U.S.-Austrian Relations in the Pre-Anschluss Period: FDR'S Unwillingness for War

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U.S.-Austrian Relations in the Pre-\textit{Anschluss} Period: FDR’S Unwillingness for War

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
History

By

John S. Berteau

B.A., University of New Orleans, 2001

December, 2007
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my father and mother, Winbon and Dathyl Berteau, for their emotional and financial support throughout my university studies. Without them I would never have been able to achieve as much as I have. My brother and sister-in-law, Lee and Lindsay Berteau, also deserve many thanks for keeping me entertained and encouraged during the long process of developing this manuscript. I also wish to thank Liane Bales for assisting in various stages of the development of this work by editing and proofreading many drafts. Thanks to Steve and Amy Moseley who have been the best friends for which anyone could ever ask.

The final push of encouragement to finish this manuscript came from my fiancée Mary Beth Hutchinson. She is truly a woman who inspires me to get out of bed in the morning and do something productive with my day.

I would also like to thank the professors that instructed me, and had the most impact on me in my undergraduate and graduate education: Dr. Gerald Bodet, Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Dr. Joe L. Caldwell, Dr. Michael Mizell-Nelson, and my thesis advisor, Dr. Günter Bischof.

In all there are many people who helped bring this work together, and although my name is on the title page, all of the above listed share in its birth; to them this work is dedicated.
# Table of Contents

Abstract........................................................................................................................................iv

Introduction....................................................................................................................................1

Domestic Policy..............................................................................................................................3

Foreign Policy...............................................................................................................................21

Conclusion....................................................................................................................................44

Notes............................................................................................................................................47

Bibliography.................................................................................................................................59

Vita................................................................................................................................................62
Abstract

This paper evaluates the United States’ decision not to come to Austria’s aid prior to and during the Anschluss of 12 March 1938. The uniqueness of this work is the two-front evaluation of both the internal/domestic affairs of the United States and the foreign policy of the US Government vis-à-vis Hitler’s aggressive foreign policy. As this paper will show, Anschluss might have been prevented, but at a cost neither the United States nor European powers were willing to pay. The domestic situation in the United States was too fragile, as was the lack of public support for war for FDR to have any leeway in militarily aiding Austria. American, and to some degree European, opinion held that the Austrian question was a European matter, and to that end American domestic policy dominated foreign policy in hopes of reestablishing the United States economy prior to attempting to aid anyone else.

Keywords: Anschluss, Austria, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Great Depression, Interwar Diplomacy, U.S. Foreign Relations
Introduction

It is the purpose of this work to try and understand why the United States did not come to Austria’s aid prior to its annexation by the Germans on 12 March 1938. By examining both the domestic and international fronts, and the political posturing therein, the reasons supporting the United States’ course of action becomes clearer. The focus, then, is on the primacy of domestic policies in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s thinking.

To date there is no work, which addresses the United States’ position on the Anschluss in such a way. It is my hope to prove that because of current American domestic situation President Roosevelt’s options were extremely limited in the realm of foreign affairs.

FDR’s primary concern continued to be the Great Depression and its effects on the country. His main goal in the early part of his first administration had been to halt the country’s downward economic spiral. Roosevelt attempted to do this through the New Deal. It is only because of the heavily Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress that President Roosevelt’s New Deal acts could be passed so quickly, and with such little debate.

Another factor to be kept in mind as part of the domestic context of FDR’s foreign policy formulation was the isolationist and pacifist sentiment in the United States. These groups had significant influence on, at first, public opinion, and later on Congressional leaders. The work done by these anti-war groups caused the passage of a series of Neutrality Acts, all aimed at keeping the United States out of any war.

In the midst of both campaigning every two years and fighting to end the long economic depression, Franklin Roosevelt was also attempting to modify the Supreme Court. Throughout the 1930s FDR continually combated the United States Supreme Court, whose justices regularly invalidated his New Deal acts. They left the President scrambling to alter what the court found
unconstitutional. Subsequently, the President passed new laws that ideologically were similar to
the ones invalidated by the court. FDR wanted to alter the court so that his New Deal acts would
not continue to be invalidated due to the court’s conservative reading of the United States
Constitution. The main goal of the New Deal, however, was to hopefully put an end to the Great
Depression, and ultimately bring the country back on an economic upswing.

In analyzing the domestic situation some events will be given further in depth treatment
than others. For example, the economic theories behind the Great Depression will not be
covered in detail. The classic works of depression economists such as John Maynard Keynes,
Milton Friedman, and new scholarship by modern-day economists such as Ben Bernanke are
sufficient to provide an in-depth economic picture of the United States in the 1930s.¹ The New
Deal and the early years of FDR’s presidency have also been covered extensively by many
historians.² This paper will go into greater detail on these domestic events, because it is very
important to understand what legislation was being passed and invalidated, and what Roosevelt’s
passions were in trying to prop up the U.S. economy. It is this very passion that drove the
President’s domestic policy, and it is the reason why the domestic policy took precedence over
foreign affairs.

I also intend to show that more than enough justification can be found for the United
States to have come to Austria’s aid prior to the Anschluss. The correspondence between the
U.S. ambassadors and the U.S. State Department proves that as early as 1935, and perhaps even
earlier, many European powers correctly anticipated Germany’s aggressive moves both against
Austria as well as other Central European nations.

In analyzing U.S. foreign policy through the international context, it is important to
examine the diplomatic correspondence available, as Gerhard Weinberg notes that “American
diplomats in the 1930s were often extremely well informed—even if the government in Washington did little with their reports except file them.” Weinberg continues, “American diplomats often obtained information difficult or impossible to obtain elsewhere…on such matters as…the developments in Austria.”

It is also important to analyze the Anschluss by way of the secondary scholarship. Works by young scholars such as Alexander Lassner and classic works by scholars such as Alfred Low utilize the diplomatic traffic only available in foreign languages, otherwise unavailable. Through both primary and secondary sources, a clear picture emerges of not only the desperation of the Austrian situation, but also the diplomatic acknowledgement of the existence of this tragedy. Both the archival and printed diplomatic records also show that there is no excuse for some combination of the Western Powers (the United States, Great Britain, and France) not opposing Nazi aggression and securing Austria’s independence.

**Domestic Policy: Depression & New Deal**

In the United States, in the post-Versailles era, most Americans experienced prosperity and were most concerned with tax relief and disarmament. In 1920 when Americans went to the polls, they voiced their concerns and voted in Republican Warren G. Harding by an unprecedented majority. Harding was an isolationist and against the Wilsonian vision of collective security. He suggested instead the League of Nations a more loosely tied international organization that would only meet when an aggressor threatened the peace. Harding offered America an alternative to internationalist Wilsonian vision. In America, the 1920s was a decade of unheralded prosperity during which small scale internationalist movements began. No American, however internationalist, wanted the United States to be pulled into another war; although, as American diplomat George Messersmith would later point out, it would be better to
“fight a small war now, than a catastrophic one later.”\textsuperscript{5} Throughout the 1920s conferences were
called, movements were started and pacts were signed, all in the name of spending less on
defense and keeping the United States out of another war. There was a prevailing pacifist
sentiment in the United States.

The 1921 Washington Conference was called to limit the building of capital ships
(battleships and battle cruisers) for the three largest naval powers for a period of 10 years. The
conference established a building ratio of 5:5:3 and applied it to the three largest naval powers
(the United States, Great Britain, and Japan). The major achievement of this conference for the
United States was that the country achieved rough numerical naval equality with Great Britain
without an increase in naval spending. The conference also had the positive effect of ending the
1902 naval alliance between Great Britain and Japan, as well as continuing a U.S. open-door
policy with China. One weakness of the conference was that auxiliary ships (cruisers, destroyers
and submarines) were not included among the building ratios. Unfortunately, no governing
body, partisan or not, ever kept tabs on how many capital ships each country had built.\textsuperscript{6}

The 1920s also saw the rise of a new breed of pacifism led by secular, rather than
religious pacifist groups. These new “internationalist” pacifist groups often favored the
Wilsonian idea of collective security over isolationism or neutrality.\textsuperscript{7} In 1921 a Chicago lawyer
named Salmon O. Levinson formed the American Committee for the Outlawry of War, whose
sole purpose was to “have war declared illegal under international law.”\textsuperscript{8} A pacifist movement
also swept through the United States Congress in the 1920s, causing the proposal of several anti-
war bills. For example, in 1922 Wisconsin Congressman Edward Voight proposed an
amendment that would have required a national referendum before Congress would have the
authorization to declare war, an idea that gained even more support in the late 1930s.\textsuperscript{9} Likewise
Senator Lynn J. Frazier of North Dakota introduced an amendment to make war unconstitutional in every Congress from 1926 until 1937.\textsuperscript{10}

One of the key symbolic anti-war events of the 1920s was the signing of a pact between the United States and France, known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Signed by U.S. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand, this Pact called for its signers to “renounce war as an instrument of national policy.”\textsuperscript{11} However, Secretary Kellogg was against committing the United States bilaterally to the agreement, so he invited all nations to sign this Pact. On 27 August 1928 the Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed by 14 nations, and within another month virtually all nations had signed it.\textsuperscript{12}

Irrespective of such distinct anti-war feelings, Americans progressively became more internationalist during the post World War I economic boom era, also known as the “Roaring Twenties”. Such feelings did not last until the end of the decade; the United States became fervently isolationist with the onset of the Great Depression in 1929.\textsuperscript{13}

The depression lasted more or less from 1929 until the early 1940s, without private effort or public intervention to fully revive the economy.\textsuperscript{14} After the October 1929 stock market crash, investments dropped by 87%. But the real impact of the Great Depression was not the price of stocks, but rather the overall impact on the value of goods and services, unemployment, and pain and suffering of the American people.\textsuperscript{15}

Occurring less than eight months into Herbert Hoover’s administration, the Great Depression’s continued and ultimately led to Hoover’s defeat in his reelection bid in 1932. Hoover and the Republican conservatives believed that government should be non-intrusive in economic affairs. Yet near the end of his term as President, Hoover favored two economic government intervention acts which proved to be “too little, too late” as the depression worsened.
and the public grew weary of Hoover. The peak of the depression coincidentally was 1932, an election year.

The depression doomed Hoover’s chance for reelection in 1932, and definitively shaped his legacy. Certain statistics, such as the suicide rate, public and private debt, and the business failure rate reached their highest during the Hoover administration. Likewise, the value of exports and imports reached its lowest during the Hoover administration.

