond, *The Passing of American Neutrality 1937-1941,* 27-28.

[19] "It cannot be doubted that the findings of historians, the arguments of publicists, and the activities of the Nye Committee had an important bearing on the development of public opinion in the middle nineteen-thirties." Ibid., 41.

[20] Ibid., 27.

[21] Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest,* 300.

[22] Harris, *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis,* 20.

Gerald Nye, William Borah, Hiram Johnson, Burton Wheeler, Henrik Shipstead, Joel Clark, and Craig Vandenburg.[23]

Senators Nye, Clark, and Vandenberg were also recognized as pacifists who supported isolationism as a means to accomplish their goals. Isolationists believed that "American participation in experiments in international political co-operation," was a futile exercise. They supported "neutrality legislation relinquishing many of the traditional rights of a neutral under international law. The purpose of this neutrality legislations would be to avoid any risks which might be involved in carrying on foreign trade in time of foreign war."[24] The isolationists believed that the problems in Europe were of no concern to the United States, and the best course was to remain "untrammeled and free" from events "overseas."[25]

Two distinct branches of this movement began to emerge after World War I within Congress. While these "two Congressional isolationist groups were united in their suspicion of, and opposition to, the foreign policy of the Roosevelt administration,"[26] they had different plans of action to accomplish their differing goals. One group, the strict isolationists, argued for pre-emptive legislation that "advocated the abandonment of traditional neutral trading rights in time of foreign

---

[23] Hull, *Memoirs,* 217.

[24] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists," 300.

[25] *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Policy. Vol. II, March 1934 to August 1935.* (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Harvard: Belknap, 1969), 13.

[26] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists," 300.

war as a means of preventing 'incidents' at sea" as well as providing "a means of avoiding economic involvement in foreign wars...the nation would... give up foreign trade in order to keep free of war."[27]

The other sub-group, the nationalist/isolationists, preferred a modified form of isolationism that would maintain American neutrality in overseas conflicts, but would secure and maintain neutral trading rights overseas, even to combatants in a war zone. They were conservative in action on foreign policy, even though their ranks were comprised of members of both parties. This isolationism "was pre-eminently a philosophy [that was] grounded in the rich soil of American nationalism." They chose to believe that "the problems of the rest of the world, whatever their outcome, could not appreciably alter the future course of American democracy. "[28] Isolationists believed "that American democracy should not attempt to carry the Atlas load of the White Man's Burden in the form of imperialism all over the earth." America should not involve itself in foreign conflicts, or even "assume that it had the capacity, even with the best of good-will, to settle the difficult problems of European nations encrusted in the heritages of their long and sanguinary history." This faction publicly couched "its theories and sentiments...in such phrases as: let us keep out of the next world war; mind our own business; till our own garden; create the wealth; substitute abundance

[27] Ibid., 301.

[28] Ibid., 308.

for scarcity; establish a sound and efficient domestic economy; make America a work of art." [29]

The pacifists consisted of an amalgam of local, national, and international, organizations as well as organized and unorganized religious, ethnic, social, and political groups. These various groups included organizations that supported women's rights, minority rights, voting issues, prohibition, and world peace. These organizations combined with one another from time to time in order to pursue their common goal of world peace. A good example of this cooperation can be found in a joint conference that was held in Washington, D.C. in 1935. Twenty-eight peace, religious, civic, and women's groups were represented at the National Peace Conference in July 1935. This conference, also known as the Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, was organized in order to highlight their cause and to demonstrate their strength with a public demonstration of their cohesiveness. Senator Nye delivered a speech at this event that garnered coverage in the popular press, as well as being read into the official record on the floor of the United States Senate that defined his position regarding neutrality as his option for American foreign policy.[30] These groups worked to influence events by publicly opposing any moves toward a more interventionist foreign policy. They advocated "peace at any price" including "the

---

[29] Charles A. and Mary Beard, *America in Midpassage* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 452.

[30] Congress, Senate. Senator Gerald Nye transcript of address to the Conference on the Cause and Cure of War at Washington DC on the 15th of January 1930. *Congressional Record 72, pt. 2* (16 Jan 1930): 1724.

surrender of neutral rights and foreign trade, if necessary, to keep the United States" out of war.[31]

The national secretary of one of these groups, Dorothy Detzer of the Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom, was credited with "almost single-handedly persuading" Senator Nye to introduce the resolution calling for the investigation of the munitions industry. When it is remembered that the findings of the Nye committee were a major factor in the adoption of neutrality legislation in 1935, the influence of Detzer and her organization, [the WILPF], is clearly evident."[32] They also tried to encourage popular support for their movements by publicizing catch-phrase campaigns that focused on promoting "peace by creating mass hatred of war through national advertising."[33]

The pacifists and the isolationists had, before 1932, generally found a cordial reception within the executive branch for their concerns. It was easy to support these general goals when the international situation was stable, or at least not at a critical point. However, the political and economic events in Europe and in America, and the Italian-Ethiopian situation in the early 1930s made any agreement between the public activists, congressional groups, and the president on the proper course to follow much harder to reach.

---

[31] Harris, *The Italian Ethiopian Conflict,* 21.

[32] The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was founded by the late Jane Addams; see Masland, "The "Peace" Groups Join Battle," 665; and Dorothy Detzer, *Appointment on the Hill* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1948).

[33] Masland, "The "Peace" Groups Join Battle," 665.

By 1934 a new obstacle to the pacifists' and isolationists' causes existed, and that was the American president. The executive branch was now in the hands of an internationalist in the person of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Also at this point there was more cooperation between the isolationists and the pacifists when they began working together to establish neutrality regulations that would limit the president's ability to take any actions that they believed could unnecessarily involve the United States in another foreign conflict. The struggle between the executive and legislative branches over foreign policy resulted in "Congressional efforts to limit executive discretion in the conduct of foreign affairs."[34] The isolationists in the Congress, supported in many instances by pacifists groups, began to assert their influence upon foreign policy by passing laws limiting the options of the president in foreign matters, and holding Roosevelt's New Deal domestic programs hostage in order to limit his opposition to their own agenda.

The two major achievements claimed by these groups, both on their own and in cooperation with each other, were the Kellog-Briand Pact and the formation of the Nye Committee. Neither of these achievements actually lessened the threat of international involvement or war for the United States in the long run, but they were demonstrative of the foreign policy positions of the United States that were acceptable to these groups between 1934 and 1941.

These groups were represented in Congress by a pacifist/isolationist coalition of senators including Johnson, Borah, Nye, and Clark. Collectively these men

---

[34] *Donovan.* "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 299.

took up the task of legislating away the modern problems of international relations in the 20th century, believing that by leading the march into the past where these matters were less complicated they would find the answers to all the problems that had brought about American involvement in World War I. They found comfort by retreating into the myth of isolationism where the worries of the outside world, especially those of Europe, could not intrude on the peaceful functioning of American democracy. These legislators held hearings and conducted investigations into the causes of World War I with the idea that they could learn from these previous mistakes and avoid future wars through legislation.

The Nye committee[35] was authorized by Senate Resolution 206 in 1934 in order to investigate the munitions industries of the United States and their complicity in American involvement in World War I.[36] Senator Nye held hearings between 1934 and 1936, at the end of which time the committee began publishing reports of its "findings." The committee had questioned people in many American businesses including the iron and steel, shipbuilding, and aircraft industries, as well as true munitions manufacturers such the Colt Firearm Company and the du Pont Company. The committee decided as a result of their investigation that one reason that the United States became involved in World

---

[35] Congress, Senate. Vice President Garner naming the members of the committee, April 19, 1934. *Congressional Record 78 pt. 7* (19 Apr 1934): 6896.

[36] Senate Reports No. 944, 74th Congress, 2d session, Public. Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry, United States Senate. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1936. 7 parts.

War I was that "congress was not kept accurately informed" of foreign policy "during the neutrality years of 1914-17," and that contributed to the failure of that policy. The Nye Committee also found that trade issues were central to the neutrality question:

> Our growing trade in fact, affected the foreign policy of the United States from 1914 to 1917 with the Allies as well as by natural sympathies. The neutral rights we claimed were simply not enforced against our largest customers.[37]

The committee also criticized American financial and loan policies that allowed "loans to belligerents" that "militat[ed] against neutrality."[38] The parallels between the First World War and the Ethiopian situation were not lost on them:

> The Committee is of the opinion that this situation, with its risk of business depression and panic in event of damage to the belligerents' ability to purchase, involved the administration so inextricably [that] it prevented the maintenance of a truly neutral course between the Allies and the Central Powers.[39]

These revelations were important products of the Nye investigation, but there was another aspect of this particular process that speaks to the policy issue. The public nature of these hearings served to affect public opinion in that the "attendant publicity confused the public ... about America's entry into the First World War," and so confused the current issue of foreign policy in the 1930s.[40]

---

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Arnold A. Offner, *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1969), 131.

These public hearings kept the public informed of the progress of the investigation and of the findings and the conclusions of the committee. The Nye committee scrutinized the role played by American businesses before and during World War I, and reached the conclusion that American businesses had made a profit from the war, both before and during America's actual involvement in the fighting.[41] This profound revelation was intended to encourage comparisons between the situation prior to the First World War with the situation in 1934 and 1935, before the Italo-Ethiopian War.[42] The committee was able to raise the question of what role America would play, not just in political involvement, but also with trade and loans to the belligerents in the Ethiopian crisis. The issue of war profits emerged again in 1935, and the committee argued that these situations were the cause of American involvement in the First World War, and policy needed to be changed in order to avoid another one. The isolationists gained public support for their cause by invoking the specter of a replay of the First World War where "merchants of death...foment wars to boost their profits."[43]

---

[41] "Submarine Sales Split by American and British Firms," Zaharoff as World Agent got $2,000,000 from Former Concern," "Navy Officer got $326,000 for South American Work..." *New York Times,* September 5, 1934, 1. "$1,245,000,000 Work to du Ponts in War," *New York Times,* September 13, 1934, 8. "Firms Making Profit by War Facing U. S. Ire," *Dallas Morning News,* September 5, 1935, 1.

[42] Congress, Senate, Senate Reports 74th Congress, 2nd Session. This report of the Nye Committee remarks on the failure of the neutrality legislation of 1936 to prevent arms shipments to Italy, which allowed that war to be prosecuted with American supplied war materials. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 6-8.

[43] James Macgregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and The Fox* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1956), 254.

While the committee held public hearings as a part of their investigation, the actual investigation took place separately. These hearings were therefore meant to fulfill a related but separate purpose, one other than investigating the specified activities and uncovering new evidence and information. These public hearings were intended to, and in fact, did communicate to the public the seriousness of the investigation, convey a sense of thoroughness and completeness to the investigation, and add "meaning and consequence"[44] to the activities of the Senate and to the findings and recommendations of this committee.

The format and structure of the hearings acted as a dramatic presentation of the process and results of the investigation, and tended to lend weight and authority to the committee's conclusions and recommendations. The hearings were conducted in a very solemn, ritualistic manner that was structured around that of a criminal court trial.[45] This peculiar structure was not germane to the investigation itself because the lion's share of the investigation had occurred prior to the hearings, similar to the order found in criminal proceedings.

The "rituals of court"[46] were followed in order to invoke the authority surrounding the criminal process. The resulting drama produced by the hearings

---

[44] A. G. Roeber, "Authority, Law and Custom: The Rituals of Court Day in Tidewater, Virginia, 1720 to 1750," *William and Mary Quarterly* 37:1 (January 1980): 50.

[45] Then records of the hearing that took place on September 4, 1934 include the description of witnesses called before the committee, the swearing in of witnesses, the presentation of exhibits and evidence, and the testimony of those called before the committee. All these aspects of this Senate investigation are found in a criminal trial in the American criminal justice system. Congress, Senate, Munitions Industry. *Hearings before the Special Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry, 73rd Congress,* Part 1, September 4, 5, and 6, 1934.

