The United States remained neutral when France and Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939 because we believed that the conflict was primarily a European affair, and that we should exhaust all diplomatic means to avoid being drawn into the conflict. At the same time, we recognized the danger that Nazi Germany posed to the world, and took steps to strengthen our military and to protect our national interests. Through a combination of diplomacy and military readiness, we sought to navigate the complex and dangerous geopolitical landscape of the time, and to ensure that the United States remained a force for peace and stability in the world.