In the campaign of 1932, Hoover’s challenger, New York Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt, pledged a balanced budget and a 25% cut of government spending, while he accused the incumbent of “reckless and extravagant” spending. During this campaign, FDR was thought to be an internationalist due to his upbringing, although he largely dodged issues of foreign policy and ultimately focused the campaign on the domestic situation. Favoring relief in the form of works projects, the candidate FDR advocated that “aid must be extended [to the unemployed] by the government.” He acknowledged that under normal circumstances relief for the poor was the responsibility of local government and private agencies, and “under no circumstances [should] any actual money be paid in the form of a dole…by the local welfare officer to any unemployed or his family.” FDR also stated that this type of aid was to be temporary and not to be thought of as a permanent policy. In the 1932 Presidential election, most Americans seemingly wanted more change than the Republican Hoover offered them, but not as much offered by the Socialist candidate, Norman Thomas. People wanted change, not a revolution. Franklin Roosevelt was seemingly a good choice in 1932 because he stood for change, but not a change in the status quo capitalism in America. With 53.7% of the popular vote, carrying forty-two of forty-eight states, and 472 of 531 of the electoral votes, Franklin Roosevelt was elected president. Roosevelt began his term in March 1933 with the Democrats
having gained control both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the 1932 elections. The Democrats picked up ninety seats in the House, and thirteen seats in the Senate in the 1932 election. Seemingly, Roosevelt arrived in Washington with a mandate from the American people. FDR had defeated an incumbent by one of the largest margins than by which any incumbent had ever been beaten, and did so campaigning to help the “forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid.” Shortly after being elected, in reference to the American economic situation, FDR said, “it is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.” Given President Hoover’s philosophies on a non-government interventionist economy, and the resulting economic status of the country, FDR had little choice but to “try something.” It is this type of thinking that laid the groundwork for FDR’s New Deal.

Early in FDR’s administration, economist John Maynard Keynes proposed an idea to the President about how to end the country’s depression. Keynes explained that during the early days of the depression, investments dropped significantly leaving businessmen very wary of investing. Driven by their lack of faith in the economy, businessmen made the decisions to reduce manufacturing, which in turn produced layoffs. Thus, layoffs caused the unemployment rate to increase. Keynes postulated that in this instance if “the private sector would not spend, then the public sector must.” Keynes argued that governmental deficit spending was necessary specifically in this time, as raising taxes would not accomplish the desired goal of ending the depression. Raising taxes would merely redistribute wealth, whereas deficit spending would put new dollars into people’s pockets. FDR never directly adopted the Keynesian philosophy, and was never prepared to spend the amount of money that Keynes suggested; however, FDR’s New Deal programs were partially Keynesian on a more modest scale.
Although the New Deal legislation dealt with nearly every economic activity of the nation, it was not seen as an “economic revolution,” rather as a matter of necessity. Although FDR was primarily concerned with agriculture, and helping farmers, the New Deal also addressed virtually every other aspect of life, such as: banking, housing, agriculture, transportation, credit, insurance, etc. FDR claimed that his New Deal sought to bring balance “between agriculture and industry and balance between the wage earner, the employer and the consumer.” “We seek also,” FDR said, “balance that our internal markets be kept rich and large, and that our trade with other nations be increased on both sides of the ledger.”

The New Deal Acts reorganized, reformed and regulated the American economy. Historians, however, have long debated the motivation for the New Deal programs, both the administration of the funds as well as the benefits. Traditionalists such as William Leuchtenburg and Arthur Schlesinger argue that the New Deal programs were administered to address the needs of the country, while revisionists, such as Raymond Moley and Edgar Robinson, argued that New Deal spending was dictated by politics. Both views seem to be correct, at least in part. Politics did play a part in the distribution of New Deal monies, as some of the larger grants went to politically important swing states; however, states with lower employment levels did receive a proportionally higher number of large federal grants.

The New Deal contained some original ideas which partly benefited the country and helped the economy recover, but none of the ideas actually ended the Great Depression. Unemployment remained at 11.3% as late as 1939 (down from its 1933 high of 20.6%, but not nearly the 3.2% of 1929), six years after FDR took office. Because of the lingering depression, FDR’s New Deal had its critics as well. FDR’s critics cited the weaknesses of the New Deal as the absence of any steady strategy in boosting purchasing power or increasing private
investments. Roosevelt’s policies were considered to be “confusing and inconsistent” by some and “illogical” by others. In hindsight, however, some modern economists, such as Milton Friedman, have criticized some of FDR’s New Deal acts as having lengthened the depression, and slowed economic growth.

In the early part of FDR’s first administration, economic policy and the New Deal were of supreme importance, but were not the only noteworthy situations in need of addressing. When FDR took office in March 1933, he was somewhat concerned about disarmament and the lack of progress made at the Geneva Disarmament Conference. President Roosevelt appointed Norman H. Davis, a confidant of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, to chair the American delegation at Geneva. In May 1933, Ambassador Norman Davis said in a speech at the Geneva Conference that the United States was committed to reducing its armaments, as well as not interfering with any League of Nations sanctions against aggressor nations. However, shortly after Davis’ speech at Geneva, FDR agreed to support an amendment sponsored by Hiram Johnson that called for an impartial embargo. “The President’s failure to recognize that his approval of the Johnson Amendment negated Ambassador Davis’ pledge at Geneva suggests Roosevelt’s own overwhelming preoccupation with domestic issues at a time when crucial domestic legislation was nearing final approval.” This was a clear example that, Roosevelt was more concerned with his New Deal programs than with foreign affairs; however, the issue of impartial vs. discretionary embargos did not go away, and reappeared during the Neutrality Act debates in 1935.

The national economy made modest gains during 1933 and 1934, but by the 1934-midterm elections, none of FDR’s New Deal programs had significantly improved the economy much more than Herbert Hoover’s programs had. The unemployment rate decreased more than
8% in 1933 and by another 22% in 1934, and the economy was slowly showing signs of
recovery. In 1933 the suicide rate decreased slightly, and the business failure rate decreased by
35%. In 1934 the suicide rate continued to decrease, as did the business failure rate.
Also, in 1934 the gross national product increased for the first time since 1929, and Americans
had more money to spend on recreation. Increased disposable income caused attendance at
baseball games to increase, and attendance at national monuments increased over 4000%. 41

Regardless of the slow recovery, the American people continued to have faith and
certainty that Roosevelt and the Democrats had a better plan for recovery than the
Republicans. In the midterm elections the Democrats picked up an additional nine seats in the
House and ten in the Senate, bringing the totals to ninety-nine seats gained in the House and
twenty-three gained in the Senate since 1932. 42

Meanwhile, in Asia the Japanese had begun to show bolder movements against the
Chinese; in Africa, Italy looked to expand its “empire” at the expense of Ethiopia. The League
of Nations’ inaction over these two issues caused a decline in the League’s prestige. With a
diminished League of Nations, and war looming on two continents now (Asia and Africa) the
United States’ growing isolationist movement began to pursue Congressional avenues to keep
America from entering a war. As Secretary of State Cordell Hull stated, “An avalanche of
isolationism was overwhelming any prospect of inducing the American people to agree to a more
vital share in world affairs.” 43 Professor Robert Dallek notes that by the mid 1930s Americans
generally agreed that the United States’ involvement in World War I was a mistake, and that
President Wilson’s executive freedom allowed it. Strict limitations on the President’s power
seemed to be the only way to prevent another war. In hopes of preventing future wars, and in
partial response to peace activists’ claims that the munitions industry sabotaged arms embargo
efforts in Congress, and the idea that arms makers pushed the country into World War I, Congress launched the Senate Munitions Investigating Committee to explore the arms and munitions industries.\textsuperscript{44}

The Munitions Committee was chaired by Senator Gerald Nye of North Dakota. Nye was a progressive Senator who was selected for the committee in part because of his charge that bankers and industrialists had pushed the U.S. into World War I. The Nye Committee set out to prove that the munitions industry, “unless curbed by the government, was likely to involve the United States in foreign wars.”\textsuperscript{45} The committee was extremely isolationist and thought that peace would be best achieved by “staying home and remaining neutral.”\textsuperscript{46} In essence the committee’s role was two-fold, both trying to uncover the causes of American entry into the First World War, and to prevent its involvement in a later war.

The committee found that the munitions industry did partly influence the country to go to war, and in March 1935 President Roosevelt met with Senator Nye about the prospect of drafting neutrality legislation based on the findings of the committee.\textsuperscript{47} Within three weeks of FDR’s meeting with the Nye Committee, two House Resolutions and two Senate Resolutions (one sponsored by Senator Nye) were introduced into Congress. However well-intentioned this committee was, the overall effect of the Nye Committee’s findings was to “throw the country into the deepest isolationism at the very moment when [U.S.] influence was so vitally needed to help ward off the approaching threats of war abroad.”\textsuperscript{48} This stance proved to be detrimental to the survival of the Austrian state.\textsuperscript{49}

Due to the escalating situation between the Italians and the Ethiopians, Congressional leaders desired to pass legislation before the end of the 1935 session. For this same reason Secretary Hull was trying to delay the Nye Committee hearings, delay neutrality legislation, and
delay the State Department giving an “official position” on neutrality. While Congress was debating several versions of neutrality legislation, President Roosevelt’s New Deal was dealt a severe blow when on “Black Monday,” the Supreme Court ruled three of the New Deal acts as unconstitutional. This was an unexpected move by the Court because judicial nullification was a seldom-used practice in U.S. history.

By late August, a neutrality bill sponsored by Key Pittman (D-NV), Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, passed the Senate. A unified State Department voice of Secretary Hull and Assistant Secretary R. Walton Moore tried to lobby the president to kill the Pittman bill, which called for an impartial embargo. FDR refused to veto the bill in fear of disrupting the ten pieces of pending domestic policy legislation [again showing FDR’s deference to domestic politics], some of which were in direct response to the court’s “Black Monday” invalidations. Roosevelt agreed to the impartial embargo if the act expired in six months and if the President was given leeway in defining the “arms, ammunition and other implements of war” that the legislation indicated were to be embargoed. Soon after, the amended bill passed the House and the following day passed the Senate.