[46] Ibid., 1.

attracted a great deal of public attention. Popular newspapers and magazines announced the impending hearings[47] and commented on the nature of the issue, armaments, and then covered their progress. The press also publicized the committee's findings and conclusions. The issues highlighted in the hearings as well as the conclusions reached were published in the popular press at that time.[48]

Senator Nye and the committee took advantage of this publicity by announcing each coming stage of the investigation, as well as releasing tidbits of information intimating what their efforts would reveal before each public committee session began.[49] The previews of committee activities and the public revelations that resulted were all planned and controlled by the committee, and reflected the political position of Senator Nye and the other members concerning American foreign policy during that period. The public hearings were in effect a "stage play" that furthered the political interests of one segment of the political spectrum, one, which consisted of a combination of pacifists and isolationists during the inter-war period.

---

[47] Senators James P. Pope, Gerald P. Nye, and Homer T. Bone featured in photograph and article titled, "Senate Group Preparing for Munitions Inquiry," "Three of committee give final touches to plan to start tomorrow questioning a hundred officials of war material concerns." *New York Times* Monday, (September 3, 1934), 3.

[48] *The New York Times, Harper's Magazine, The Nation, Readers Digest, and Fortune,* all ran articles covering the hearings directly or the related armament issue between 1934 and 1936.

[49] "Nye Enumerates War Profit Rises: Coming Inquiry Outlined," *New York Times,* (September 2, 1934), 6.

The committee hearings pursued a political goal and could be seen as an example of a political trial.[50] They were intended to give credence to the committee's opinions and findings in the eyes of the public, and so build up a "communal sanction"[51] for its recommendations, which were essentially isolationist and anti-war in nature. This investigation weighed heavily upon the passage of the 1935 Neutrality Act, which required a mandatory embargo on shipments of war materials to all belligerents in foreign conflicts. President Roosevelt did not get his discretionary option where he would be able to choose who would be targeted by embargoes, and the isolationists prevailed in this incident.

Congressmen had been addressing their concerns over America's foreign policy toward Italy and Ethiopia legislatively and passed the first Neutrality Act in 1935. This act included a mandate that required the president to impose trade embargoes on all involved parties in the event of a foreign war. Roosevelt would have preferred an act that included a provision that would allow the president to manipulate what was embargoed and against whom the restrictions would apply. This option would have allowed him to hurt the aggressor, and in effect take sides while maintaining an arguably neutral position.[52]

---

[50] This model is similar to that demonstrated by A.G. Roeber in his article "Authority, Law, and Custom," 29-52.

[51] Ibid., 32.

[52] Julius W. Pratt, A *History of United States Foreign Policy,* 3rd Ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall. 1972), 344.

President Roosevelt was looking for an opportunity to take some action in response to the Ethiopian crisis that would reflect his interventionist tendencies, but Congress was looking for ways to hold him to a more isolationist position. The Congress passed the Neutrality Acts in 1935 and 1936 in response to fears that someone "in the Department of State or in any other department in this government" will commit an "improvident act" that would drag the United States into another foreign war.[53] Questions about the domestic balance of power, between the Congress and the president, began to arise after the first New Deal programs went into effect, and Congress took some liberties over the protests of the executive branch to encroach upon the traditional authority of the executive to establish foreign policy. The domestic policies that Roosevelt held dear were held hostage to the passage of the neutrality acts, and to the encroachment of the legislative branch into the realm of "traditional" executive powers.[54] Congress passed the first neutrality act that included a mandatory embargo of implements of war to any belligerent, as opposed to the discretionary embargo Roosevelt preferred. Roosevelt preferred to pick his battles, and chose to support Congress on this matter in order to avoid a battle over domestic legislation.

The Neutrality Acts received some criticism from American businesses as being "premature and ill-advised"[55] because they interfered with American

---

[53] Congress, Senate. Text of a floor debate on the proposed neutrality legislation by Senator Bone, Nye, Robinson. Long, Vandenburg, and Clark on August 20, 1935. *Congressional Record* 79:13, 13777.

[54] Ibid., 13778.

commerce, and as such damaged the national recovery effort. Roosevelt was caught between two desires, the first being his desire to hinder the war through selected embargoes (tacitly supporting the League of Nations efforts), and the second being the "tempting trade opportunities" for Americans willing to take advantage of the situation by supplying "materials that [might] prolong the war" [56] American exporters and business interests opposed the administrations' efforts at the "moral embargo" and instead favored a neutrality policy that allowed "unlimited trade" with belligerents. [57]

---

[55] Pratt, *A History of United States Foreign Policy,* 80.

[56] Ibid., 81.

[57] Ibid., 122.

CHAPTER VI

REACTIONS TO THE WAR

The varying interpretations of why American became involved in the First World War and what the result was for the United States complicated the policy formation process in the 1930s. President Wilson's reliance on an idealized, highly moral foreign policy was one factor that deserves more criticism. He held "that America stood as an example to the world, and should pursue high ideals"[1] such as world cooperation and peace in order to fulfill this goal. His methods, at times wildly applauded by political factions within the Congress and the public, failed to address how these goals could possibly come about when they lacked a realistic approach, such as a policy of more direct involvement in international affairs before they deteriorated into war. These policies included no options for handling reticent leaders or countries that did not respond to moral criticism. The practice of verbally scolding warring parties was ineffective especially when those parties had already come to blows or were like Mussolini in 1935, who had determined that he would proceed with military action "to get what he desires in Ethiopia" regardless of outside opposition.[2]

Pacifist reasoning was not a very effective response to the crisis, and the remaining options for the United States were mainly economic. This brought into

---

[1] Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest,* 269.

[2] "Showdown is Coming in East Africa Crisis," *New York Times* (September 15, 1935), 3.

play the relations between the United States and the two countries. At the beginning of the conflict between Italy and Ethiopia in 1934, the United States had strong ties with Italy, but few ties or interests in Ethiopia. Breckinridge Long was the American Ambassador in Rome, and while an American legation was installed in Addis Ababa, no American ambassador was assigned there. In June 1935, the State Department "trouble shooter" George Hanson was dispatched to Addis Ababa,[3] but was replaced within one month by Cornelius Van H. Engert from the United States legation in Cairo in order to maintain diplomatic contact with Haile Selassie during the crisis.[4]

American economic and business interests in Ethiopia were limited to some private contracts and minor trade in consumer goods.[5] Hopes for increased industrial intercourse between the United States and Ethiopia were buoyed in 1929 when Ethiopia agreed to award the J. G. White Engineering Corporation a contract for the construction of a dam on Lake Tsana, the source of the Blue Nile. The United States government assisted in making this agreement happen, and handled the exchange of money between Ethiopia and the White Engineering Co.[6] at the opening stages of the contract. The progress of this project was

---

[3] "Foreign News," *Newsweek* (July 22, 1935), 19.

[4] Communication from Engert to secretary of state on May 2, 1936 confirming receipt of letter of credence" that was to be presented to Emperor Sellassie by Engert, affirming his official position as minister resident to Ethiopia. *FRUS 1936,* Vol. III, 65.

[5] Reuben S. Young, "Ethiopia Awakens," *The Crisis,* September 1935, 262.

[6] Cables between Minister Southard in Ethiopia and the American Acting Secretary of State Clark, March 1929 to August 1931. *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers*

interrupted by the conflict between Ethiopia and Italy and was never completed. This early contract and a second contract that awarded oil exploration rights in Ethiopia to the American based Standard Vacuum Oil Company[7] had been abandoned by September 1935 in order to lessen U. S. economic interests, as well as to reduce the possibility of Americans being caught between the warring parties in Ethiopia.[8] Italy was a more important purchaser of oil, raw materials, and industrial equipment from the United States.[9]

Once the war began on October 3, 1935, Roosevelt could only attempt to protect U.S. neutrality by implementing the mandatory embargoes as required by the Neutrality Act.[10] This act required that upon the determination of a state of war existing between two or more foreign countries, "the president shall proclaim such fact, and it shall be thereafter be unlawful to export arms, ammunition, or implements of war from" anywhere in the United States to any of the warring countries.[11] Roosevelt's only overt act prior to invoking the Neutrality Act was to recognize that a state of war existed without an official declaration from the

---

1933. Vol. II: The British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East, and Africa (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 863, 868, 877.

[7] Telegram from American Chargè in Ethiopia Engert to Secretary of State Hull on August 30, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 778.

[8] Telegram from Secretary of State Hull to Ambassador Bingham in the United Kingdom on September 3, 1935. Ibid., 17-18.

[9] Friedlander, "New Light," 117.

[10] *F.D.R. His Personal Letters*, 508.

[11] Communication from Secretary of State Hull to ambassador Long in Italy on October 16, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 806.

warring countries. Roosevelt and the internationalists did not believe that they had enough support for independent intervention in this conflict. They believed that Congress and the voting public would oppose any other action at this time, and so their options were limited. A Gallup public opinion poll taken in September and October 1935 showed 75% of the respondents were in favor of a war referendum, and 71% believed that the United States should remain neutral in the event of any overseas conflict.[12] The existence of this "overwhelming desire by the American people not to become involved in war" was a basic tenet of the Roosevelt administration.[13] Two ancillary issues at play at this time within the United States were the anti-imperialism and the international disarmament movements. Both had some bearing on the conflict but did not lend themselves to unilateral action by the United States. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia touched on both of these issues, but there was no significant response available to Roosevelt under the legislative limitations of the Neutrality Act.[14]

Many Americans were unhappy with this turn of events in Africa, but there were no policy options available to address their concerns. The domestic circumstances summarily limited any possible actions by the United States.

---

[12] George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971* (New York: Random House, 1972), 3.

[13] Communication from Chargè Engert in Ethiopia to Secretary of State on October 30, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 776.

[14] Samuel Flagg Bemis, " The Shifting Strategy of American Defense and Diplomacy," in *Essays in history and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee* eds. Dwight E. Lee and George E. McReynolds (Worchester, Mass.: Clark University Publication, 1949) 9.

The United States had, by passing the Neutrality Act, announced to the world that "the United States was unwilling to lend a hand in halting aggression" in Europe.[15] This domestic position along with the earlier abandonment of the League of Nations destroyed American credibility as a world power and abrogated most of America's influence in this as well as many other international affairs.

The League was not a significant player in this affair at this time either because of many of the earlier actions by its members. America's refusal to join the League had severely damaged its effectiveness from the beginning,[16] and the failure of the remaining members to dedicate themselves to making the organization work further crippled its effectiveness.

In spite of his interventionist leanings, Roosevelt maintained a consistent isolationist position in his public statements. He announced that "despite what happens in continents overseas, the United States of America shall and must remain...untrammeled and free."[17] This public position implied that the United States would rely on its existing policies, such as the Good Neighbor Policy and the Doctrine of Nonrecognition, as well as the Neutrality Acts to maintain America's neutrality and its moral position in the world community.

---

[15] Adler, *The Uncertain Giant 1921-1941,* 175.

[16] Karl J. Schmidt, "League of Nations," available at http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/E/league/leaguexx.htm. Accessed 7-17-2002.

[17] Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* 13.

This "good neighbor policy" was intended to keep the United States free from involvement in foreign affairs, "that do not concern us."[18] Roosevelt defined this policy as one of respecting "obligations" as well as "the sanctity of...agreements in and with a world of neighbors."[19] The policy was lacking in that it did not define what overseas events would be of concern to the United States such as the complicated situations in which it found itself in the 1930s. It also presented a serious potential for conflict with the congressional policy of isolationism since being a good neighbor implies offering assistance when needed, not turning one's back on a neighbor. As such, this policy had no program or guidelines, could not be employed in any effective way, and had no effect on the international situation at all.

