

World War II

Background

In 1931, Japan invaded and conquered the Chinese state of Manchuria. In 1937, Japan invaded the rest of China, eventually occupying nearly all the coastal cities. Meanwhile, in 1939, Germany invaded Poland, leading to war with Britain and France. In 1940, Germany conquered France. That year, Germany and Japan signed a peace treaty. Japan then asked for, and received permission from Germany to occupy French Indochina in Asia. On July 24, 1941, Japanese troops landed in French Indochina. The next day, President Roosevelt considered punishing Japan by terminating all trade with the country.

Terminate Trade with Japan by "Dell Hall"

Europe's experience of the past five years teaches that democracies must stand up to aggressive dictators before they become too powerful to stop. In 1936, Germany violated the Treaty of Versailles by sending troops into the Rhineland, which was supposed to be a buffer zone between France and Germany. In 1938, Germany occupied Austria. Later that year, Germany occupied the mountainous border with Czechoslovakia called the Sudetenland. In 1939, Germany conquered the rest of Czechoslovakia.

Britain and France had the power to stop the Germans at any of these points. But, they did nothing. It wasn't until Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, that Britain and France finally declared war. But, by then, Germany had mobilized and rebuilt its own army, defeated two of Britain and France's most powerful allies, and almost doubled its territory.

Giving in to tyrants does not preserve peace. It simply whets their appetite for more.

The same thing is happening in Asia. In 1931, Japanese soldiers blew up a train in Manchuria and claimed the Chinese did it. They used this incident to justify invading Manchuria. The League of Nations saw right through the ploy and voted to condemn Japan. Japan then quit the League. But, President Hoover did nothing.

Japan's next plan was to conquer the rest of China. In 1937, the Japanese instigated a battle at the so-called Marco Polo Bridge in Peking. Then, they used it as an excuse to invade China.

During this conflict the Japanese army has committed acts of brutality. They bombed the American ship *Panay* and strafed its crewmen. They bombed churches, schools and hospitals of American missionaries. And, in December, they killed about 250,000 Chinese men, women and children when they captured the city of Nanking.

Japan is not a democracy. Military thugs who are fanatically devoted to the *samurai* tradition now run the country. The generals control the choice of prime minister. Many openly talk of creating a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" with Japan dominating the other nations of Asia. Germany and Japan, the world's two gangster nations, have even signed a peace treaty.

This enabled Japan to claim another victim. Yesterday, Japanese soldiers landed in French Indochina and began occupying that colony. We cannot wait until Japan has conquered the most vital parts of Asia, such as Singapore, or the oil fields in the Dutch East Indies or the rubber plantations in British Malaya. We must act now to convince Japan we are serious. Terminating all trade with Japan is the least we should do.

Negotiate with Japan by "Henry David"

Germany is truly an enemy of freedom and democracy. When Adolf Hitler was elected chancellor, he almost immediately abolished future elections. He then invaded his neighbors with whom he had no quarrel. Great Britain is the only democracy still holding out against him. Last month, Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

There is no question Germany poses a threat to the U.S. They are close to conquering most of our major trading partners. Their U-Boats have sunk numerous American cargo ships without warning. In fact, we have more reason to declare war on Germany now than we did in 1917.

Japan, on the other hand, is at war with China. While some claim that Japan is the aggressive nation in this conflict, the facts are not so clear. A civil war is raging in China between the Nationalists and the Communists. There is some evidence that the Chinese Communists planned the Marco Polo Bridge incident in order to start a fight between the Japanese and Chinese Nationalists.

The civil war in China also explains why Japan occupied Manchuria. Japan has few natural resources. It relies on trade to get its coal and oil. It is also a democracy, with a congress called the "Diet" and an elected prime minister. Like all democracies, it fears communism.

Yet, communists have taken over Russia and may soon take over China. The Japanese occupied Manchuria to ensure that it remains stable so they can continue to trade for the important resources grown and mined there.

We may disapprove of such an aggressive action, but who are we to judge it? Less than 40 years ago, the U.S. sent soldiers to occupy five Latin American nations. Our goal was similar to Japan's; ensure stable governments and open trade routes.

The fact is, we have been hypocritical in all of our dealings with Japan. After World War I, we made Japan sign a treaty agreeing to have no more than 3/5 the number of battleships that the U.S. or Britain have. In a truly insulting gesture, the U.S. passed a law in 1924 forbidding any more Japanese from immigrating to our country.

Japan will not be our enemy unless we make it our enemy. Terminating all trade with the country will do just that. In 1904, President Teddy Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize for helping negotiate an end to the war between Russia and Japan. Franklin Roosevelt should help negotiate an end to the war between China and Japan, instead of choosing sides in that conflict. We should focus our anger on Germany, not Japan.