The Neutrality Act based on the Nye committee’s findings was passed in August 1935. The largest debate over the proposed neutrality legislation was whether the proposed embargo should apply to all parties equally (an impartial embargo) or a discretionary embargo in which the President would be able to choose to which nation or nations to apply the embargo. Pacifists and Congressional leaders mostly supported an impartial embargo, although some thought an impartial embargo did not go far enough. As Senator Nye put it, “my own belief is that a complete embargo on all trade is the only absolute insurance against the United States being drawn into another prolonged major war between great powers.” The President favored
collective security, but was willing to acquiesce to a discretionary embargo so long as the debate was not long and drawn out. Roosevelt feared that a lengthy debate over neutrality would interfere with the passage of his domestic programs, such as the Guffey Coal Act, which was being debated concurrently. The State Department was split over the embargo question: Secretary Cordell Hull and Undersecretary William Phillips favored a discretionary embargo, while Assistant Secretary Moore and Chief of Western European Affairs J. Pierrepont Moffat favored an impartial embargo. Secretary Hull actually opposed all neutrality legislation because of the threat of war around the world, but like FDR, he was willing to acquiesce to the more palatable discretionary embargo. Public sentiment in the form of pacifists and church groups favored collective security, and only half-heartedly supported any form of neutrality legislation. Many who originally favored the Wilsonian ideal of collective security abandoned it in favor of neutrality due to the global situation and collective security’s growing unpopularity with the American public.

The Neutrality Act of 1935 created a National Munitions Control Board headed by the Secretary of State to “license and supervise all arms shipments [and prohibit] the carrying of munitions in American ships either to belligerents or to neutrals for transshipment to belligerents.” The act also stated that American citizens who traveled on belligerent ships did so at their own risk. Congress adjourned on 26 August, and on 31 August 1935, FDR signed the bill which was set to expire on 29 February 1936. Upon signing the act, Roosevelt issued a statement indicating that the arms embargo might have the opposite effect and could possibly drag the United States into a war. “History is filled with unforeseeable situations that call for some flexibility of action.” Roosevelt agreed to sign the Neutrality Act both because he was hoping to gain concessions when it expired in six months, and because he was fearful of
jeopardizing the passage of his New Deal programs. The Neutrality Act passed on 31 August was the first departure from traditional American neutrality. In the meantime, the Neutrality Act (the nation’s new standard of neutrality) was quickly put to the test.

The world was abhorred to read in October 1935 about the fighting breaking out in Ethiopia (also known as Abyssinia). The Ethiopians, infamously called by Emperor Haile Selassie to bring their spears, were no match for the Italians and their modern weapons. Because of the mismatch, Secretary of State Cordell Hull considered declaring neutrality to be unnecessary, as the application would have been as blatantly anti-Italian. President Roosevelt, on the other hand, thought it was important to warn Americans that a list would be published of all American citizens traveling on belligerent ships to Italy or Ethiopia, as well as anyone who exported essential raw materials (oil, steel, etc.) to either belligerent. FDR was later convinced by his advisors that publishing such lists would be an unwise decision, so the President opted not to follow through with his idea. Shortly thereafter, on 5 October, Secretary Hull issued his “moral embargo” which encouraged people not to trade the essential raw materials that make war possible to either belligerent. Trade of essential raw materials was not specifically addressed by the Neutrality Act, so the government had no legal recourse, and could only suggest that American businessmen not involve themselves in trading these “contraband” goods.

President Roosevelt ironically declared that he did not “believe that the American People [would] wish for abnormally increased profits that temporarily might be secured by greatly extending our trade in such materials; nor [would] they wish the struggles on the battlefield to be prolonged because of profits…” FDR was proven wrong because despite these statements, American trade with Italy in these essential raw materials dramatically increased in October 1935. Keep in mind that at this point in history the United States produced more than fifty
percent of the world’s oil, and that oil was the most essential commodity shipped to Italy and its
war machine. Italy would have had great difficulty in replacing the oil supplied by the United
States. But much to President Roosevelt’s chagrin, the October 1935 oil exports to Italy were
shown to be twice as high as the normal level for October. 68

FDR could not deny that American oil was fueling Mussolini’s war machine; yet, despite
governmental warnings there had been significant increases in the export of oil, copper, scrap
iron and steel, as well as other materials. 69 In November 1935, the oil exports to Italy reached
three times their normal level. Hull’s “moral embargo” was an abysmal failure, seemingly
proving correct Senator Nye’s hypothesis that American businessmen favored profit over
peace. 70 The Ethiopian crisis served as a lesson to American policymakers that “arms and
munitions” were not the only things that drive a war, and that essential raw materials should have
been evaluated in any posture of keeping the United States out of a war. 71 With the 1935
Neutrality Act, set to expire on 29 February, 1936, the next Congress began with debates about a
new Neutrality Act.

Although the Ethiopian Crisis showed just how important the trade of raw materials was,
in late February 1936, when the Neutrality Act was set to expire, Congress decided after much
debate to extend the existing act with only minor changes. FDR had agreed back in August 1935
to the Neutrality Act in its original form, in hopes of gaining concessions with the act. With the
passage of the new Neutrality Act, FDR did not receive any of the concessions he first sought in
August 1935. 72

The changes integrated in the new legislation included that the President was obligated to
apply an embargo impartially to nations currently warring at the time of the passage of the
legislation, specifically worded to address the situations in Asia and Africa. Also added was a
prohibition on loans to belligerents.\textsuperscript{73} It was a disappointing setback for the President that his provision to limit the trade of essential raw materials to belligerents was not included in the new Neutrality extension.\textsuperscript{74} The President was willing to accept the 1936 Neutrality Act “as is” due to the upcoming election. He did not want neutrality to be an “anti-administration” issue, in the upcoming election. The new act was set to expire 1 May 1937.\textsuperscript{75}

Shortly after the U.S. Congress renewed the Neutrality Act, in March 1936 the prestige of the League of Nations further declined when Nazi Germany unilaterally remilitarized the Rhineland.\textsuperscript{76} This was Germany’s first move toward recapturing the territory lost by the Treaty of Versailles. Although, Hull continued to press that “peace and strict neutrality… [were] the cornerstone of American foreign policy,” historian Irwin Gellman notes that by this point President Roosevelt saw war in Europe as inevitable.\textsuperscript{77}

However, in the United States, Franklin Roosevelt’s attention was not on the Rhineland or war, it was on reelection. The President continued to be preoccupied by his reelection bid in November 1936, and focused his campaign on the merits of his New Deal.\textsuperscript{78}

Also, in mid-1936 Sumner Welles became the new Under Secretary of State, replacing William Phillips (who became the new U.S. Ambassador to Italy). Welles subsequently reorganized the State Department, due to a cut in the department’s budget, which resulted in the elimination of 40-50 positions. This reorganization coincided with President Roosevelt recalling several Ambassadors to European nations to aid in the President’s 1936 reelection bid. The State Department prior to the mid-1936 cuts was barely able to process the foreign correspondence, and after the cuts the department suffered even more.\textsuperscript{79}

Shortly after President Roosevelt’s landslide reelection, the Supreme Court, for a change, gave a favorable ruling to the President. In \textit{U.S. v Curtiss-Wright}, Justice Sutherland, speaking
for the Court, ruled that the President has superior power, above all others, in the case of foreign affairs. The President, the court said, had better chance of knowing the actual conditions in foreign countries, and he is often privy to information that others are not. Foreign affairs are often based upon this secret knowledge, the release of which may be detrimental to the situation. The court went on to say that in foreign affairs, legislation “must often accord to the President a degree of discretion and freedom from statutory restriction which would not be admissible were domestic affairs alone involved.” This ruling strengthened the President’s position from which he tried to direct foreign policy. Coming off a massive victory and on the heels of the Supreme Court’s favorable ruling, in late December 1936 Roosevelt asked Congress for permanent neutrality legislation. Unfortunately, the President’s request would be delayed due to the civil war in Spain.

Since the 1936 Neutrality Act did not specifically cover civil wars, Secretary of State Hull issued another “moral embargo.” However, in late December several individuals applied for permission to export airplanes to the Spanish Government (over the moral embargo). Roosevelt denounced this request as “legal but unpatriotic,” as the U.S. government could legally take no action since exportation was lawful. Naturally, this action stirred the government to begin considering legislation to address nations involved in a civil war. Ironically, much of the aid sent to the Republican Government of Spain in violation of the moral embargo ended up in the hands of Franco’s rebel forces. Professor and historian Robert Divine has noted that this episode caused FDR to realize that had he “possessed broad discretionary powers he could have dealt with the problem swiftly and efficiently,” and this began to change his mind with regard to neutrality. He knew, however, that his will was not necessarily the will of the people due to a January 1937 poll revealing that 69% of Americans favored Congress being responsible for the
American Neutrality policy, and not the president. Regardless of who dictated the neutrality policy, the fact remained that the Spanish Civil War had revealed the shortcomings of the 1936 Neutrality Act, which made no provisions for civil wars. Rebel leader Francisco Franco reportedly praised Roosevelt for the U.S. foreign policy stating that it was a gesture that the rebels would never forget.

In early 1937, while debating a new Neutrality Act, Senator Nye, among others, felt that the United States’ position of neutrality towards Spain should be reexamined due to Germany and Italy’s quasi open-ended aid of Franco’s revolutionaries. Neutrality in this case actually was helping the rebels. To make matters worse, news of conflicts pouring in from around the world was so dreadful that both democrats and republicans were “beginning to look like bad watchmen.” Some, like Nye, wanted to extend the embargo to Germany and Italy, whereas some favored lifting the embargo as to make materiel available to the Spanish government. Probably the chief reason, however, why the United States was adamantly against aiding either side in the Spanish conflict was the both non-interventionist stance of other European nations such as Britain and France. Without addressing many of the concerns raised by Senator Nye and others, on 1 May 1937, the day that the 1936 Neutrality Act expired, FDR signed a new permanent Neutrality Act into law. Because he was left with little discretionary power, FDR announced in June, after the passage of the 1937 Neutrality Act that no change would be made in the policy towards Spain.

The 1937 permanent Neutrality Act provided that whenever the president found to exist a state of war between two nations or whenever a civil war existed which “endangered the peace” of the United States, four major restrictions automatically took place:
1. An embargo of arms, ammunition and implements of war (not including essential raw materials) to all belligerents;

2. A ban on loans to belligerents;

3. A ban on arming merchant ships dealing with belligerents;

4. A ban on American citizens traveling on belligerent ships.

The new Neutrality Act included a “cash-and-carry” portion that limited trade of goods to normal pre-war levels and that had a 2-year trial period after which the president could decide if it was necessary. Because of its cash-and-carry measure, the 1937 Neutrality Act favored both aggressors such as Japan and sea powers such as Britain as both had the means to transport goods from America. This permanent attempt at neutrality legislation shows how difficult it was to anticipate future world affairs. Each time a neutrality act was passed, a belligerent inadvertently circumvented it, throwing the President and the Congress into a frenzy to try and reconcile the legislation to current events.

In July-August 1937, Japan attacked China west of Peking, starting an informal undeclared war, which prompted FDR not to apply the Neutrality Act. It was determined by the administration that the application of the Neutrality Act would greatly favor Japan who had a Navy superior to the Chinese, and could take advantage of the cash-and-carry portion of the act. Since Japan was decidedly the aggressor, and the United States had good relations with China, President Roosevelt did not want to appear to be aiding one side over the other.