The United States had established the "Doctrine of Nonrecognition" in response to Japanese conquests in China in the early 1930s. This doctrine stated that the United States would not extend diplomatic recognition to any new governments or treaties between China and Japan that came about as a result of the Japanese military conquests in Manchuria.[20] In 1935 this policy was applied to any Italian conquests in Ethiopia. This doctrine was intended to "discourage similar military adventures by European Dictators," but recognition by the United

---

[18] Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest*, 582.

[19] Franklin D. Roosevelt, Inaugural Address on March 4 1933, *Works of Franklin D. Roosevelt* available at http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1933a.htm.

[20] *America as a World Power 1872-1945* ed Robert H. Ferrell (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 222; and Ernest Ralph Perkins. "The Non Application of Sanctions Against Japan, 1931-1932," *Essays in History and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee* (Worchester, MA: Clark University Press, 1949), 215.

States was apparently not of any more concern to the Italians than it was to the Japanese, and there is no evidence that this policy had any real impact either.[21]

The Neutrality Act of 1935 imposed mandatory embargoes against all participants in a foreign war, thus removing any doubt of America's intention to remain neutral. This act had one singular effect of denying the president the option to take action against the aggressor nation, however that determination of status had been reached. By establishing this neutrality legislatively, the congressional isolationists believed that they could remove American political and economic interests from these overseas conflicts, and thereby avoid the earlier motivations that would normally cause the United States to become involved in these foreign entanglements.

This restriction fulfilled the isolationist's stance in principle, but caused some conflict between foreign policy and domestic policy. American business interests wanted to take advantage of the foreign countries' wartime spending to boost sales and profits for the United States. The internationalists, and especially the American business sector, argued that trade with warring countries was not a violation of the principle of neutrality. They found fault with Congress over its definition of neutrality. They wanted to rebuild the domestic economy through trade, while the isolationists believed that they were working to avoid a repeat of American involvement in the First World War, which they believed was caused by American trade with the warring countries prior to 1917. The American business

[21] Perkins, "Nonapplication of Sanctions," *215.*

interests believed that this act was a violation of the spirit of neutrality. They believed that denying "the right of a [neutral] nation to trade with any belligerent" was not true neutrality.[22] As a result, some domestic factions argued for unimpinged trade with both parties and criticized the Neutrality Acts as damaging to the economy.

As a matter of neutrality, a continuance of unrestricted trade with these countries would mean essentially trade with Italy. Ethiopia did not have the means to trade with the United States to the degree that Italy did, and Italy would bear the brunt of the sanctions because of the amount of its trade that had been affected by the trade restrictions on arms, implements of war, and travel restrictions for U. S. citizens.[23] Embargoes would favor Ethiopia over Italy, and unrestricted trade would have benefited Italy. This caused a conflict between these two views because either option would have been tantamount to picking sides and becoming involved, and so was "the antithesis of neutrality."[24]

President Roosevelt limited his options by maintaining his "untrammeled and free" principle to invoking the Neutrality Act. He could not adopt the purely neutral position and still support existing treaties like the Kellog-Briand Pact. Roosevelt may have realized the contradiction between his policies and the

---

[22] John Norman, "Influence of Pro-Fascist Propaganda on American Neutrality, 1935-1936," in *Essays in History and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee* (Worchester, MA: Clark University Press, 1949), 198.

[23] "No two nations at war were ever on exactly an equal footing and...a policy of strict neutrality must apply to the detriment of one more than to the detriment of another." Ambassador Long relating his explanation of American neutrality to the Italian government official, Mr. Suvich, in a telegram to Secretary of State Hull on November 21, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 822.

[24] Norman, "Influence of Pro-Fascist Propaganda on American Neutrality," 205.

neutrality legislation, and so felt that some other actions on his part were necessary.

The president sent a stern communication to Italy concerning its actions in Ethiopia in July 1935. Secretary of State Hull informed Italian Ambassador Augusto Rosso that the United States "view[ed] the Italo-Ethiopian conflict with the greatest concern." This sounded ominous, but these were just words because at that point there was no presidential option for action beyond this symbolic "declaration of principles".[25] Roosevelt later sent a personal message to Mussolini asking that "the controversy between Italy and Ethiopia...be resolved without resort to armed conflict."[26] Neither of these pleas provoked the desired response.

The League of Nations held as much promise as any alternative available to the Americans at that time, but once again the isolationists in Congress had effectively blocked any real American support for that organization. Many in the United States still resented the idea of a League of Nations, and some attributed the worldwide economic collapse to the failure of the Treaty of Versailles, which had established the basis for the league at the end of World War I.[27]

---

[25] Memorandum by Secretary of State Hull on November 22, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 826-827; and Vera Micheles Dean. "Saving League at Ethiopia's Expense?" *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 14:38 (July 19, 1935).

[26] Message from Secretary of State Hull to American Chargè Kirk in Italy instructing him to relay the President's message on August 18, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 739.

[27] The Treaty of Versailles. War reparations were directly related to the collapse of the world economic markets, and contributed to the American collapse in 1929.

The world community was watching as Italy violated the independence of Ethiopia and numerous treaties, including the Kellog-Briand Pact. President Roosevelt was forced to make a choice between fighting for his personal beliefs and risking the failure of his domestic programs, or accepting the foreign policy limitations placed upon him by the congressional isolationist faction. He could have pursued the position he enumerated earlier, that the United States "could not be indifferent to a violation of a treaty to which it is a party,"[28] and taken some steps to punish Italy and help Ethiopia. He chose, however, to adopt the position that America did not have to take any action because "the Kellog treaty [did] not provide for automatic intervention" in the event of a violation against a signatory.[29] Using this weakness in the wording of the treaty as an excuse rather than admitting that these policies were inherently contradictive, President Roosevelt instituted no significant action to stop Italy or to help Ethiopia.

Most Americans would not have felt poorly over the loss of Ethiopian independence to Italy at this point. Ethiopia was not a major world power, and the racial issues tended to frame the conflict in racial terms rather than on the principles of independence and human rights. Americans were not willing to risk involvement in a foreign conflict when those being threatened were not white. Mussolini had been able to put the Ethiopian issue into "the shape of a contest between the black and white races," and the American public was concerned

---

[28] *Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, Vol II,* 622.

[29] F.D.R. to George Peek, November 22, 1935, *Personal Letters.*

about the increased racial "problems" at home as much or more than the freedom issues in Ethiopia.[30] Ethiopia was a nation of "blackamoors," and the issue was presented as an example of a greater race overwhelming a lesser people.[31] Americans were basing their judgment in this instance on the "oft repeated practice of viewing foreign people through the lenses of racial categories at home."[32] The principle of Justice in this instance was overshadowed by the contest between the light and the dark races, and Americans often would not support the Ethiopian cause as a result.

The American public was in a dilemma over fulfilling their "humanity and sense of justice" by supporting Ethiopia[33] and maintaining "racial solidarity" even at the expense of "Christian brotherhood, international law, ...and other established international norms."[34] The racial aspect of the Ethiopian crisis galvanized the "black American press and churches" who identified with the plight of the Ethiopians and "publiciz[ed] the Ethiopian crisis in the United States."[35] This public response to the Italian-Ethiopian crisis served to further

---

[30] Telegram from U. S. Ambassador to the U.K. Bingham to Secretary of State on July 9, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 613.

[31] "Ethiopia," *Time* 26:1 (January 6, 1936), 15.

[32] Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 10.

[33] Anne Rice Pierce, *Woodrow Wilson and Harry Truman: Mission and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 27.

[34] Ayele Berkerie, "African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War," in *Revisioning Italy: National Identity and Global Culture* eds Beverly Allen and Mary Russo (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 121.

complicate the domestic argument over what actions should be taken in response to Italian aggression. In terms of principles, supporting Ethiopia was the right thing to do. However, the fear of the racial unrest caused by another Ethiopian victory over Italy was a substantial concern for many observers and people who had interests in the existing imperial system in Africa. The importance of maintaining the white race's "prestige" forced many to conclude that an Ethiopian victory would "bring more danger to the world" [36] than an Italian takeover of that country would bring.[37]

The loss of Ethiopian independence to Italy was not significant in a tactical or strategic sense. Ethiopia's takeover by Italy was not immediately recognizable as damaging to American interests, but America's lack of any significant reaction to this act of aggression and violation of standing treaties was. Roosevelt wanted the world community to accept the United States as a world leader. Roosevelt had promised to "dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor",[38] but this failure to support this idea weakened it, and demonstrated to the world that Roosevelt and the United States would go to great lengths to avoid any action to support agreements such as these.

---

[35] Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 11.

[36] Stephen Gwynn, "Ebb and Flow," *Fortnightly Review* (London) November 1935, 615.

[37] Abyssinian dangers included, "possible race riot from Cairo to the Cape." Telegram from Chargè in France Marriner to Secretary of State on August 11, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 626.

[38] Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* 39.

As previously demonstrated, at this point there were few if any other options available to the President. Congress had dictated one course of action with the passage of the Neutrality Act of 1935, and its extension in 1936.[39] Congress had discouraged active American involvement in overseas affairs before the passage of that act by threatening the passage of Roosevelt's "new deal" legislation if he attempted any acts that they considered "unneutral."[40]

Without some exceptional show of courage and a battle with Congress, Roosevelt was left powerless. He was acutely aware that this legislation weakened him, as evidenced by his message to Ambassador William C. Bullitt, where he opined that "...no European Capitol in the present confusion cares a continental damn what the Unites States thinks or does."[41] America had announced to the world, inadvertently, that it would do nothing. Roosevelt's did not have the authority to take corrective action if Italy did not comply with his requests. Mussolini recognized that Roosevelt had no option for reprisal if Italy displeased America and ignored the plea for peace. Beyond complaining about the lack of a truly neutral position by the United States,[42] Italy ignored the appeals for peaceful arbitration.

---

[39] "Neutrality Act of August 31, 1935: Joint Resolution," U.S. Department of State Publication 1983 *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 265-271. "Year Extension for Neutrality Act is Program," *Chicago Daily Tribune.* (February 13, 1936), 10.

[40] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 303.

[41] F.D.R. to William C. Bullitt April 21, 1935, *Personal Letters,* 476.

[42] Telegram from Ambassador Long in Italy to Secretary of State Hull on November 21, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 822.

President Roosevelt liked to think of the United States as a major world power, and this attitude was reflected in his remarks concerning the international relations between "less powerful nations" and the "strong" United States.[43] This sounded good, but instead of engaging itself in world affairs through organizations like the League of Nations, the United States attempted to pick its own course and intervene or abstain in foreign matters based upon nationalistic whims and domestic concerns.

Roosevelt claimed that he was unable to fully realize his desire to intervene in the matters of the European nations because of the restrictions placed upon him by the two "Neutrality Acts" passed by Congress in 1935 and 1936. At a time when the Ethiopian problem, as well as the increasingly aggressive posture of Hitler foreshadowed the impending breakdown of peace in Europe, Roosevelt had been "stripped of [any] power to throw his country's weight against aggressors."[44] The isolationists in Congress had placed the United States in the position that even "if the civilization in Europe is about to destroy itself through international strife...the United States [would] stand idly by", believing that they could rest on their declaration of neutrality without suffering any ill effects, and all the while avoiding involvement.[45]

---

[43] Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "I Hate War," August 14, 1936. In *Development of United States Foreign Policy: Addresses and Messages of Franklin D. Roosevelt* available at http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188title.html. Accessed 7-17-2002.

[44] Burns, *Roosevelt,* 256.

[45] F.D.R. to Edward M. House September 17, 1935, *Personal Letters,* 507.

