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APUSH

Period 4

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CH 25 Focus Questions 2,4 (300-325 words)

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2. Franklin Roosevelt’s immense influence over America during this period cannot be understated. After winning two elections in landslides and starting a new age and economic recovery, his was the most important opinion in all of America. As world tensions grew in the early 1930s, the Democratic-Controlled Congress was quick to pass the Neutrality Acts, which embargoed any nation in any military conflict. As Fascists took over Italy and threatened war over Ethiopia, America’s isolationism was tested, but held. However, when Japan attacked China near the end of the 1930s, FDR delivered his “Quarantine” Speech, calling for punishment for Japanese and other fascist aggression, in order to reduce their risk of involvement, but not unwilling to fight for their security and welfare (#211, p 175). Despite FDR’s popularity, public backlash forced him to back off the issue. Even the start of the Second World War didn’t much change public opinion, until the fall of France. In 1940, as threat towards America from Nazis grew, public opinion grew, and FDR successfully pushed for greater Cash-and-Carry laws from Congress in order to support Britain. As a majority of Americans supported new actions to oppose the Axis, FDR took away Britain’s money problem, and switched Cash-and-Carry into a Lend-Lease agreement, and positioned America in a role to be the Arsenal of Democracy (#214, p178). He convinced Americans that instead of risking American lives, America could win the war without a man on the ground by providing Britain with the necessary war material to defeat the Nazis. Throughout all his words at this period of time, he did not mention that it was almost inevitable that America would be pulled into the war and provided hope that America could go without bloodshed. However, he was not naïve about preparation, however, and did implement the first and last peacetime draft in American history.

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4. America was as isolationist for the last time in the 1930s, and the changes that took it to partake in the war led to the globalist America we have today. Failure of interwar diplomacy was one of the biggest reasons of Americans turning away from international politics. Words of Washington once again found a popular reception, as people used it to turn their eyes away from the world (#212, p 176). However, a slew of international incidents quickly brought America back onto the stage. The start of the War certainly tested America’s willingness to give to Britain, as Cash-and-Carry managed to pass through the halls of Congress, with very little support. America was always culturally, economically, and religiously tied to the Allied Powers, it just didn’t want any of its citizen’s blood spilt. The Fall of France did much more to revitalize America’s international interests, however. The new Lend-Lease agreement forced America to confront German submarines, and often times got in direct conflict with them. There was still pushback from American Isolationists as Franklin Roosevelt passed Lend Lease through Congress, and donated war materials to Britain (#214, p 180). The America First Committee was populated by these people, along with Axis sympathizers and swaths of the Republican Party. On the Pacific Front, Japan continued to increase its influence and challenged America. In September 1940, however, Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Italy and Germany. Previously, Japanese attacks on American gunboats went unpunished, but as isolationists lost power, FDR was increasingly willing to fight back. In Summer of 1941, he froze Japanese assets in the United States and created a complete oil and trade embargo on the empire. Tokyo had the choice to improve relations with the Americans, but instead turned to violence, giving up on American peace talks with the Secretary of State. A Japanese fleet bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, finally officially pulling America into the war.

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