However, just as the U.S. economy was gaining momentum, all attention in the Roosevelt Administration folded inward in late August 1937 when the economy hit a slump. Government spending seemed to be the only thing keeping the economy going and in 1937 when Roosevelt tried to cut spending, the economy suffered for it and FDR had become a “prisoner of his own
spending policies.”93 From August 1937 to May 1938 unemployment increased from 4,991,000 to 9,587,000. This economic downturn was nicknamed the “Roosevelt Recession.”94

The recession of 1937-1938 was caused by a reduction of government spending, and was counteracted by using Keynesian government spending policies.95 In regards to the new recession the New York Times in autumn 1937 said that, “the cause is attributed by some to taxation… [and] by others to the demoralization of production caused by strikes.”96 Journalist and author Amity Shlaes adds that, “both the taxes and the strikes were the result of Roosevelt policy.”97 In 1939, the government tripled the deficit of 1938, which ended the recession but only brought things back to “depression normal” and did not return the country to prosperity. The FDR administration never spent the amount of money suggested by Keynes to pull the country out of depression (5 to 10 times more was needed to be according to Keynes).98 The recession had such a profound effect on the country that when the Japanese attacked the U.S.S. Panay in late 1937, killing two Americans and wounding fifty others, the outcry for war was nil. Even at this event, some Americans pushed even harder for isolationism.99

While the U.S. economy was backsliding, many still seemed to be unhappy with the 1937 permanent Neutrality Act. So many were dissatisfied that between the winter 1937 and spring 1938, more than 20 bills challenging the Neutrality Act were put forth in Congress. It was obvious to both internationalists and isolationists that the situation that existed was favorable to neither camp.100 In early 1938, even Senator Nye proposed legislation that favored either a cash-and-carry benefit for the Spanish loyalists, or lifting of the embargo for the Loyalists only and keeping the embargo on the rebels.101

From mid-1937 on, Franklin Roosevelt was reluctant to risk anything in the realm of foreign affairs. Hugo Black, FDR’s nominee for the Supreme Court, was found to be a former
member of the Ku Klux Klan (a white supremacist group); moreover, the “Roosevelt Recession”, and the so called, “court-packing” crusade had made Roosevelt the most unpopular of his long presidency. With so much controversy in domestic affairs, now was not the time for controversial moves in foreign affairs.¹⁰²

Such is a brief overview of the complex domestic situation in the United States in the 1930s. President Roosevelt had his hands full simply with internal affairs and American politics. But the global picture was significantly more complex and more convoluted than that of U.S. domestic policy. With rising conflicts in Europe, Africa and Asia worldwide peace was being threatened, and sooner or later the United States would be forced into action.

**Foreign Policy: Austria & Anschluss**

In the pre-World War II context, why was Austria so important and why should her independence have mattered to the United States? Austria was important because it was the first sovereign, independent nation that was overpowered by the Third Reich. In the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or National Socialist German Workers Party (hereinafter referred to as “Nazi”) era, Austria desired independence and autonomous freedom, but did not have the ability to achieve it alone. Austria’s independence had to be guaranteed by nations more powerful than the stripped and broken Österreich. Unfortunately, Austria could never find an agreement that ensured its independence. The importance of Austrian independence was crucial on the eve of a possible new war. Had the western powers been agreeable to stop Hitler in 1938, World War II might have been averted. That may be speculative, but the evidence that follows paints a picture that the Anschluss did not come as a surprise; the Western powers did not need to sacrifice Austria and appease Hitler. The argument
by some that Austria was “historically German” and ought to be included in the *Deutsches Reich* (German Empire), lacks validity in light of the two countries’ distinctly separate histories.

When evaluating Austro-German relations, one must consider their history. From 1848 forward, many Austro-Germans thought of themselves as members of the German Nation (an ethnic group characterized by a common language, geography, determination, beliefs and character). The First World War fortified the links between the Austrians and the Germans. Yet, despite similar identities and common language, the cultural differences between the Austrians and Germans were “substantial, and reasserted themselves quite independently of Allied promptings in 1919,” as the two countries had already drifted apart prior to the end of World War I. In fact Austria had not been part of Imperial Germany, and therefore Germany did not “lose” Austria at Versailles.

After World War I, the victors drafted in Paris, a treaty of terms and boundaries for Germany and Austria. The resultant Treaty of Versailles carved up Central Europe, and created new artificial borders for Germany based on European security needs rather than nationalist promptings. As a result, Germany was reduced in size and stripped of her colonies. Austrian Chancellor Karl Renner, in going to St. Germain, told his people that he would get the best terms possible for Austria. Yet, there was little Renner could do as Austria was formally stripped of most of the territories she had gained since the fourteenth century. Included in these territories was the Austrian South Tyrol. Although the majority of residents in the South Tyrol spoke German, the Italians annexed it with little difficulty, establishing a new Italian-Austrian border at the Brenner Pass. The peacemakers in Paris arbitrarily created a host of smaller states out of the former central Europeans monarchies, and as Georges Clemenceau, French Prime Minister (1917-1920) dramatically put it, “Austria, that is what is left over.”
Postwar Austria was in a desperate situation, as economic conditions were extremely poor. Austria was, “a land without coal, one that was unable to produce sufficient foodstuffs” within its own borders. To make matters worse, Austria had no major export industries, and would have a difficult time at best existing independently.\textsuperscript{110}

Following World War I, Austria had no separate national identity other than a Germanocentric view of the world. Many Austrians in all political camps viewed \textit{Anschluss} as the only solution to their many problems. Trying to evoke point number ten of President Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points”, the principle of self-determination, Austria moved towards \textit{Anschluss}, but was denied by the European powers.\textsuperscript{111} In post-Versailles Austria, the socialists were the first group to push for \textit{Anschluss}. During the St. Germain talks Austrians insisted on \textit{Anschluss}; Germans felt that the terms of the peace treaty would be tougher on them if they were pushing towards a union with Austria.\textsuperscript{112}

Due to overwhelming public opinion Germany and Austria signed an agreement that called for a speedy unification. Austria would essentially be relegated to being a former province, with Vienna becoming a “second German capital.” At least such an \textit{Anschluss} agreement would allow Austria to exist in a state other than destitute poverty.\textsuperscript{113}

\textit{Anschluss}, however, was never a viable option as far as the four victorious powers (United States, Britain, France and Italy) were concerned. Germany’s interpretation of Wilson’s fourteen points argued that this violated the principle of self-determination, but the four powers disagreed. The World War I victors correctly thought that \textit{Anschluss} would lead to Germany’s economic and political domination of Central Europe, the very preponderance that the victorious powers were trying to prevent. Allowing Germany to annex Austria would place Germany on the Brenner Pass, which the Italians strongly opposed, and Czechoslovakia feared being
surrounded on three sides by Germany. Nor did any of the Balkan states wish to have Germany on the Danube River, in a position to dominate Southeast Europe.\textsuperscript{114} France was the staunchest opponent of \textit{Anschluss} as, “no French politician was prepared to permit vanquished Germany to expand its territory and add some 6.5 million people to its population.” Especially considering that \textit{Anschluss} would have strengthened Germany beyond the power she had in 1914 (given that Austria was more ethnically homogeneous and geographically more important than the outlying parts of what was Imperial Germany).\textsuperscript{115}

In the early 1930s, while the United States was shifting to the left from the Republican Hoover to the Democratic Roosevelt, Europe was shifting even more radically to the right. In May 1932 Engelbert Dollfuss became Chancellor in Austria, and in January 1933 Adolf Hitler became Chancellor in Germany. Shortly after Hitler’s \textit{Machtergreifung} (seizure of power) or as some have said \textit{Machterschleichung} (sneaking into power), the Nazis won a plurality of the seats in the \textit{Reichstag}, the German Parliament. With the rise of Dollfuss in Austria and Hitler and the Nazis in Germany, the mood in Austria shifted towards nationalism and away from \textit{Anschluss}.\textsuperscript{116}

But the new Nazi German government favored \textit{Anschluss}, more so than ever. Shortly after the rise of the Nazis in Germany, homegrown Nazi terrorism began in Austria. Chancellor Dollfuss reacted to these Nazi actions by banning all activities by the Nazi Party in Austria. This, naturally, prompted even more terrorism by the Austrian Nazis. Dollfuss complained to Britain, France, and Italy after having warned Germany to stop their support of subversive Nazi actions and terrorism. Hitler's response to Dollfuss' complaint was that it was not a matter of subversion, but rather of \textit{one} German people. Hitler argued that the oneness of German people could not be expected to subscribe to political lines, and that the actions of Austrian Nazis were
due to the movement of Greater German people, not deliberate activities on behalf of one country trying to overthrow another.\textsuperscript{117}

In retaliation, Dollfuss then revamped the state closer to an authoritarian/fascist model. In exchange for agreeing to implement fascist policies Dollfuss received a promise of military assistance from Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini, if the Nazis tried to force \textit{Anschluss}. Dollfuss then dissolved the \textit{Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs} (Social Democratic Party, or SPÖ), independent unions, and workers’ associations and seized all of their possessions. At this point nearly two-thirds of the Austrian population was denied any voice in the Dollfuss government. German Chancellor and Nazi leader Adolf Hitler was extremely displeased with Dollfuss’ anti-German actions, and shortly thereafter the Austrian Nazis attempted a \textit{coup d’État}.\textsuperscript{118}

The Nazis rocked the Austrian government on July 25, 1934 with the murder of Chancellor Dollfuss during a failed \textit{putsch} attempt.\textsuperscript{119} In support of Austria, Italian leader Benito Mussolini, also known as “\textit{Il Duce}”, sent four army divisions to the Austrian border to show his support for his fallen comrade Chancellor Dollfuss, and for Austrian independence.\textsuperscript{120}

Upon Dollfuss’ murder Kurt Schuschnigg, Dollfuss’ Minister of Justice, became Chancellor of Austria. From his earliest days in office, Schuschnigg was clear in stating that maintaining Austrian independence was of paramount importance.\textsuperscript{121}

Schuschnigg hoped that Austrian independence could be maintained by creating of an “Austrian pact,” that would be guaranteed by Britain, France, and Italy.\textsuperscript{122} Without Italy’s support, Schuschnigg acknowledged that Austrian independence would be difficult to maintain. This proved to be especially clear in 1935/36 when Mussolini embarked on colonial conquest in Africa.
In violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany revealed the existence of an air force and plans to build a 550,000 man army. In response to this, FDR drafted a peace plan that called for England, France, Italy, Poland, Belgium, Holland and possibly Russia to agree to blockade Germany (thereby controlling all of Germany’s imports and exports). FDR would shortly thereafter re-suggest this idea of a blockade to the participants at the Stresa Conference.\textsuperscript{123}