While these statements showed that Roosevelt was aware of his situation and the possible consequences, the scope of his disappointment belied his own failure to take a strong public stand on the foreign policy issue at this time. Roosevelt failed to take the principle of a strong, workable foreign policy to heart, and build the necessary support for his programs by establishing "popular attitudes" among the American people "that he could later evoke in support of his" internationalist policies.[46] Roosevelt instead chose to shore up support for his domestic policies rather than fight for his ideals. He vacillated between foreign policy positions, moving toward an internationalist position when possible, and then retreating to the popular isolationist position "as political conditions required."[47] He was a "pussyfooting politician" who moved with the flow, and safeguarded his political position, supporting isolationism"[48] instead of prosecuting his dream for the United States to become a real player in world affairs. The American people followed his lead, and supported several conflicting foreign policy positions, "from isolationism to neutralism to participation in world politics."[49] Similarly because of his stated desire to stay out of "foreign entanglements" and "foreign wars," Roosevelt should have increased his support for the League of Nations, however, he was unwilling to fight Congress, and so

---

[46] Burns, *Roosevelt,* 263.

[47] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 311; and Burns, *Roosevelt, 247.*

[48] Ibid., 262.

[49] Ibid., *248.*

he "drifted" away from his internationalist stance to a safer political position as each situation warranted.[50]

Roosevelt applied sanctions against Italy and Ethiopia primarily in accordance with the Neutrality Acts, but also as a punitive measure against Italy. Italy suffered a greater loss of trade than Ethiopia because of its industrial economy and world trade status, Ethiopia was denied war materials that it could not have purchased or shipped anyway.[51] Italy, however, had built up its supplies, and except for certain raw materials was able to produce its own war materials sufficient to prosecute the war. The loss of a source of these raw materials may have frustrated Italy, but it did not stop them from continuing their campaign to subjugate Ethiopia.

Roosevelt was willing to compromise many of his high ideals in order to maintain his political viability. During his initial term as president, Roosevelt declared his focus to be on the "establishment of a sound national economy"[52] and so he "gave first priority to domestic policies."[53] While he had previously supported the Wilsonian principles embodied by the League of Nations, Roosevelt abandoned that organization, showing just "how far he would

---

[50] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists," 312.

[51] Telegram form American Chargè Engert in Ehtiopia to Secretary of State Hull on October 30, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol I, 777.

[52] Franklin D. Roosevelt Inaugural Address on March 4, 1933. *Works of Franklin D Roosevelt* available at http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1933a.htm.

[53] Burns, *Roosevelt,* 263.

compromise...to realize immediate goals."[54] His immediate goal was, at this point, re-election[55], while the necessity for national leadership was apparently secondary.

Roosevelt's desire to revitalize the American economy also produced a series of concerns that further complicated the desire for isolationism and neutrality, and highlighted the contradictions between these two policy positions. By 1935, Roosevelt had accepted the fact that America could not recover from the depression unilaterally and needed to work with other nations to some degree. Roosevelt also recognized that his economic policy would act as a weather vane to indicate America's willingness to cooperate with other countries, and if his domestic programs suffered at the hands of a hostile Congress, then his international reputation would also suffer. The significance of the 1919-20 congressional snub of Wilson's League of Nations plan could not have been lost on Roosevelt. The "moral embargo" that the administration attempted to impose upon exports of materials other than "implements of war"[56] such as wheat, copper, and cotton, represented his effort to do something to inhibit the Italians ability to carry on their war, and possibly help the Ethiopians while avoiding a confrontation with congress over neutrality. This was a feeble attempt to bring logistical pressure on the Italians, and favor Ethiopia, and it violated the spirit of true neutrality. In this example, while this policy had a questionable effect on

---

[54] Ibid., 247.

[55] Ibid., 263.

[56] Harris, *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis,* 78.

Italy, it did interfere with domestic economic growth and commerce, which was already suffering from the worldwide depression. Actions that were intended to further world peace did not produce the desired result, and actually increased the economic situation in America.

The Roosevelt administration seemed to grasp at straws and look to unlikely sources for a solution to the building tension in Ethiopia, and in Europe. It held the seemingly absurd hope that the League of Nations could "crowd Italy out of Africa,"[57] and stop the impending war. While Roosevelt "continued to picture American involvement as the surest means to an effective foreign policy,"[58] he failed to exercise leadership and exert pressure on Congress to support his ideals. As a result he found his executive authority limited in matters of foreign policy in general and was unable to offer more than "moral support" to the Ethiopians and to the ongoing peace efforts of the League of Nations.[59] Congressional isolationists were able to pass the Neutrality Acts, believing they would insure American non-involvement in the Ethiopian conflict. These acts damaged the stature of the United States in the world community because they limited any international action the United States could take. They announced "to the world in advance" that the United States would not intervene in any conflict, regardless of past policies for that area.[60]

---

[57] Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and The Fox, 589.*

[58] Dallek, *Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* 14.

[59] Ibid., *256.*

The premise of establishing a lasting peace through a balance of power in Europe provided the foundation of American foreign policy at the end of the World War I, and Americans tried to be counselors rather than participants in the process. While America felt secure under the Monroe Doctrine and Theodore Roosevelt's "Big Stick" policy umbrella in the Western Hemisphere,[61] in Europe the balance of power system of peace among Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany was "forever discredited" in World War I.[62] The Great War caused many to change their pre-war ideas about international relations. The belief that justice and peace were ubiquitous motivations among the countries of the world was being shown to be false as the Ethiopian crisis developed. International cooperation was found to be a viable alternative only when the nations in question as well as the more powerful nations were willing to put aside their individual interests in the pursuit of the greater good.[63]

The American response was to withdraw from these half-hearted efforts by other countries and let the events in Europe play out as they might. This response failed to take into account the changing condition of world communication and international relations, and ignored the possible impact of

---

[60] *Roosevelt and Foreign Policy,* 626.

[61] These policies relied on the military and industrial dominance of America in dealing with less powerful nations. These nations would be forced to comply with the wishes of the dominant power in the western hemisphere. These methods did not lend themselves well to the European situation.

[62] Samuel Flagg Bemis, "The Shifting Strategy of American Defense and Diplomacy" in *Essays in History and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee* (Worchester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1949), 9.

[63] Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs 1934-1935,* 10.

these overseas conflicts on America. President Woodrow Wilson supported the idea of collective security in Europe, promising to replace several essentially equally powerful nations with a consortium of powers who, collectively, would keep the peace through "common action" resulting from the "international obligations" that defined membership in the League.[64] Wilson, however, but could not gain the domestic support for an active American role in the League. This plan for world peace failed because it required the collective effort and support of several powerful nations in order to work effectively. The damage that the League had suffered in the immediate post-war period, beginning with the failure of the United States to become a member, reduced the possibility that the organization would be able to do anything about Italy and Ethiopia.

No collective effort was possible when Italy violated the spirit of international law that recognized the right of independent nations to exist. Italy violated the League of Nations charter by committing acts of aggression against another member of the League. Mussolini also ignored the plea for peace from Roosevelt in August 1935 and violated the spirit of the Kellog-Briand pact. The principle of collective security in the 1930s and the League of Nations was dead.[65]

Roosevelt might have been able to affect public opinion similar to how Wilson was able to do, if he had chosen to make a fight for his ideals, supported

---

[64] *Arbitration, Security and Reduction of Armaments,* League of Nations General Report (October 1, 1924), 2. Available at http:// digital.library.northwestern.edu/league/le000009.pdf.

[65] William E. Dodd, American Ambassador in Germany to Secretary of State, August 22, 1935, FRUS *1935* Vol. I, 636.

as he was by the internationalist faction. Roosevelt also believed that he, as the chief executive of the United States, should have had the ability to support some nations and oppose others through economic sanctions that would be applied at his discretion as situations arose. This attitude would have allowed the United States to maintain the trade necessary for its economic health, gain a stronger leadership role in World affairs, and keep the peace. The primary failings in Roosevelt's stance were the tenuous control he had over his domestic programs, and his lack of the willingness to gamble his political position in order to win policy battles that would in turn benefit the nation.

With a more bold approach to the issue, Roosevelt might have won out over Congress, and the world situation may have progressed differently than it did. Roosevelt had the authority to pursue his foreign policy goals with little congressional interference. As a matter of tradition, the president had great leeway in the execution of foreign policy. The Supreme Court solidified this authority with its 1936 decision in *United States vs. Curtiss-Wright Export Company.* The court ruled that there existed a "very delicate, plenary and exclusive power of the President as the sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations," and also found that this power did "not require as a basis for its exercise an act of congress."[66]

[66] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 313.

President Roosevelt was, however, a politician first, and he was aware of "the overwhelming desire of the American people to stay out of war."[67] He was also aware of the political clout of the congressmen and senators who would oppose his internationalist policies. He moved carefully lest he should have upset his own domestic political applecart.

As the European situation worsened, the United States should have taken more of an active role in world affairs than it did. If the domestic political system had been more inclined to open discussion and had been focused on the good of the nation as a whole, then decisions could have been made that would have lessened the severity of the Second World War, and reduced the damage sustained by the United States, and the rest of the world. The problem was that the American legislative system was encumbered with special interest groups who were able to influence American foreign policy to favor their own individual ideals, while ignoring the majority of the population, not to mention the best course of action for the nation.

Wilson accepted the parallel eventuality in 1917 and changed his pacifist/isolationist foreign policy position to that of interventionist. But even while doing so, he clung to his high moral position and couched the change of policy in terms of his peace principles. "It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than the peace, and

[67] Ibid., 316.

we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts."[68] Wilson wrapped himself tightly in the banner of pacifism, even as those convictions proved flawed in practice, and painted himself as a tragic/heroic figure, forced into taking this distasteful but necessary course of action. This presentation of the situation caused Congress and the public to allow themselves to be easily disabused of their previous principles, and they quickly fell in behind President Wilson to support the American war effort.[69]

President Roosevelt wanted the United States to assume a role in the current affairs of Europe, believing that "the United States could...increase the possibility of peace in the 1930s by using its power to discourage potential aggressors from provoking war." He had to move slowly, however, because "he was handicapped by the 'isolationist' attitude of the American people and particularly powerful opposition in Congress."[70] President Roosevelt did not abandon his efforts to influence foreign affairs, even though he "was fearful of arousing effective public opposition to his policies." He took advantage of those concessions he was given by Congress, and adopted a generally ineffective, "step-at-a-time, short-of-

---

[68] Cooper, *Warrior and the Priest,* 322.

[69] I am not criticizing the patriotism represented by this phenomenon; it is, rather, an example of the limited effectiveness of the process by which the public was kept informed. The public addresses that were supposedly informative in nature were in fact intended to elicit the maximum support for a public figure, in this case Wilson, and the ease with which the public's attitudes are changed shows how shallow the information exchange between politician and public really was. If the public was in control of government policy, then it would stand to reason that this reversal of policy would have been initiated by public action, not reaction to what they were being told by President Wilson.

[70] Cole, "American Entry into World War II," 603.

war approach"[71] to the problems overseas. Most of these concessions were won in a battle with his foreign policy opponents in the Congress, using the public and private interplay that characterized the political process of that time.

Starting in the early 1930s, Senator Key Pittman "was in the middle of the struggle between the [senate] isolationists and [the Roosevelt] internationalists for control of foreign policy"[72] and acted as the president's representative in the senate. Pittman was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee between 1933 and 1940, and while he was recognized as the president's man, he allowed his own political savvy to temper and tone down any attempts by Roosevelt to gain control of foreign policy that might have endangered "pending or imminent vital domestic legislation."[73] Most importantly, Pittman played a role in the neutrality legislation debate in 1935 and 1936, which directly addressed presidential power and foreign policy. Senator Nye and the Committee members had taken an active role in limiting presidential authority by "securing the passage of neutrality legislation, both in 1935 and in 1936"[74] to achieve this goal. Nye stated in the report that "this legislation represent[ed] a great and wholesome advance in the interests of keeping this Nation out of foreign wars."[75] By being able to hold New Deal legislation hostage to their views, these pacifists

---

[71] Ibid., 605.

[72] Cole, "Senator Key Pittman and American Neutrality Policies," 644.

[73] Ibid., 649.

[74] Senate report 944, pt 3 p 2.

[75] Ibid.

and isolationist congressmen both took advantage of Roosevelt's desire for a secure political position, and the nation lost in the end. Roosevelt never attempted to clearly define his foreign policy and wavered from one position to another as the political situation required. He wanted the United States to be involved in world affairs, but he also wanted to be politically successful, and so his foreign policy goals were sacrificed to his domestic political goals, passage of New Deal legislation, and his own re-election.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

American foreign policy in the 1930s was formed based upon the same principles that guided foreign policy formation in the 1910s. With the exception of the bad memories from the most recent war, the political situation in America in the 1930s was very similar to the situation immediately preceding the First World War. President Wilson established some specific precedents when he was forced to change his stance on neutrality by how he gained public support for his policy changes and how Congress foiled his post-war plans. These events prior to the First World War can be compared to similar events in the interwar period, and a pattern emerges that shows these parallel policy positions, as well as similar results.

Beginning with the establishment of the colonies in North America and continuing through World War I, the United States had enjoyed an economy based heavily upon international export and trade, as well as the wealth and authority that came from technological development of its industry, production, and trade with the rest of the world. The First World War allowed the United States to emerge as an economic force, and Americans assumed this role gladly.

The ability to choose when to be interested in foreign affairs, however, was no longer available because of this new role in the world community. Whether or not the principle policy makers understood this, the United States had become

part of an international community and was forced to accept this to a limited degree in 1939,[1] and commit to the concept totally in 1941.

The proof of this was the same proof used by isolationists to justify non-entanglement in foreign affairs in the early 20th century, namely that "the fundamental causes for American involvement in the [First World] war [occurred] ...in other parts of the world."[2] Isolationists argued that complete isolation from foreign political affairs would prevent any involvement in future wars. The argument that disentanglement from foreign events would insulate the United States from foreign wars was flawed because some very basic issues were ignored. The increasing post-war trade and communication with the rest of the world had changed the dynamics of international relations.

The same "fundamental cause" argument served the internationalist side of the argument as well. Events overseas had caused American involvement in the First World War, and these events had not respected the Americans' intention to remain neutral. The internationalists argued that preventing war was central to avoiding involvement in a war; therefore, involvement in political affairs afforded a better opportunity for the United States to control events, possibly forestall conflicts, and if those conflicts proved to be unavoidable, lessen the resulting

---

[1] Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: A Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 27. Quoting Majorie Kinnan Rawlings who argued that the lack of American involvement in European affairs after World War I resulted in the German aggression in Poland, and in the need to amend the Neutrality Acts in 1939, "Knowing that American participation in a League of Nations with teeth in it, would have avoided all of this."

[2] Cole, "American Entry into World War II: A Historigraphical Appraisal," 606.

damage.[3] The failure to recognize this fact before World War I was more excusable than the repeat of the same mistake in the period before World War II. The pacifists and the isolationists chose to deny that America's future was intertwined with that of Europe, while the internationalists argued that it was and could not be ignored. The internationalists were proven correct in believing that foreign problems would find America regardless of how committed the United States was to avoiding them. In their view, the best hope was to control as many of the circumstances as possible, and thereby control the resulting damage. There existed a great deal of evidence that tended to support the internationalist position even before 1939, but the isolationists, much to the detriment of the nation, ignored it.

These two major arguments defined the formation of American foreign policy in the 1930s. President Roosevelt was more closely aligned with the internationalists, but the isolationists, in cooperation with the domestic pacifist movement, had an undeniable political presence and were able to prevail in the resulting competition for dominance over foreign policy.

Even though President Roosevelt possessed an internationalist view of the roles America could have played in the events of the 1930s his failure to act increased his difficulties at home. He could not gain passage of his pet legislation at home without majority support in Congress. While he did have enough votes to pass many of his domestic programs, his support in Congress

---

[3] Drummond, *The Passing of American Neutrality,* 27.

for the new deal programs did not mirror support for his foreign policy. Some congressmen and senators who supported his domestic programs opposed internationalism and interventionism overseas.[4] When problems arose, Roosevelt was forced to make choices between his foreign policy and his domestic policy. He readily sacrificed his principle of world order and world peace in order to salvage his political viability at home.

Isolationist principles were flawed. There were arguments that tended to prove that America was dependent upon the world economy and could not maintain its current levels of industrial production and economic recovery by purely domestic means. The economic collapse and subsequent depression of the 1920s that put one-fourth of the workforce in America out of work is evidence of this. Foreign markets had to be available to move the products of American industry in order for the industrial capability of the United States to expand and for production to increase to the level that would put America back to work. The United States had to have been involved in foreign affairs in order to grow or even survive at this point.

Americans had to depend on the international principles of neutrality in order to pursue their foreign trade opportunities, but were unwilling to exercise those principles when they were needed most. During foreign wars and conflicts they expected to be able to continue normal communication and trade in the war zones. They would have needed to exhibit a great deal more patience and

---

[4] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 303.

forgiveness, and would have to have been willing to abandon their European economic interests as well as avoiding involvement in those overseas political conflicts in order to keep out of those foreign conflicts.

America seemed to expect that the Europeans would conform to a hybrid form of international relations. Their standards and conduct during their war would be modified to extend some sort of special protection to American property and interests regardless of how those American interests might have conflicted with Great Britain's or Germany's, such as delivering materials to the warring parties. The idea that America could claim neutrality and proceed to ignore the circumstances in Europe while continuing to trade with all parties was not based upon reason or reality.

After World War I, America returned to the pre-war attitude of isolationism as a basis for its foreign policy. The fault for this recidivism lies mainly with the political leaders in America. The nuances of international relations were neither simple nor easily understood, yet President Roosevelt was willing to let his isolationist opponents as well as public opinion, as uninformed as it was, guide his foreign policy decisions. He was not alone in this course of action, several of the activists within the pacifist and isolationist camps took pains to influence public opinion in favor of their positions in order to gain that public support. The result was that U.S. foreign policy in the period leading up to and through the Italian-Ethiopian war of 1935-1936 was not well defined, and Roosevelt failed to improve existing or implement more workable foreign policies.

This lack of leadership allowed competing interest groups to bring their conflict with each other into the public arena and affect foreign policy to the detriment of America's best interests in the long run. Americans did not learn from these mistakes as the situation progressed and failed to remedy the foreign policy shortcomings until the next big world crisis developed. The Italian-Ethiopian conflict was the major international event that brought the policy shortcomings to light, and was the seminal event that caused the United States to chose a path, which was isolationism, and then try to craft new policies and legislation to fulfill its purpose which was to prosper economically and maintain its neutrality during this and future foreign wars.

President Roosevelt's efforts to implement his domestic policies and improve the domestic situation in America stood at the "forefront in his concerns."[5] While Roosevelt held the personal opinion that internationalism was the best choice for the country, he chose not to endanger his domestic political goals by pursuing his own policies. He avoided taking a confrontational stance toward his opponents in Congress by taking his message to the public as President Wilson had done previously with some success. Instead "Roosevelt [followed] Congress in a policy of rabid isolationism" and allowed the neutrality acts to be passed without a public fight.[6] In doing so he illustrated that he lacked the leadership initiative to fight for what were to become vital American interests in Europe and Africa.

---

[5] Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy, 39.*

[6] Divine, *Second Chance, 25.*

The pacifist/isolationist groups repeated the same mistakes prior to World War II that they had made prior to the first war, and again failed to achieve their ultimate goal of peace for America. In the process, they exerted pressure on the Congress to pass laws that served to weaken the authority of the president, and weaken the international standing of the United States.[7] In their minds, the Ethiopian crisis was an example of one of the mistakes of the last war. It would have been a serious mistake for the United States to become involved "in what bore the appearance of another colonial arrangement among Britain, France, and Italy."[8] They resisted American involvement in the Ethiopian affair even though the crisis was recognized as having long-rang effects on peace and the balance of power in the world at that time. If the crisis were "allowed to progress to the point of actual hostilities, it may involve half the world in a catastrophe and change the foundations of political society."[9]

The attempts by the isolationists and the pacifists prior to the First World War and during the interwar period that followed are prime examples of political factions influencing American foreign policy in order to further their own separate agendas, and in the process allowing, and sometimes exacerbating, the very evil

---

[7] American Neutrality Act "would be a blow to the collective system which Geneva is trying to put through." Secretary of State Hull to President Roosevelt, October 5, 1935. *FRUS 1935,* Vol. 1, 798.

[8] Harris, *The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict,* 32.

[9] Ambassador Long's telegram to Secretary of State on September 12, 1935, *FRUS 1935* Vol. 1, 749. The crisis was also seen as "a challenge to the League of Nations." American Chargè to the United Kingdom Atherton telegram to the Secretary of State on August 22, 1935. Ibid., 636. The Italo-Ethiopian war could "spread into a world conflagration." "Ethiopia," *Time* 27:1 (January 6, 1936), 13.

they claimed to have been fighting. Particularly in the power struggles for control of foreign policy between the Congress and the presidents after World War I, these battles became especially damaging. The Neutrality Acts did not keep America insulated from foreign wars. They did succeed in informing "the world that the United States was not only unwilling to lend a hand in halting aggression," but because of the threat to embargo all participants in a foreign conflict, "[10] it was also bent upon "discouraging European collective efforts" to stop aggressors in the future.[11] These efforts failed to prevent the very event that all sides in this multifaceted struggle for power over foreign policy claimed to be working to avoid, American involvement in World War II.

The process of policy formation is key to these failures, and a major factor in this process is how these competing groups co-opted public policy to their own will, and used publicity campaigns to gain political support. The pacifists and the isolationists recycled the same arguments that were used before World War I while ignoring how those previous machinations failed to keep American isolated from world conflicts. The horror of the First World War was introduced as a new point in the argument against internationalism in the 1930s, but otherwise the argument remained the same. This new type of war was a cautionary example of the advanced technology the world was now facing. The honor and glory of

---

[10] The neutrality Acts would have required the U.S. to embargo shipments of materials to England if a conflict broke out between England and Italy as a result of the tension over Ethiopia. Communication between Ambassador Long in Italy to Secretary of State Hull, October 9, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol 1, 669.

[11] Adler, *The Uncertain Giant,* 175.

battle was replaced by the wholesale slaughter of men on the technologically advanced battlefields of Europe that produced massive casualties without victory.

The pacifists/isolationists publicized the idea that the quarrels in Europe were as they had been in the past, localized events that could have either been attended to or ignored by the people of the United States as they wished. This logic was pleasing to Americans who did not want another war. The public was presented with no alternate view, and their response to the pacifist/isolationists' political viewpoints[12] was based on one side of the argument, and not balanced by any public argument from President Roosevelt. He could have taken his side of the policy question to the public and gained public support for his position like President Wilson had been able to do little more than one decade earlier, but he did not.

Political influence within the American democratic system was one major factor in the formation of foreign policy. The isolationists utilized the American democratic process and took their arguments to the public in order to gain that influence. They then used the public response to their arguments as proof of support for their positions. In the pursuit of these individual goals the big picture was obscured and the grand design of what was good for the country as a whole was lost. The groups at the center of this issue all claimed to have a clear purpose and prophesied terrible consequences if their particular agenda was not followed. The public, lacking in the necessary education and without being in

[12] Rhodes, *U.S. Foreign Policy,* 139.

possession of all of the facts, chose "peace" and "neutrality" over "entanglement" even when those choices were not realistic, and did not truthfully describe the results of the policies.