In mid-1935, just a few months after Germany’s violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Mussolini and French Prime Minister Pierre Laval met in Rome to discuss several issues of geopolitical importance to both Italy and France, one of which was the preservation of Austrian independence. French Prime Minister Pierre Laval and Mussolini agreed in the “Rome Accords” to consult \textit{if} Austrian independence was threatened. The Austrian Chancellor was not satisfied with this agreement because it did not include a provision for \textit{guaranteed military aid to Austria}, something Kurt Schuschnigg saw as vital to Austrian security.\textsuperscript{124} Although the British approved of the “Rome Accords,” after Laval agreed to grant Mussolini a “free hand” in Ethiopia, the British withdrew their support. Shortly thereafter, upon hearing a rumor of an impending German-Austrian alliance, Britain, France and Italy met at Stresa, Italy, to attempt to work out an agreement to preserve Austrian independence. In the United States, President Roosevelt had high hopes for the Stresa meeting. The President hoped that the three parties would agree and partner with the Little Entente (Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia) so that a blockade of Germany could be established that the United States could “officially recognize.” However, at the Stresa Conference (also known as the “Stresa Front”) Britain refused to agree to defend Austria under any circumstances. Britain’s refusal to defend Austria was caused in large part due to Britain’s ongoing quarrel with Italy over the \textit{Duce’s} colonial aspirations in Africa.\textsuperscript{125}
In October 1935 shortly after the formation of the Stresa Front, *Il Duce*, suffering from a bad case of imperial fever, invaded Ethiopia. Britain was very concerned over this aggression, but not so much out of concern for the Ethiopian people rather because of Ethiopia’s strategical importance.\textsuperscript{126} Even before Ethiopia was defeated, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini seeing himself as a modern-day Caesar, publicly expressed interest in expanding his empire north of Ethiopia. The *Duce*, after his conquest of Ethiopia, had his sights set on the British controlled countries Sudan and Egypt. He wanted his Italian empire to stretch from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{127} An Italian presence in Ethiopia was “too close for both British comfort”, as London was worried about the security of its African colonies that bordered Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{128} However, Britain knew that it could not afford to directly challenge Italy’s presence in Africa, as it might push Italy closer to an alliance with Germany, which neither Britain nor France nor Austria wanted.\textsuperscript{129}

Meanwhile in Central Europe Nazi Germany remilitarized the Rhineland, in violation of the Versailles and Locarno Treaties. Although many were worried, including the Austrian government which clearly understood this event to have lasting significance for *Mitteleuropa*, none of the world powers reacted to Germany’s move into the Rhineland because it was formerly and historically part of Greater Germany. The neutralized Rhineland was a unique creation of Versailles, created within Germany, whereas Austria and Czechoslovakia were created as independent. Because of the Rhineland’s history and political status, many expected German to someday again reoccupy the Rhineland. However, after Germany abruptly remilitarized the Rhineland world leaders pondered Germany’s next move.\textsuperscript{130} Some felt Czechoslovakia would be next on Hitler’s list of countries; others felt that Austria would be next. William Bullitt,
Ambassador to France (1936-1940) said that France would not fight for Czechoslovakia if they had to fight Germany unilaterally.\(^{131}\)

After the Rhineland incident, in early 1936, Mussolini and Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg had a meeting in which Mussolini recommended to Schuschnigg that Austria improve their relations with Germany because due to the strain on Italian resources as a result of Mussolini’s Ethiopian adventure, they could no longer guarantee Austrian independence. *Il Duce* suggested that Austria look to Germany to ensure their independence.\(^{132}\) With the July 11, 1936 agreement with Nazi Germany, Kurt Schuschnigg tried to do just that.

The “July Agreement” as it has become known, was the first major event on the road to *Anschluss*. In this agreement between Schuschnigg and Hitler, Austria agreed to give the Austrian Nazis amnesty, to give the Austrian “national” opposition (the Nazis) cabinet representation, and align the Austrian government closely with German foreign policy. In return for all of these Austrian concessions, Germany agreed to recognize Austrian independence (something that Adolf Hitler had refused to do up to this point). Austria saw this agreement as a fixed basis of future policy between Austria and Germany. Germany saw this same agreement as another step on the road to *Anschluss*.\(^{133}\)

George Messersmith, the U.S. ambassador to Austria (1934-1937), on the day of the agreement between Austria and Germany, wrote a letter to Secretary of State Cordell Hull in which Messersmith questioned Germany’s motives. Why, Messersmith postulated, would Germany now recognize Austrian independence, when they had refused to do so prior to this? He had no answer other than to speculate that it could be due to improving British-German relations. Messersmith thought that in the long run the agreement would enslave Austria to Germany.\(^{134}\)
Earlier in 1936 Messersmith promoted the position that Germany’s natural economic hinterland was Südosteuropa (Southeast Europe). This was a principal reason, he said, that it made sense that Germany protested against any trade agreement among Southeastern European countries. Germany wanted bilateral agreements with each of these countries individually. Germany’s deliberate plan, which was in the making, involved running up large debts in Southeast Europe and then paying them back with goods and *not* hard currency. This essentially led these countries to becoming more economically dependent on Germany. Economic dependence, in George Messersmith’s view, led to political dependence. Messersmith said that German trade agreements were designed to help Germany and hurt everyone else. Only with a favorable balance of trade could Germany continue to rearm. Without such a balance the Nazis had no money for rearmament.\(^\text{135}\)

Soon after the July 11 Agreement, Schuschnigg speculated, “those who could still help no longer deemed Austria worth saving.” Austria was a reminder to the West of postwar mistakes in diplomacy. Some U.S. conservatives, ignorant of Pan-German history, argued that Austria and Germany were historically and racially destined to become one state. After the July 11 Agreement, many of Austria’s supporters gave up hope. Messersmith predicted that the July 11 agreement had more to do with Italy and Germany than Austria and Germany. Messersmith also said that Italy was still playing the field and was not committed to Germany just yet; some would say that Messersmith was wrong on both accounts. In any event, European security was maintained so long as Italy remained aligned with Britain and France.\(^\text{136}\)

Just as Europe was beginning to settle after the July 11 agreement, Civil War broke out in Spain on July 17, 1936 (an event that made President Roosevelt even more skeptical of trying to maintain European peace).\(^\text{137}\) The United States was not really interested in the internal affairs
of Spain or saving Spanish democracy; the real danger of the Spanish Civil War was its spillover
effect and the threat of a general European war. War in Spain ultimately pitted the National
government, and its supporters Russia, England and France against a group of rebels led by
General Francisco Franco and his allies Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Although it was
unknown at the time, the Spanish Civil War offered a glimpse of the future alliances that would
develop during World War II.138

Since Germany and Italy were fighting on the same side, aiding Franco’s rebels, the
Western nations desiring peace (i.e. United States, Britain, and France) were careful not to act in
tandem and cement an alliance between Hitler and Mussolini, which might have led to
Anschluss. No one, except Germany, wanted Anschluss; so the United States, Britain and France
took the neutral road. Little did anyone know that Hitler was purposely withholding aid from
Franco in hopes of lengthening the Spanish conflict, and draw Italy closer to Germany and
further from the Western powers.139

Italy also added to the push towards Anschluss, when in May 1936 Mussolini dismissed
his pro-Austrian Foreign Minister, Fulvio Suvich in favor of his son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano, who
was notoriously pro-German.140 In October of the same year, Ciano visited Berlin where he
made agreements with the Germans that essentially abandoned Italian protection of the
Schuschnigg government and Austrian independence. Later, Ciano reaffirmed what Il Duce had
told Schuschnigg a few months earlier that Italy could no longer give them any material support
because of the resources needed to be sent to Spain; Ciano suggested that Austria turn to
Germany for further help.141 Amazingly, in spite of Ciano’s actions, neither Schuschnigg nor the
other Austrian leaders counted Italy out of an “Austrian Pact” as many still saw Mussolini
through the “rose colored glasses of July 25, 1934.”142 Within weeks, on November 1,
Mussolini publicized an Italian-German agreement, the groundwork of which was laid during Ciano’s October visit to Berlin. This agreement became known as the “Pact of Steel” or the “Rome-Berlin Axis.”

The Rome-Berlin Axis was a settlement between Italy and Germany in which they agreed to pursue joint diplomatic and economic policies in the Danubian region. This meant Italy’s final abandonment of Austria. Both Italy and Germany agreed to openly aid Francisco Franco and the rebels (Spanish Nationalists) in Spain. Additionally, the German government officially recognized Mussolini’s conquest of Ethiopia. Global tensions were mounting in response to the solidification of a formal alliance between Italy and Germany, and the seemingly impending Anschluss.

In response to growing global tensions, President Roosevelt gave a speech on August 14, 1936 in Chautauqua, New York that quickly became known as the “I hate war” speech. FDR stated that he hated war, and although the United States did not want war, the United States also did not want to let war occur due to American passivity. The speech was important in that the FDR wanted to show that the United States was not afraid of going to war if war was necessary. It is doubtful that at this time President Roosevelt could have actually intervened because of both the strong isolationist sentiment and close proximity to the November presidential election in the United States, not to mention that at this point the U.S. military was not prepared for such action.

After FDR’s Chautauqua speech, warnings such as that of Emil Ludwig began to filtrate into the State Department. Ludwig, a noted Jewish philosopher and rabbi espoused in a letter to Cordell Hull a common view of the anticipated German plan for European domination. In his letter Ludwig said that Germany would not settle for anything less than defeat of the West, and that it was a mistake to believe that Germany would be satisfied by having colonies without
having a war. “They don’t want land,” claimed Ludwig, “but the satisfaction of being victorious over France.” Ludwig added that the United States was the only country that Germany feared. This fear was rooted in their defeat at the hands of the Americans in 1918. He made it clear that “[isolationism] is the very thing the Germans [are] praying for.”

William Dodd, U.S. Ambassador to Germany (1933-1938), said in August 1936 that Germany was resuming her normal position of importance in Europe, logically followed by the collapse of the artificial Europe created by the Treaty of Versailles; Messersmith chimed in that it was Germany’s goal to be the strongest nation on Earth. As time progressed and it looked more certain that Britain and France would do nothing to stop German posturing, Dodd indicated there was a good chance that the Nazis were going to be able to dominate Europe without fighting a war.