The stronger coalition consisting of the pacifists and the isolationists resisted any movement toward greater American involvement with foreign countries in Africa and Europe, and won the public opinion battle. They were then able to dictate at least part of the Roosevelt foreign policies through the Neutrality Acts.

President Roosevelt was not without options in this battle. All of the groups were agreed on the need to avoid involvement in another war. This point of agreement could have been the central meeting point for these groups, and could have been a vehicle for Roosevelt to take control of the controversy. Roosevelt could have pursued this continuity of purpose by using the mechanisms that were already in place by 1934, and he might have experienced some success.

Roosevelt's attempt to achieve disarmament on an international level meshed with the pacifist's similar efforts. Likewise the isolationists and the business interests, except for arms dealers, could hardly have objected to the principle of disarmament. The League of Nations, which was based upon these same goals, already existed and could have provided the one venue that could have moved these issues from theoretical principles and political bombast to reality. The main sticking point here was that these efforts involved international agreements and treaties. Involvement with other world powers offended the isolationists and

those who supported neutrality, but these movements had been persuaded to compromise in the past, and they might have been persuaded in this instance too.

Peace organizations opposed imperialism by the world powers, and to varying degrees so did the other groups, depending upon their operative definition of Imperialism. The Italian threat to Ethiopia was an example of imperialist action, and this could have been a second point that Roosevelt could have cited as a basis for collaboration on foreign policy and possibly even the achievement of some real victories for everyone, but he did not recognize, or was afraid to pursue this course of action.

The lesson learned from the First World War should have been that it was not possible to completely isolate an industrialized country from foreign events. The European conflicts had the potential of involving the United States regardless of her neutral or altruistic motives. America had become involved in World War I not by choice or by policy, but by vital necessity because of this international codependence and communication.

While Roosevelt "continued to picture American involvement as the surest means to an effective foreign policy,"[13] he failed to exercise leadership, and exert pressure on Congress to support his ideals. As a result he found his executive authority limited in matters of foreign policy in general, and was unable to offer anything more constructive than "moral support" to the Europeans and to the

[13] Dallek, *Roosevelt and Foreign Policy,* 14.

world community until the situation had progressed "beyond the ongoing peace efforts of the League of Nations."[14]

President Roosevelt contributed further to the success of his opponents on foreign policy by keeping his policy preferences private, and embracing the isolationist legislation in public.[15] When the Congress was debating the passage of the first Neutrality Act,[16] President Roosevelt wanted the United States to assume a role in the current affairs of Europe. He believed that "the United States could... increase the possibility of peace in the 1930s by using its power to discourage potential aggressors from provoking war." He had to move slowly, however, because "he was handicapped by the 'isolationist' attitude of the American people and particularly powerful opposition in Congress."[17]

President Roosevelt did not abandon his efforts to influence foreign affairs, even though he "was fearful of arousing effective public opposition to his policies." He took advantage of any concessions he was given by Congress, and adopted a generally ineffective, "step-at-a-time, short-of-war approach" to the problems overseas.[18] Most of these concessions came about because of

---

[14] Ibid., 256.

[15] "Roosevelt asserts Neutrality Resolution will be sole guide in Ethiopian Dispute," *New York Times* (September 14, 1935), 1.

[16] Text of Roosevelt's statement on approval of the Neutrality Act of 1935. *Development of United States Foreign Policy* http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188-03.html. Accessed 7-17-2002.

[17] Cole, "American Entry into World War II," 603.

[18] Ibid., 605.

increasing foreign crises, and not because of Roosevelt's opposition to isolationism.

As the Ethiopian crisis progressed Roosevelt and his State Department invoked the mandatory provisions of the act in order to avoid taking action in several instances where they were called on to take some action. Roosevelt let the Congress take the lead and avoided making any decisions. Senator Pittman even criticized the president's initiative in foreign policy when he stated, "no one today knows what is the foreign policy of our government."[19] This lack of a definite policy and presidential leadership in international affairs was discernable to foreign powers during this time as well. Haile Sellassie asked in July 1935 if the United States intended on enforcing or bringing the Kellogg-Briand Pact into play against Italy.[20] Great Britain, France,[21] and Italy also made inquires as to the invocation of the Pact in an effort to understand America's possible role in the crisis.[22] Each time the American answer was evasive and non-committal. The United States supported all attempts by the League of Nations to arbitrate the crisis, but would not take part as an interested non-League member or as an "absolutely impartial" third party. [23]

---

[19] Quoted by Betty Glad, *Key Pittman: The Tragedy of a Senate Insider* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 190.

[20] Note from Selassie to the government of the United States as transmitted by the American Charge in Ethiopia, George, on July 6, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol. 1, 726.

[21] Acting Secretary of State cable to Ambassador Dodd in Germany July 13, 1935. Ibid., 731.

[22] Ambassador Long cable to Secretary of State on November 21, 1935. Ibid., 822.

The United States had initiated the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact and publicly announced that it believed that the pact was "no less binding now than when it was entered into by the ...nations that are parties to it."[24] Privately Secretary of State Hull advised the president that he did find any portion within the pact that prescribed "any method of its invocation" other than to "appeal...to the belligerent countries to abide by their legal and moral obligations" as codified in the pact.[25]

The invocation of the "legal and moral obligations" is an example of another major factor in the formation of American foreign policy during this period. Americans were basing too many hopes on the principle of contract and laws. The continuing reference to the contractual obligations of the League Covenant and the Kellogg-Briand Pact[26] illustrates the American attitude that contracts could solve problems between nations, and that international relations could be dictated through contracts. This attitude can be excused to some degree because of the traditional American dependence upon contracts in their domestic lives.

---

[23] Telegram from Chargè Engert in Ethiopia to Secretary of State on September 10, 1935. Ibid., 744.

[24] Telegram to Ambassador Dodd in Germany from the Secretary of State on July 13, 1935. Ibid., 731.

[25] Telegram from Secretary of State Hull to President Roosevelt on October 13, 1935. Ibid., 773.

[26] "The time has come to utilize the Briand-Kellogg pact to prevent aggressive warfare." Senator James Pope as quoted by the *New York Times,* October 13, 1935, 1. "Italy and Ethiopia were reminded in positive terms of their obligation under the Pact of Paris." *New York Times* (October 13, 1935), 1.

The democratic system of the United States is based upon a contract between the government and the people in the form of the Constitution of the United States. American foreign relations during this period were focused upon business relations between American businesses and foreign concerns. These relations were controlled with contracts, which are an important part of the democratic-capitalist system. Americans held the contract in very high regard as a result of their experiences and their capitalist ideology.

The failure of this ideal in international political relationships came because the other signatories of the Pact and of the League covenant were not controlled by the same principles as the Americans were. Mussolini and Selassie were both leaders in countries whose systems were based upon a concentration of power in their respective governments, and not the general public. These leaders did not have the same respect for the sanctity of written contracts, and would abandon them in favor of alternative courses of action without much thought. There was no mechanism for enforcing the conditions of the Kellogg-Briand Pact; therefore these parties could easily ignore their contractual obligations because they faced no sanctions for doing so.

The United States seemed to ignore the ever-increasing evidence that the treaties and pacts were subject to the incidental whims of the individual signatories, and were not a concrete solution for the problems that arose between different countries. Americans chose to believe that these international contracts, like the business contracts that they were familiar with, were binding

and enforceable. They failed to consider, however, how the contracts would be enforced if one party chose to ignore them. International agreements such as those that made up the League of Nations Charter could have provided this regulating authority, but that was antithetical to the isolationist policy. Americans possessed "an extreme state of sentiment in favor of isolationism and every form of pacificism [sic]" and were "in violent opposition" to international obligations.[27] American foreign policy was in contradiction with itself as a result of this attitude.

The final factor affecting the formation of American foreign policy was the level of sophistication of the voting public in the United States. These citizens were regularly assailed with an "endless reiteration of a narrowly isolationist viewpoint" of foreign affairs through the radio, the newspapers, and in rallies and meetings held by the pacifists/isolationists.[28] Public support was garnered by using the tools of politics, speeches, congressional hearings, newspapers, and the radio. This support was based not upon a full understanding of the nuances of the international situation, but upon the basic emotional issues of pacifism.[29]

The vociferous isolationists/pacifists released bits of information explaining how the evil capitalist impulses of American industry brought the United States into the First World War. They offered as a solution the strict adherence to the principles of isolationism, supported by the findings of the Nye Committee, and enforced by the Neutrality Act of 1935. These arguments were not fully

---

[27] Memorandum from Secretary of State Hull on December 2, 1935. *FRUS 1935* Vol. 1, 866.

[28] Drummond, *The Passing of American Neutrality, 40.*

[29] Bolt, *Ballots before Bullets,* 133.

supported by the history of these policies, or the facts of the current situation, and this faction was guilty of misrepresentation of the issue to the public.

Roosevelt was guilty of timidity and obfuscation when he failed to take a firm stand and meet his opposition head on. Roosevelt was contributing to the problem when he publicly supported the Neutrality Acts and "deceived the American people"[30] by citing the act as the American answer to the crisis. He "deceived the American people concerning his policies and objectives in foreign affairs,"[31] when he should have been more forthcoming. He "was less than candid in explaining the objectives of American foreign policy on several occasions,"[32] when he did not prevail in his fight with Congress over neutrality and foreign policy.

America was caught in between these factions, and the American public was never fully informed. The foreign policy decisions that were made at that time were selfish and ineffective. Neutrality legislation had the further unfortunate effect of misleading potential aggressor nations by giving them reason to assume that the United States was indifferent to the use of war as an instrument of national policy."[33]

American policy makers' attempts to avoid overseas entanglements led to a multi-faceted foreign policy that was dominated by the Isolationist viewpoint.

---

[30] Cole, "American Entry into World War II," 606.

[31] Ibid., 608.

[32] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists," 304.

[33] Ibid.

Conversely, President Roosevelt had an intense desire for the United States to play a role in achieving world peace on a lasting basis, and he did make some feeble attempts at establishing an international presence for the United States, but only within the constraints that the competing power groups were imposing on him.

Roosevelt claimed publicly that Americans had "led or performed our full part in every important attempt" to achieve the goal of world peace,[34] but these attempts consisted mainly of pleas for peace and cooperation, and lacked real substance. Roosevelt's cable to over 50 world leaders regarding international support for Disarmament in 1933,[35] and his inquiry of Ambassador William E. Dodd in Germany concerning the possibility of whether "a gesture, an offer or a formal statement by me [Roosevelt] would, in your judgment, make for peace"[36] both had no effect. The international community disregarded these offers. Likewise Mussolini "ignored the United States" pleas for peace prior to Italy's invasion in October 1935 because he did not consider America to be as significant a threat to his plans for conquering Ethiopia as Great Britain and

---

[34] Franklin D. Roosevelt, Presidential Address on Armistice Day, November 11, 1935, Development *of United States Foreign Policy: Addresses and Messages of Franklin D. Roosevelt.* Available at http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188title.html. Accessed 7-17-2002.

[35] Franklin D. Roosevelt. Message to the Nations of The World Appealing for Peace by Disarmament and the End of Economic Chaos, May 16 1966. *Development of United States Foreign Policy: Addresses and Messages of Franklin D. Roosevelt,* Ibid.

[36] Dodd was a United States Diplomat in Berlin in 1936. This message was an attempt by Roosevelt to make his presence known to the Nazi regime, as well as an attempt to encourage peace in that region with the verbal or moral support of the United States. *F.D.R. His Personal Letters,* 571.

France were.[37] The good will of the United States at this juncture had little value to perspective recipients because the United States had so little influence on world affairs.

At the outbreak of hostilities in 1935, the United States had "given no indication of foreign policy [concerning] Italy and Ethiopia",[38] except for the continuation of "the individualist and isolationist policy, [which was] initiated when the United States disavowed the Treaty of Versailles."[39] Beyond this general policy of avoiding anything that threatened foreign involvement by the United States in foreign political matters, there was no proactive foreign policy that applied to European matters.

The Stimson Doctrine did little to hinder Japan's conquests in China when it was first developed January 1932, other than perhaps supplying a public statement of disapproval that the United States needed in order to make themselves feel better for having no other safe course of action to resort to at that time.[40] Secretary Hull expanded the scope of this policy to include any conquest Italy might make in Ethiopia, but this was done half-heartedly and was not expected to have any effect on the crisis.[41]

---

[37] Harris, *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis,* 43.

[38] William T. Stone, *Foreign Policy Bulletin* XIV: 48 (August 23, 1935).

[39] Hull, *Memoirs,* 127.

[40] *America as A World Power,* 222.

[41] "Breckinridge Long skeptically questioned [the workability of the Doctrine] urging instead that the President recognize the...fact." Robert A. Freidlander, "New Light on the Anglo-American Reaction to the Ethiopian War 1935-1936," *Mid-America* 45:2 (April 1963), 124.

America, Italy, Ethiopia, Great Britain, France, and fifty-eight other countries had signed the Kellog-Briand Pact in 1928.[42] The "anti-war" provisions of this pact specifically addressed incidents of aggression such as the Italian action against Ethiopia, and the spirit of the pact intended that the preponderance of the additional countries' opposition to acts of aggression would inhibit that aggression. In practice, the actions taken by Roosevelt were in line with the actions taken by the other signatories, namely hoping "that an amicable solution will be found and peace will be maintained"[43] and "consultation [and]...appeal by all of the signatories of the pact to the belligerent countries" to cease their actions.[44]

The Naval Power Treaty signed in 1922 by Great Britain, the United States, Japan, France, and Italy was in effect at this time, and was a tangential concern to the United States because of concerns that some actions taken in Europe, such as a military build-up, might incite an arms race with Japan. America believed that these acts and treaties were substantial and sufficient to protect American interests and to support her European allies, but when some concrete plan of action was necessary, when the trouble started, these acts were no more than words. Likewise, attempts to calm the situation with the United States post-war international influence met with failure. Roosevelt sent a personal message

---

[42] "The News-Week Abroad," *Newsweek* XI: 3 (July 20, 1935), 13.

[43] "U. S. Again Invokes Kellogg Pact," *New York Times* (September 13, 1935), 17.

[44] Secretary of State Hull communication to President Roosevelt on October 13, 1935, *FRUS 1935* Vol 1, 774.

to Mussolini in August 1935 asking Italy to avoid war in the interests of world peace, but as mentioned earlier, Mussolini ignored this plea.[45]

Congress had been addressing their concerns over America's foreign policy toward Italy and Ethiopia legislatively and passed the first Neutrality Act in 1935. This act included a mandate that required the president to impose trade embargoes on all involved parties in the event of a foreign war. Roosevelt would have preferred acts that included a provision that would allow the president to manipulate what was embargoed and against whom the restrictions would apply. This option would have allowed him to hurt the aggressor, and in effect take sides while maintaining an arguably neutral position.[46]

President Roosevelt was looking for an opportunity to take some action in response to the Ethiopian crisis that would reflect his interventionist tendencies, but Congress was looking for ways to hold him to a more isolationist position. Congress passed the Neutrality Acts in 1935 and 1936 in response to fears that Roosevelt would commit some act that would drag the United States into another foreign war. Questions about the domestic balance of power, between the Congress and the president, began to arise after the first new deal programs went into effect, and Congress took some liberties over the protests of the executive branch to encroach upon the traditional authority of the executive to establish foreign policy. The domestic policies that Roosevelt held dear were

---

[45] Personal Message to Mussolini, August 19, 1935, *Roosevelt and Foreign Policy,* 622.

[46] Pratt, A *History of United States Foreign Policy,* 344.

held hostage to protect these inroads of the legislative branch into the realm of executive powers. Congress passed the first neutrality act that included a mandatory embargo of implements of war to any belligerent, as opposed to the discretionary embargo Roosevelt preferred.

The pacifists/isolationists embraced an unreasonable nostalgia for the simpler times of the past. This view of a less complex world allowed them to ignore the fact that the modern world had succumbed to the ravages of modern technologies and economics. The belief that one country could turn back the clock and return to those simpler more peaceful times was so shortsighted and naïve that their very denial of this reality was instrumental in their failures.

President Wilson moved easily into the interventionist role and pursued an active role for America in the war as the best means to attain peace.[47] Likewise, Roosevelt's fight with Congress was not unattainable, and Roosevelt should have taken some action to prepare the United States militarily in order to put some weight behind his words when he supported the League of Nations. Wilson was able to reverse his stance and convince his detractors to support the war effort, and Roosevelt had that same potential, but allowed his politics to guide his actions. Between the senators and the president, their infighting increased the toll that both world wars took upon the United States, while failing to fulfill their personal political goals.

---

[47] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in Buffalo to the American Federation of Labor," *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* ed. Arthur S. Link et al. Vol 45, November 11, 1917-January 15, 1918. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 14.

Wilson had been able to redirect American's passionate hatred for war into a hatred of evil, and "identified [this evil] with one nation-Germany. Peace was held at bay by Prussianism, [and] victory became the prerequisite of progress."[48] The high principles of these groups were foiled by the realities of world, and thus the first major test of the national policy of pacifism/isolationism in the 20th century failed. Likewise the renewed effort to return to those pre-World War I policies and ideas would fail to achieve peace for America in 1941.

President Roosevelt could have played to the nationalists to make up for the support he would have lost in a fight with the isolationists. Nationalists supported a variation of the Isolationist policy that concentrated on "the traditional rights of neutrals to trade freely with anyone anywhere,"[49] and they looked to exploit the trade opportunities that foreign conflicts would present. This group believed that the United States had a responsibility to the domestic economy to exploit any opportunity that would bring money and trade back into the United States. They wanted trade to take a priority over ideals like those of the pacifists. Rebuilding the economy, and putting Americans back to work was more important than promoting high moral standards.

Roosevelt could have exercised the authority of the executive, which he was aware of but did not challenge until 1936. The Supreme Court held in *United States vs. Curtiss-Wright Export Company* that there existed a "very delicate,

---

[48] Charles Chatfield, "World War I and the Liberal Pacifist in the United States," *The American Historical Review* 75:7 (December 1970), 1921.

[49] Harris, *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis*, 21.

plenary and exclusive power of the President as the sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations." The Court also ruled that this power did "not require as a basis for its exercise an act of congress."[50] This political infighting did present a serious obstacle to the formation of a cohesive, workable foreign policy that Roosevelt may have been able to overcome if he had demonstrated the necessary leadership and political fortitude to fight for his ideals and for a workable policy, but he failed to do so.

Roosevelt could have followed the example set by President Wilson by pursuing his argument in the press, like his opponents were doing, and he could have shifted that public support to his cause. Roosevelt could have also developed some definite policies at this time, and so had some concrete alternatives to offer the public if he choose to fight the isolationists.

The United States lacked assertive leadership in the person of Franklin D. Roosevelt and relied too heavily on the inherent sanctity of the written contract as a tool to regulate international relations. The American public was too easily swayed by the one-sided arguments produced in this struggle, because of their lack of understanding and sophistication. Finally, the willingness to believe in the viability of isolationism as a workable foreign policy in spite of evidence to the contrary all led to the failure of American foreign policy during the interwar years.

Some objectives, such as world peace, cannot be achieved without either an agreement between the hostile powers, or some compelling power that can force

[50] Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists," 313.

the parties to respect the peace. To deny this reality is to ignore the pure mechanics behind the international community and the U.S. role in it. To pursue unrealistic, idealistic national goals by applying internal pressure on the national government through political means is counterproductive to the well-being of the nation, and sacrifices the good of the country and of the people to the prevailing group's narrow interpretation of the world situation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938. ed William E. Dodd Jr., and Martha Dodd. Intro Charles A Beard. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1941.

Carter, Boake. *Black Shirt Black Skin.* Harrisburg PA: Telegraph Press, 1935.

Chicago Daily Tribune, July 1934- July 1936.

Congressional Record 72, pt. 2. (January 6, 1930 to January 23, 1930). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1930.

Congressional Record 72, pt. 11 (June 23, 930 to July 3, 1930). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1930.

Congressional Record 75, pt. 5. (February 25 1932 to March 11, 1932). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1932.

Congressional Record 77, pt. 4. (May 12, 1933 to May 25, 1933). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933.

Congressional Record 78, pt. 4. (March 1, 1934 to March 14, 1934). Washington, D.C.. United States Government Printing Office, 1934.

Congressional Record 78, pt. 7. (April 18, 1934 to May 2, 1934). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1934.

Congressional Record 78, pt. 8. (May 3, 1934 to May 20, 1934). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1934.

Congressional Record 79, pt. 11. (July 22, 1935 to August 5, 1935). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1935.

Congressional Record 79, pt. 13. (August 19, 1935 to August 26, 1935). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1935.

Congress, Senate, Munitions Industry, *Hearings before the Special Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry,* 73rd Congress. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1935, 1936. Part 1, 2, 5.

Congress, Senate. Munitions Industry. *Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry, United States Senate.* Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1936. 7 Parts.

Dallas Morning News, October 1934-July 1936.

Dean, Vera Micheles. " The Breakdown of Collective Security" Foreign *Policy Bulletin* (V. XIV, no. 37, July 12, 1935) 1.

Detzer, Dorothy. *Appointment on the Hill.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1948.

Development of United States Foreign Policy: Addresses and Messages of Franklin D. Roosevelt, available at http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188title.html. Accessed 7-17-2002.

Engelbrecht, H. C. and F. C. Hanigen. *Merchants of Death: A Study of the International Armament Industry.* New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1934.

F D. R. His Personal Letters. Ed Elliott Roosevelt. New York: Duelle, Sloan and Pierce, 1950.

Foreign Policy Bulletin. Foreign Policy Association. New York: Kraus Reprint Company, 1968.

Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs. Vol. II, Mar 1934-Aug 1935. ed Edgar B. Nixon. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Harvard: Belknap, 1969.

Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs. Vol. III, Sept 1935-Jan 1937 ed Edgar B. Nixon. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Harvard: Belknap, 1969.

Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World. eds Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2003.

Gallup, George H. *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971.* New York: Random House, 1972.

"Great Britain: Parliament's Week," *Time* 26:2 (July 8, 1935), 16.

Gwynn, Stephen. "Ebb and Flow." *Fortnightly Review* (London) November 1935. 614.

Hull, Cordell. *Memoirs of Cordell Hull.* Vol I. New York: The McMillan Co, 1948.

Lansing, Robert. *The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921.

Levi, Carlo. *Christ Stopped at Eboli: The Story of a Year.* trans Frances Frenaye. New York: Noonday Press, 1989.

Lippman, Walter. "Britain and America: The Prospects of Political Cooperation in the Light of Their Paramount Interests." *Foreign Affairs* 13: 3, April 1935. 363-366.

Manheim, Frank J. "The United States and Ethiopia". *The Journal of Negro History.* V.17, 1932.

Masland, John W. "The "Peace" Groups Join Battle." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 4:4, December 1940, 664-673.

Mid-America: An Historical Review. Chicago: Loyola University, Institute of Jewish History, 1929.

Nesbitt, L. M. *Hell-Hole of Creation: The Exploration of Abyssinian Danakil.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935.

New International Year Book, The. ed. Frank H. Vizetelly. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1935.

"New Light on The Anglo-American Reaction to the Ethiopian War, 1935-1936" *The Journal of Modern History.* Vol. 45, No. 2. April 1963. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929.

Newsweek, (New York), July 1934-July 1936.

New York Times, May 1895-December 1896, June 1934-July 1936.