Shortly after FDR’s “I hate war” speech, and Dodd’s comments on the “rebirth” of Germany, Hitler drafted what would become known as the “Four-Year Plan.” “Its significance derives from the fact that Hitler hardly ever put pen to paper throughout his entire dictatorship, but on this occasion the substance of his thoughts was sufficiently important to the future development of Germany policy for him to set them down himself.” In this plan, Hitler called for a program of substantial militarization and the “unrestricted mobilization of the nation’s economic resources to prepare for [an] apocalyptic struggle.” This plan became the basis of subsequent German military, economic, and foreign policy.

At the end of 1936, a tumultuous year in world politics, Commander-in Chief of the Deutsche Luftwaffe (German Air Force), Hermann Göring after a secret meeting on the Four-Year Plan, arrogantly told U.S. Ambassador to Germany William Dodd that the duty of the German economic machine was to serve the interests of the whole German community, which...
compelled universal obedience. He went on to say that Germany planned to rearm to the fullest extent possible. Göring claimed that military self-sufficiency was paramount and he called industry, workers, and the people to be “prepared for further sacrifice.” He also claimed that the day would come for Austrians when they would consider it an honor to be given the Hitler salute.\textsuperscript{152} Comments such as these leave little to the imagination about the Nazis’ firm intentions vis-à-vis Austria. But even at this point at the end of 1936 it was not too late to save Austria; Germany still lacked the financial resources to militarily pursue \textit{Anschluss}.

However, with President Roosevelt fresh off his big reelection victory, and confident in his Supreme Court reorganization plan, the United States commander-in-chief was still resoundingly focused on domestic politics rather than war looming in Europe. To compound this, U.S. Ambassador to Austria George Messersmith thought that his long awaited economic crisis had finally hit Germany, and that the Nazis would not last throughout the year, as Germany was running out of raw materials, and fast.\textsuperscript{153} At the beginning of 1937 the FDR apparently had an abundance of reasons to focus on the domestic agenda, and fewer reasons to concern himself with Europe’s affairs.

Early in 1937 Mussolini formally abandoned the Stresa Front and later that year joined the Anti-Comintern Pact. Some saw this as Italy’s formal abandonment of their support for an independent Austria (although Italy’s \textit{informal} abandonment of Austria began prior to July 11, 1936).\textsuperscript{154} The desperate Austrian government, however, felt that Mussolini would always avoid having Hitler at the Brenner, and Ambassador Dodd said that the Austrians felt that “Mussolini [did] not intend to abandon Austria.”\textsuperscript{155}
Although American diplomatic dispatches indicated that Italy was loyal to Austria, Yvon Delbos, French Minister of Foreign Affairs (1936-1938) said that if German troops attacked Czechoslovakia, France would fight; but if Austria were attacked, France would abstain.

Also, at this time Austria and Czechoslovakia were trying to reach an agreement, as their fates were tied closely together. On this agreement, French Foreign Minister Delbos commented in May 1937 that Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Austria combined could not stop Germany militarily. Mussolini attempted to stop any agreement between Southeast European states, as to not provoke a German attack. The Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister Stefan Osusky felt that Hitler would not attack Czechoslovakia until at least the spring of 1938, but admitted that, as of the summer 1937, Austria could be attacked at any time. By this time both Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg and Czechoslovakian President Eduard Benes agreed that only through the strong support of Britain, France and Italy could the independence of Southeast Europe be preserved.¹⁵⁶

Franz von Papen, German Minister to Austria (1934-1938), whose job it was to undermine Austria’s diplomatic position in Europe, showed considerable chutzpah when he went to Paris to determine whether France would react more to an attack on Czechoslovakia or Austria, echoing what the American diplomats reported. France informed Papen the French would fight for Czechoslovakia, fulfilling the limits of their treaty obligations. Paris also said – with less fervor – that they would view unfavorably any change in the international status of Austria.¹⁵⁷ Germany seemed to be drawing close to a move against Austria, but Czechoslovakia seemed to be under no immediate threat (which could explain French willingness to fight for Czechoslovakia). French Foreign Minister Yvon Delbos thought that only giving in to Germany’s colonial desires would appease them (Austria and the Czech Sudetenland would not
count as colonies because of their geographic position, adjacent to Germany, not to mention that Germany already considered them quasi-part of the *Deutsches Reich*).\(^{158}\)

Truculent associates of Hitler continued to indicate future aggressive plans of action. Göring revealed that German policy was now to incorporate all Germans into the *Deutsches Reich* because they were now only separated by artificially boundaries created at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Göring also said that an agreement between Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia would cause Germany to go to war in Southeast Europe, as all Germans must be united. Göring also indicated that Germany only had dreams of regaining what was lost at Versailles.\(^{159}\)

In the United States around this time, Roosevelt gave a speech in Chicago on the Sino-Japanese war that had been escalating for the past few months. Although hardly noticed in Europe, FDR called for a global *quarantine of aggressor nations*, mostly by economic means.\(^{160}\) Roosevelt said that when sickness ravaged a group of people, the community joined together in a quarantine of the sick so that they may protect the health of those who are well against the spread of illness. This was essentially the first sign of America’s willingness to directly address matters abroad, although domestically Roosevelt continued to say that there had been no new developments in U.S. foreign policy.\(^{161}\)

There was a big backlash in the United States over the “quarantine speech.” Secretary of State Cordell Hull claimed that the speech set the United States back six months in changing public opinion about involvement in world affairs.\(^{162}\) In a fireside chat shortly after giving the speech in Chicago, Roosevelt said, “Peace must affirmatively be reached for. It can not just be wished for. It can not just be waited for.”\(^{163}\) Roosevelt’s ideas of U.S. isolationism were slowly changing, but official American foreign policy continued to be the same.\(^{164}\)
On November 5, 1937, a few weeks after Roosevelt’s “quarantine speech” there was a secret meeting of several high ranking Nazi officers about the future of German speaking people in Europe. The minutes of that meeting, known as the “Hossbach Memorandum”, explained Hitler’s concern that Germany’s future was dependent on solving the need for Lebensraum (living space), food, and raw materials. The Führer’s plan to solve these problems was to incorporate both Czechoslovakia and Austria into the Deutsches Reich. Although Hitler did not see the Nazis situation as imminent in November 1937, he did speculate that he might be ready to move as early as summer 1938. Shortly after the meeting Göring outlined for Ambassador William Bullitt the upcoming course of action for German foreign policy. Göring noted that both Austrians and Sudeten Germans would soon be annexed.

With regards to Austria, at the end of 1937 many questions still existed with regards to the future Anschluss. For example, U.S. Ambassador to France William Bullitt indicated that based on conversations with Camille Chautemps, French Prime Minister (1937-1938), he believed that Anschluss would lead to Italy turning against Germany. The British sent a secret memorandum to Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State (1937-1943) in which the Viscount Halifax, British Foreign Secretary (1938-1940), made the British position explicit that London supported the status quo, but that sometimes the status quo changed. Likewise, Neville Chamberlain’s position on the matter was clear that Chamberlain “adamantly opposed a powerful American presence in European Affairs.”

The first official shift in U.S. foreign policy and the first step in increased armaments came in late December 1937. However, by the time President Roosevelt had decided to slowly shift his views on foreign policy and become more proactive in Europe, it was essentially too late to save Austria. In a December letter from President Roosevelt to the Chairman of the House
Appropriations Committee, Edward Taylor (D-CO), FDR explained that he had tried “every conceivable” effort to stop the belligerents, but they refused to budge. Roosevelt acknowledged that the world as a whole was rapidly increasing its armaments; to deny this was to deny fact. He asked the Chairman to ask the Committee to consider new proposals for increased monies for naval armaments. However, many became suspicious of President Roosevelt and the motives behind his request for rearmament. Some interpreted this request as a sign that the United States was planning for an offensive attack. In concurrence with the message Secretary Hull said, “in our foreign policy there is not any disposition or intent to engage in warfare.”

Approximately two weeks later, in his State of the Union address, Roosevelt indicated that the United States had respected its treaties, but other countries had not. Those who had shifted their governments from democracy had also shifted to abandon their international legal commitments; in order for the United States to command respect we must keep ourselves adequately strong in self-defense.” These statements signaled the first public shift in foreign policy, as FDR called the United States to begin arming itself in self-defense.

In early January 1938 Sumner Welles proposed a meeting on November 11 (Armistice Day), upon the suggestion of the President that would have invited the international diplomatic community to the White House. There FDR would make a plea for disarmament and economic stability to prevent future wars. Secretary Hull was against this plan, but since Roosevelt favored it, Welles was allowed to proceed.

Welles first attempted to contact British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden about his two phased plan. Unfortunately Eden was on vacation, and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain received Welles’ plan. Chamberlain disregarded the plan because it conflicted with his own
appeasement plan. Within one month of this event Eden resigned; within two months Austria was annexed.\(^{175}\)

Guido Schmidt, Austrian Foreign Minister (1937-1938) admitted that he regretted Eden’s resignation. Schmidt’s wishful thinking posited that Neville Chamberlain’s appeasement policy was better than that of Eden, and thought that hope now existed of an Anglo-Italian understanding that would bring peace to Central Europe. The Austrian government, Schmidt said, planned to continue the struggle for an independent Austria, and confidence was increasing. Encouraged by this, Neville Chamberlain requested that FDR hold back further proposals on peace to see what his appeasement could accomplish.\(^{176}\)

Appeasement, in Chamberlain’s vision, meant to “settle differences by negotiation and concession.”\(^{177}\) Chamberlain’s appeasement policies have been debated vigorously by historians. They have been called everything from a “shameful and bankrupt policy of surrender to the dictator-states,” to a “rational strategy in the light of Britain’s weaknesses in the world by the 1930s.” However, appeasement was this and more, argue British historians Paul Kennedy and Talbot Imlay. They contend that appeasement had many phases and faces. The earlier appeasement policies of 1936-1937 are thought to have been the best policy given the state of world affairs at that time. However, as the Second World War drew closer in 1938-1939, it became apparent to some, not including Neville Chamberlain, that appeasement was a dead-end policy.\(^{178}\)

Among the great powers there was much confusion in early 1938 as to which country would be attacked first, Austria or Czechoslovakia; there was even more speculation about how and when. According to Prentiss Gilbert, William Dodd’s successor as U.S. Ambassador to Germany, no evidence existed in January 1938 that the Anschluss was imminent. Germany
definitely wanted Austria included in the Deutsches Reich, but seemed to be pursuing a gradual Anschluss. Prevailing opinion was that Italy did not want German troops on the Brenner border, and therefore still did not favor Anschluss. ¹⁷⁹ The United States later received even further confirmation that the Italians were pro-Austrian. During a conversation with Italian Ambassador to the United States Fulvio Suvich, Under Secretary Sumner Welles was informed that Germany wanted colonies and monetary assistance, but had no ambitions in Central Europe, and especially no designs on Austria. Suvich claimed that he was Austrian by birth and had helped Mussolini respect Austria after the murder of Dollfuss in 1934. Suvich claimed that Austrian independence was a cornerstone of Italian foreign policy, an obvious falsehood. ¹⁸⁰