Nye, Gerald P "Is Neutrality Possible for America?" *Tomorrow in the Making.* eds John N. Andrews and Carl A. Marsden. New York: Whittlesey House, 1939. 420-435.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, transmitted to Congress, With the Annual Message of the President, December 8, 1885. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1886.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President, Transmitted to Congress December 2, 1895. Washington, D.C.. Government Printing Office, 1896.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1904. Washington, D.C.. United States Government Printing Office, 1905.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States With the Address of the President to Congress December 7, 1915. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1924.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1916 Supplement: The World War. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1929.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1919. Washington, D.C.. United States Government Printing Office, 1919.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States The Paris Peace Conference 1919. Washington, D.C.. United States Government Printing Office, 1929.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1927 Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1933. Washington, D.C.. United States Government Printing Office, 1949.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1934. Washington, D.C.. United States Government Printing Office, 1951.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1935. Washington, D.C.. United States Government Printing Office, 1953.

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1936. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1954.

Report of the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry. Senate Reports, 74th Congress, 2d Session. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1936.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. *Works of Franklin D. Roosevelt.* Available at http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches.

Pfeifer, Nathaniel. "RIP Ethiopia." *Opportunity* 14:1, January 1936. 134-136.

Shepardson, Whitney H. *The United States in World Affairs: An Account of American Foreign Relations 1934-1935.* Publication of the Council on Foreign Relations. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935.

_____. *The United States in World Affairs: An Account of American Foreign Relations 1936.* Publication of the Council on Foreign Relations. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936.

Spencer, John H. *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of the Haile Selassie Years.* Algonac Mi: Reference Publications, 1984.

Stone, William T. *Foreign Policy Bulletin.* 14:48, August 23, 1935.

Time, January 1933-July 1936.

Tomorrow in the Making. eds John N. Andrews and Carl A. Marsden. New York: Whittlesey House, 1939.

Wesley, Charles H. "The Significance of the Italo-Abyssinian Question", *Opportunity* Vol 13, May 1935. 148-151.

Wilson, Woodrow. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson.* ed Arthur S. Link et al. Vol 45, November 11, 1917- January 15, 1918. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. *Seventh Congress, Grenoble, May 15-19, 1932.* Available at http://www.wilpf.int.ch/statements/1932.htm accessed 3-18-2003.

Woolbert, Robert Gale. "Italy in Abyssinia." *Foreign Affairs* 13:3, April 1935. 496-499.

Work, F. Ernest. "Italo-Ethiopian Relations." *The Journal of Negro History.* V.20, 1935. 438-447

Young, Reuben S. "Ethiopia Awakens". *The Crisis.* Sept 1935.

Secondary Sources

Adler, Selig, *The Uncertain Giant 1921-1941: American Foreign Policy Between the Wars.* New York: Macmillan, 1965.

American Foreign Relations. New York: New York University Press, 1971.

Avalon Project at Yale Law School available at http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon.

Ayers, Edward L., et al., American *Passages: A History of the United States,* Vol II. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000.

Baer, George W. *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

_____. *Test Case: Italy, Ethiopia and the League of Nations.* Stanford, California; Hoover Institution Press, 1976.

Bahru, Zewde. *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1974.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991.

Battle for Adowa, The. Available at http://www.rastaites.com.

Beard, Charles Austin. *American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946.

Beard, Charles A. and Mary Beard. *America in Midpassage,* New York: Macmillan, 1939.

Bemis, Samuel Flagg. " The Shifting Strategy of American Defense and Diplomacy". *Essays in history and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee.* eds Dwight E. Lee and George E McReynolds. Worchester, Mass: Clark University Publication, 1949. 1-14.

Berkerie, Ayele. "African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War," *Revisioning Italy: National Identity and Global Culture.* eds Allen, Beverly and Mary Russo. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. 116-131.

Bismarck, Europe and Africa: The Berlin African Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition. eds Forster, Stig, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson. London: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Bolt, Ernest C. Jr. *Ballots Before Bullets: The War Referendum Approach to Peace in America, 1914-1941.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977

Braddick, Henderson B. "A New Look at American Policy During the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1935-1936." *Journal of Modern History.* Vol. 34, No. 1, 1962. (64-73).

Burns, James McGregor. *Roosevelt: The Lion and The Fox.* New York: Harcourt Brace & Co, 1956.

Chabod, Federico. *Italian Foreign Policy: The Statecraft of the Founders.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Chatfield, Charles. "World War I and the Liberal Pacifist in the United States." *The American Historical Review* 75:7, December 1970. 1920-1937.

Clark, Martin. *Modern Italy Longman History of Italy*, Second Edition. London: Longman, 1984.

Cole, Wayne S. *Roosevelt and the Isolationists, 1932-45.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.

_____ "American Entry into World War II: A Historigraphical Appraisal." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 43:4, March 1957 595-617.

_____. " Senator Key Pittman and American Neutrality Policies, 1933-1940." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 46: 4 (Mar., 1960), 644-662.

Cooper, John Milton. *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt.* Cambridge: *Belknap Press, 1983.*

Costigliola, Frank. *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919-1933.*

Craig, Gordon A. *Europe Since 1815.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.

Dallek, Robert. *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs.* New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 1983.

_____. *Democrat and Diplomat; The Life of William E. Dodd.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

_____. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1945.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

De Grand, Alexander. *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982.

Del Boca, Angelo. *The Ethiopian War 1935-1941.* trans P.D. Cummins. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Development of United States Foreign Policy. Available at http://www.ibiblio.org

Diggins, John P *Mussolini and Fascism; The View from America.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Diplomats 1919-1939, The. eds. Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (New York: Atheneum, 1953.

Divine, Robert A. *The Illusion of Neutrality.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

_____. *Second Chance: A Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II.* New York: Atheneum, 1967

Donovan, John C. "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy." *World Politics* 3.3 (Apr., 1951), 299-316.

Drake, Richard, *Byzantium for Rome: The Politics of Nostalgia in Umbertian Italy, 1878-1900.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

Drummond, Donald F. *The Passing of American Neutrality 1937-1941.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1955.

Dugan, James and Laurence Lafore. *Days of Emperor and Clown: The Italo-Ethiopian War 1935-1936.* New York: Doubleday and Company, 1973.

Duggan, Christopher. *Francesco Crispi 1818-1901: From Nation to Nationalism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Ethiopia. Library of Congress country studies. Available at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+et0028)

Ethiopian Treasures. Available at *http://*www.ethiopiantreasures.plus.com.

Ferrell, Robert H. *American Diplomacy in the Great Depression: Hoover-Stimson Foreign Policy, 1929-1933.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

Friedlander, Robert A. "New Light of Anglo-American Reaction to the Ethiopian War, 1935-1936." *Mid-America*. Vol. 45, No. 2, 1963. (115-125).

Function and Policies of American Government; Big Democracy in Action. eds Peltason, Jack W. and James M Burns. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1958.

Glad, Betty. *Key Pittman: The Tragedy of a Senate Insider*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Goldstein, Erik. *The First World War Peace Settlements, 1919-1925.* New York: Longman, 2002.

Gunn, Peter. *A Concise History of Italy*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

Hagan, Kenneth J. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy 1877-1889.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973.

Hannigan, Robert E. *The New World Power: American Foreign Policy, 1898-1917*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Harris, Brice Jr. *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1964.

Harris, Joseph E. *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia 1936-1941.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.

Henze, Paul B. *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Jablon, Howard. *Crossroads of Decision: The State Department and Foreign Policy, 1933-1937* Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1983.

Johnson, Walter. *The Battle Against Isolation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944.

Jonas, Manfred. *Isolationism in America, 1935-1941.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966.

Kaplan, Amy. *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U. S. Culture.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Leffler, Melvyn P. *The Elusive Quest: The American Pursuit of European Stability and French Security 1919-1933.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

Macgregor-Hastie, Roy. *The Day of The Lion: The Life and Death of Fascist Italy 1922-1945.* London: Macdonald, 1963.

Marcus, Harold G. *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and The United States, 1941-1974: The Politics of Empire.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 1953, 1957, 1960.

Morgan, Philip. *Italian Fascism, 1919-1945.* New York: St Martin's Press, 1995.

New York Times Almanac, 2002. ed John W. Wright. New York: Penguin, 2001.

Norman, John. "Influence of Pro-Fascist Propaganda on American Neutrality 1935-1936. *Essays in history and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee.* eds Dwight E. Lee and George E McReynolds. Worchester, Mass: Clark University Publication, 1949. 194-214.

Offner, Arnold A. *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938.* Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1969.

Pankhurst, Richard. *The Ethiopians.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.

Perkins, Ernest Ralph. "The Nonapplication of Sanctions Against Japan, 1931-1932. *Essays in history and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee.* eds Dwight E. Lee and George E McReynolds. Worchester, Mass: Clark University Publication, 1949. (194-214).

Pierce, Anne R. *Woodrow Wilson and Harry Truman: Mission and Power in American Foreign Policy.* Westport: Praeger, 2003.

Plesur, Milton. *America's Outward Thrust: Approaches to Foreign Affairs 1865-1890* (Dekalb: Northern University Press, 1971), 156.

Political Graveyard. Available at http://politicalgraveyard.com.

Pratt, Julius W. *Cordell Hull, 1933-1944. Vol. 1. The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy.* Series, Vol XII. eds Robert H Ferrell and Samuel Flagg Bemis. New York: Cooper Square Publishers Inc, 1964.

_____. *A History of United States Foreign Policy.* 3rd ED. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

Presidents from Hoover Through Truman, 1929-1953: Debating the Issues in Pro and Con Primary Documents. comp John E. Mosher. Westport, Conn.; London: Greenwood Press, 2002.

Reynolds, Clark G. "American Strategic History and Doctrines: A Reconsideration." *Military Affairs* 39:4, December 1975. 181-191.

Rhodes, Benjamin D. *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1941.* Westport: Praeger, 2001.

Roeber, A. G. "Authority, Law and Custom: The Rituals of Court Day in Tidewater Virginia, 1720 to 1750." *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Edition, 37:1, January 1980. 29-52.

Rubenson, Sven. *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence.* New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1979.

Sagay, J.O. and D.A. Wilson. *Africa- A modern History (1800-1975).* New York: Africana Publishing/Holmes & Meir Publishing, 1978.

Sbacchi, Alberto. *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941.* Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1997

Schmidt, Karl J. "League of Nations." Available at http://odur.let.rug.ni/~usa/E/league/leaguexx.htm.

Schmitz, David F. *The United States and Fascist Italy, 1922-1940.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988

Seager, Robert II. "Ten Years Before Mahan: The Unofficial Case for the New Navy." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 40:3, December 1953, 491-512.

Smith, Daniel M. *The American Diplomatic Experience.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972.

Three Faces of Midwestern Isolationism. ed John N. Schacht. Iowa City, Iowa: The Center for the Study of the Recent History for the United States, 1981.

U. S. Naval Historical Center. Available at http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/foabroad.htm.

Uzoigwe, G. N. "The Results of the Berlin West African Conference: AN Assessment." *Bismarck, Europe and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition.* eds Forrester, Stig, Wolfgang J Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson. London: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Von Eschen, Penny M. *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997

Warner, Geoffrey. *Pierre Laval and the Eclipse of France.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968.

Wubnch, Mulatu. *Ethiopia: Transition and Development in the Horn of Africa.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1988.

Zewde, Gabre-Sellassie. *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

PERMISSION TO COPY

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Texas Tech University or Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, I agree that the Library and my major department shall make it freely available for research purposes. Permission to copy this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Director of the Library or my major professor. It is understood that any copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my further written permission and that any user may be liable for copyright infringement.

Agree (Permission is granted.)

Disagree (Permission is not granted.)

_____ _____

Student Signature Date