Realistically though, Germany had a different plan than what Suvich claimed. In early February, Germany accused Austria of violating the 11 July 1936 agreement, to which Austria responded that they had not violated the agreement and drew up a list of all the ways that Germany had violated it. ¹⁸¹ This prompted the meeting on 12 February at Berchtesgaden between Hitler and Schuschnigg. The February 1938 Berchtesgaden meeting was a turning point in Hitler’s path to Anschluss. After the meeting Time magazine praised Schuschnigg for, “yielding much without yielding Austria’s territorial integrity.” ¹⁸² However, a few nights after the meeting, Schuschnigg revealed the truth to John C. Wiley, George Messersmith’s successor as U.S. Ambassador to Austria, about his meeting in Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest. Schuschnigg said that 12 February was the most horrible day of his life. “Hitler openly told him of his desire to annex Austria, and declared that he could march into Austria with much greater ease and infinitely less danger than he incurred in [the] remilitarization of the Rhineland,” Wiley reported. After Berchtesgaden, France said they would have to confer with Britain as to whether or not they would recommend Schuschnigg to accept or reject Hitler’s demands. Soon after the French
Foreign Minister told Schuschnigg that only a coalition of Britain, France, and Italy could save Austria, reaffirming Austria’s long standing position vying for Western protection.\textsuperscript{183}

Schuschnigg gave Wiley the details of the meeting of Hitlerite brow-beating at Berchtesgaden. Hitler had brought in three generals to Berchtesgaden to pressure the Austrian Chancellor. Hitler made four demands: amnesty for all Austrian Nazis; the Nazis who lost pensions and positions to be reinstated; Seyss-Inquart was to be appointed as Minister of the Interior (and in charge of all police forces); and Austria was not allowed to make any moves with regard to foreign affairs without first consulting Germany. Hitler told Schuschnigg that the goal was to bring together 80 million Germans to dominate Europe. With respect to the agreement at Berchtesgaden: amnesty was granted to Austrian Nazis and the Nazi pensions were reinstated; Nazi positions were not.\textsuperscript{184}

Even after Berchtesgaden, Schuschnigg did not give up hope, even though at this point FDR considered the soon to be \textit{Anschluss} a \textit{fait accompli}.\textsuperscript{185} Schuschnigg told U.S. Ambassador to Austria Wiley that he still wanted an independent Austria, but if Germany challenged Austria militarily, then Schuschnigg would be forced to resign. In response, Wiley mistakenly told Guido Schmidt that the United States urged Austria against any action which might be assumed to threaten Austrian independence. In what was tantamount to scolding, Moffat chided Wiley, “We certainly can’t be thought…to assume any responsibility legal or moral in Europe at the moment…”\textsuperscript{186} The only way to maintain Austrian independence, in Schuschnigg’s opinion, was for Britain, France, and Italy to join together and support Austria; without such diplomatic support Austria would never be safe. The Austrian Chancellor never seemed to consider U.S. involvement in the securing of Austrian independence, as he seemingly considered it a European matter. Chancellor Schuschnigg admitted that getting Britain, France, and Italy together would
be difficult because Britain and France would be forced to recognize Italian conquest of Ethiopia. Schuschnigg was doing everything in his power to buy more time, as he did in July 1936.\textsuperscript{187}

The Austrian Chancellor claimed to have confidence in his newly appointed Minister of the Interior Arthur Seyss-Inquart (who was forced upon him at Berchtesgaden), and still vowed to continue struggling for Austrian independence. Egon Berger-Waldenegg, Austrian Ambassador to Italy, said that Seyss-Inquart was a loyal Austrian and glad to see July 11\textsuperscript{th} reaffirmed.\textsuperscript{188} Meanwhile William Bullitt noted that he was told by an unnamed “intimate associate” of Arthur Seyss-Inquart’s that the Austrian Minister of the Interior was 100\% Nazi, and would soon show his true colors.\textsuperscript{189}

The new U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, and noted anti-Nazi, George Messersmith sent a long and fiery memorandum to Cordell Hull in which he discussed the February 12 meeting at Berchtesgaden. Messersmith said that Hitler had made such stringent demands of Austria as to leave them without real independence. Messersmith expressed his bewilderment about how Britain could pursue appeasement with Germany given that Germany had never kept agreements with anyone. Moreover, Hitler had spelled out his plan for Anschluss in his 1925 semi-autobiographical work \textit{Mein Kampf}. Yet British policy was focused more than ever on dead agreements, complained Messersmith. Messersmith wrote that in his opinion, if Austria resisted Anschluss, Schuschnigg might end up like Dollfuss. The Assistant Secretary had no doubt that Anschluss was Germany’s goal; however, Hitler’s \textit{Wehrmacht} (German Army) was not militarily ready to go to war. Austria was all but lost unless France or Britain stood up and spoke out in support of Austria. If Hitler was not to be confronted over Austria, Czechoslovakia was sure to follow four-to-five months later. Messersmith correctly assumed that France would fight for
Czechoslovakia in February, but would not come to its defense later. The Assistant Secretary claimed that *Anschluss* would open the flood gates of European conquest to Germany because there was no country in Northern or Southeastern Europe that could stop German advances.\textsuperscript{190} Messersmith’s predictions were on the mark.

On February 20 Hitler gave a speech in which he both affirmed Austrian independence and stated that over ten million Germans lived in states adjoining the borders of *Deutschland*, a clear indicator that the *Führer* considered those ten million a least a *de facto* part of the *Deutsches Reich*.\textsuperscript{191} Shortly after Hitler’s speech France coincidentally recognized that a German controlled Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania would be too powerful, and that France would be destroyed within a few years. France contacted Britain in an attempt to secure an agreement to aid Austria militarily if there was any change in the status quo. Britain said they would agree only if Italy both joined the agreement, and pulled their support from Franco’s rebels in Spain. Mussolini agreed to talk about both ventures with Britain and France, but Britain still did not feel comfortable with the agreement so in the end three powers did not reach an agreement to protect the independence of Austria.

Shortly before the *Anschluss*, Yvon Delbos said that because Britain had made it clear they would do nothing to stop Austria’s annexation and since France did not have the military power to stop Germany single-handedly, that the world had reached the stage where diplomacy was dead and only force would prevail. French Prime Minister Eduard Daladier still claimed that France would support Czechoslovakia if they were attacked, but he now considered Austria a lost cause.\textsuperscript{192}

On March 9, Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg announced a plebiscite, where he expected all Austrians to vote for a “free, German, independent, social, Christian Austria
dedicated to peace.” The qualifications for voting were “all Austrian citizens, male and female born earlier than 1915,” qualifications that eliminated most Nazis from voting.\textsuperscript{193}

Hitler went into rage over Schuschnigg’s proposed plebiscite, as it would have surely meant defeat for Anschluss. Seyss-Inquart issued an ultimatum to Schuschnigg, on Hitler’s directive, to cancel the plebiscite. Under threat of a Nazi instigated civil war, Schuschnigg cancelled the plebiscite, so long as there would be no Nazi disturbances in Austria. Berlin demanded that Schuschnigg must resign, and name Seyss-Inquart as his successor.\textsuperscript{194}

On the day Schuschnigg resigned, March 11, 1938, the \textit{New York Times} wrote that the United States planned to do nothing about Anschluss. J. Pierrepont Moffat, head of the Division of European Affairs in the State Department, noted that the United States, “had no intention of moving before the British and French, as in a purely European situation we did not wish to take the lead.”\textsuperscript{195} Hull said that Austria was opposed to German policy and that the proposed plebiscite would have proven that. Dispatches from foreign governments had long forecasted the Anschluss and American and European unwillingness to prevent it.\textsuperscript{196} The next day, March 12, when the Wehrmacht invaded and occupied Austria, Edgar L. G. Prochnik, Austrian Minister to the United States received orders to raise the Nazi swastika flag over the Austrian embassy in Washington. Moffat commented that this event made it clear to “Washingtonians that Austria was no more.”\textsuperscript{197}

After the Anschluss, Schuschnigg said that up to March 14 the American press had been in general pro-German. Only on this date did the media focus shift to Germany going after smaller states, blatantly breaching agreements.\textsuperscript{198} German lies and propaganda also began to run wild after the Anschluss. Göring told Nevile Henderson, British Ambassador to Germany (1937-1939), that German troops would withdraw from Austria as soon as order was restored (order
was never lost!), and Austria would have a free election (which did not happen). Seyss-Inquart also told Ambassador Wiley that Austria would remain independent after he formed a government of “reasonable and moderate men,” which also never happened. André Francois-Poncet, French Ambassador to Germany (1931-1938), assessed that the world had mistakenly given-in to Hitler, and that the Führer’s desire for further land grabs had been merely aroused further.199

On March 16, four days after the Anschluss, Assistant Secretary of State, George Messersmith let it be known to John C. Wiley, the U.S. Ambassador to Austria (1938), that there would be no change in U.S. policy no matter what happened elsewhere. The next day Secretary of State Cordell Hull gave a speech wherein he noted that, “Isolationism is not a means to security; it is a fruitful source of insecurity,” echoing FDR’s thoughts that the United States could not escape staying out of a European conflagration either through isolationism or neutrality. Hull stressed in the speech the necessity of rearmament. To be isolationist now would cost the United States its most valued possessions of freedom and liberty.200

On April 6, 1938 the United States closed its embassy in Vienna and told Berlin that Germany was now responsible for Austria’s debts in accordance with international law, a charge which Hitler dismissed. The United States and the European powers accepted Anschluss either de facto, de jure or both, and only Mexico ever formally denounced the German annexation of Austria.201

Conclusion

The United States quietly pulled out of Austria. Immediately after the Anschluss, FDR had wanted to issue a strong response, but was talked out of it by the State Department.202 That the United States’ diplomatic relations with Austria ended without much ado about anything
should come as no surprise, after American and Western inaction during Austria’s precipitate slide toward Anschluss. Although Britain and France were blatant appeasers of Hitler, there is little evidence that President Roosevelt saw the Anschluss as a way to quell the appetite of a hungry dictator.203

The Neutrality legislation in place in the United States severely limited FDR’s ability to come to Austria’s rescue. So either because of, or in spite of neutrality legislation, Franklin Roosevelt was so consumed with the domestic agenda that foreign affairs were forced to a position of lesser importance. With the Depression in the United States easing after 1933 as pointed out by economist Ben Bernanke, the American economic situation was improving, but at a rate much too slow considering how much ground the United States lost between 1929 and 1933.204 FDR’s New Deal, his answer for the Depression, was the President’s first priority. In his own mind, Roosevelt needed to solve the economic crisis and then worry about foreign affairs. His fights with the Supreme Court were a fight to keep his New Deal online; an agenda which FDR thought were the key to bringing the country out of the depression.

Roosevelt’s philosophical stance on the guarantee of Austrian independence also played a significant role in the United States’ ultimate inaction vis-à-vis Hitler’s Anschluss. FDR saw the guarantee of Austrian independence as a purely European matter, not one in which the United States should be involved. France would not militarily support Austria’s independence without the aid of Britain, and Britain did not want to support Austria under any circumstance. So by Franklin Roosevelt’s rationale, the United States had no business in Europe’s affairs, if the European powers did not take matters into their own hands.

The United States had ample evidence to support the defense of Austria against Germany, if not for the sake of saving Austria itself, than at least for maintaining the European balance of
power and global security. However, regardless of the evidence for Austria needing support for its survival, President Roosevelt did not aid Austrian independence due to his top priority in his domestic agenda, namely the fights with Congress and the Supreme Court to see his New Deal agenda come to fruition and pull the country out of the persistent economic depression. Through his domestic actions and international inaction, FDR decided that since the domestic situation was a mess, it was not prudent to try and solve the world’s problems. In hindsight, had the United States been willing to go to war over the Anschluss, World War II might have never occurred, but that is speculation at best.


7 Wilson’s League of Nations was an exercise in collective security, which itself is based on the idea that peace can be maintained if the global powers agree to do so. Theoretically peace can be preserved if all parties are willing to give up some national sovereignty for the sake of collective security. Prior to the 1920s most pacifist groups were affiliated with religious groups, Charles Chatfield, *For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1971), 5; Robert Divine, *Illusion of Neutrality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 92-93.


9 Chatfield, *Pacifism*, 144; The same legislation proposed in the 1930s was known as the “Ludlow Amendment,” for further detail see below.

10 Chatfield, *Pacifism*, 143.


12 Divine, *Illusion*, 6


15 Often times the Great Depression and the October 1929 stock market crash are used synonymously; however, the terms are not synonymous. The Great Depression however was caused by a myriad of factors, the two most significant being the 1929 stock market crash, and the 1930 bank failures. Milton Friedman, *A Monetary History of the United States, 1867-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 10-11; Hosen, *Great Depression and the New Deal*, viii-ix.

16 The Hoover administration passed two acts of significance that can be thought of as forerunners to the New Deal: The Reconstruction Finance Act (RFA), and the Emergency Relief and Construction Act (ERCA). The RFA assisted financial institutions in the financing of buildings, as well as aiding in the financing of agriculture and industry. The ultimate goal of the ERCA was a public works program. Hosen, *Great Depression and the New Deal*, viii-ix.


20 Bremner, “Social Welfare,” 70


23 Robinson, *They Voted for Roosevelt*, 183. The 1932 election also resulted in Roosevelt carrying more counties than he would in subsequent elections. Ironically, the six states FDR did not carry (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) in 1932 were all in his home region, the northeast.


Statistics from the Great Depression on unemployment can be interpreted in different ways. The debate continues on whether to use Lebergott’s statistics on the unemployed, or Darby’s statistics on those not working, more than just a debate in semantics. Lebergott’s figures are the ones most often quoted in regards to Great Depression unemployment. However, Michael Darby’s 1976 revisionist estimates are probably better to use in gauging the actual number of people not working, revealing the truer economic impact on the American public. Darby’s estimates remove from Lebergott’s those employed in government relief programs, and actually reflect the total number not working. For instance both Lebergott and Darby show unemployment to be 3.2% in 1929, however in 1933 Lebergott’s figures show unemployment at 24.9%, and Darby’s show unemployment to be 20.6%. By 1935 Lebergott’s unemployment figures decline to 20.1%, however Darby’s numbers decline to 14.2% indicating that an increasing number of people are being employed in government relief work programs. The figures for 1937, the high point for recovery prior to the end of the Depression in the early 1940s show a contrast of 14.3% for Lebergott, compared to just 9.1% for Darby. The “Roosevelt Recession” in 1938 is also exaggerated in Lebergott’s figures, showing a 4.7% increase in unemployment, whereas Darby’s figures indicate that unemployment only actually rose 3.4%. Undoubtedly both Lebergott and Darby’s statistics show that many people were unemployed during the Great Depression, however Darby’s statistics better indicate country’s real economic status with regards to unemployment. Gene Smiley, “Recent Unemployment Rate Estimates for the 1920s and 1930s,” The Journal of Economic History 43 (June 1983): 488.

Friedman, in his 1963 classic work on the U.S. economy, indicated that FDR’s New Deal acts in many cases undermined consumer confidence in the market, and that FDR’s sweeping changes in investing, banking, and labor relations generally encouraged people to hold onto their money rather than purchase goods or invest it. Friedman and Schwartz, Monetary History, 495.

Davis’ resume also included his role as a financial adviser to Woodrow Wilson at the Versailles Peace Conference. Ambassador Davis also shared in Hull’s belief that the United States ought to have a bigger and more helpful role in world affairs. Divine, “Collective Security,” 49.

An impartial embargo held that when a state of war was found to exist, the President must apply an embargo equally to all warring parties. This was in sharp contrast to Davis’ speech that implied that the United States would use a discretionary embargo, so that aggressors could be embargoed, and victims of the attack could be aided by both the League of Nations, and the United States, independent of each other; This amendment was commonly referred to as the “Johnson Amendment” named for Senator Hiram W. Johnson (R-CA).


Smiley, “Recent Unemployment Rate Estimates,” 488.

Hosen, Great Depression and the New Deal, 252, 268, 286, 295.

After the mid-term elections in 1934, Democrats controlled 74% of the House, and 71% of the Senate. Nelson, “President and the Court,” 271.
Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. I (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), 397; Although Hull, himself was not very experienced in foreign policy prior to being appointed as Secretary of State. Hull was most passionate about free trade, which he saw as a keystone of economic recovery. Irwin F. Gellman, *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 94.


Nye’s charge was not originally his; it was initially theorized by noted progressive Wisconsin Senator “Fighting” Bob La Follette. Divine, *Illusion*, 67.


Hull, *Memoirs*, 399; William Dodd also warned that isolationism was a “short-sighted policy…which more likely than not would ultimately lead to war.” Low, *Anschluss*, 322.


From 1790 until 1860 the Court had invalidated only two Congressional acts. From 1860 until 1920 the number ruled against by the Supreme Court ranged between four and nine per decade. The 1920s saw nineteen acts of Congress ruled unconstitutional, averaging slightly less than two per year. Irving Bernstein, *A History of the American Worker 1933-1941: Turbulent Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 638; Nelson, “President and the Court,” 269.


Divine, *Illusion*, 90; International Law Professor at Yale, Edwin Borchard, was an opponent of a discretionary embargo. He testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that such an embargo might itself be considered an act of war. Divine, “Collective Security,” 50.


Divine, *Illusion*, 90. Secretary of State Cordell Hull had various reasons for his opposition to neutrality legislation. Hull stated that if the country was bound to neutrality legislation it would let aggressors know exactly what the United States would and would not do, and warmongers would do as they pleased. Hull also thought that an aggressor would be more likely to attack an unprepared country if they knew the United States would not come to the victim’s aid. Hull, *Memoirs*, 406, 413, 415.


Traditionally the United States’ stance on neutrality was non-partisan: all belligerents were treated equally. Since the 1790s the United States defended the right of its citizens to trade war materiel with warring nations, impartially. Thomas Jefferson, in 1793 used this same stance against the British who protested the Americans trading with the French. This was more or less the United States’ neutrality stance until World War I. Divine, Illusion, 7.

Gellman, Secret Affairs, 89; Dallek, American Foreign, 112; Divine, Illusion, 122-123.

Divine, Illusion, 124.

Divine, Illusion, 129.

Divine, Illusion, 128; Dallek, American Foreign, 114-115.

Divine, Illusion, 129; Dallek, American Foreign, 118, 120.

Divine, Illusion, 130. Public polling, a new tool in gauging the public opinion revealed that 82% of people surveyed in March 1936 thought that the manufacture and sale of war munitions for private profit should be prohibited. Gallup and Robinson, “Public Opinion,” 387.

Divine, Illusion, 134.

Gellman, Secret Affairs, 90.


Divine, Illusion, 160-161; Dallek, American Foreign, 118.

Dallek, American Foreign, 120, 136; Divine, Illusion, 157-158.


Hull, Memoirs, 488; Gellman, Secret Affairs, 92.

Gellman, Secret Affairs, 125.

Gellman, Secret Affairs, 137-138; Dallek, American Foreign, 125.

Justice Sutherland cited the example of George Washington’s refusal to send Jay’s Treaty to the House of Representatives. Sutherland said that the “wisdom of Washington’s decision ‘has never since been doubted.”’ Arthur Schlesinger, The Imperial Presidency (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 100-103; For a synopsis of the facts, questions, and decision in United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation et al., http://www.oyez.org/oyez/resource/case/395/.

Divine, Illusion, 168.

Divine, Illusion, 169-170; Dallek, American Foreign, 135.


Divine, Illusion, 172.


Hofstadter, *Age of Reform*, 308.


Although this was still not a popular move with the American people. In polls taken in December 1937 and February 1938, 62% and 63% respectively said they did not think the government should start spending again to help get business out of its slump. Gallup and Robinson, “Public Opinion,” 377; McCraw, “Mixed Economy,” 44.


McCraw, “Mixed Economy,” 44.


FDR was so unpopular at this time that when in late November a special session of Congress was called for another round of domestic legislation, the President failed to get a single act passed. In one instance as many as 108 House Democrats voted opposite the President. Dallek, *American Foreign*, 147, 153, 159.


The Austrian Hapsburg Empire had dissolved into many “nations” in the months preceding the end of the First World War, due to cultural and ethnic differences, and a centuries old desire for independence. Low, Anschluss, 8-10; Marks, Ebbing, 280.


Luza, Austro-German, 5-6; Low, Anschluss, 8-10; Lassner, “War by Other Means,” 92.


Marks, Ebbing, 90.

Steininger, “Anschluss,” 90; Low, Anschluss, 11-12.


Lassner, “War by Other Means,” 93-95; Steininger, “Anschluss,” 32-33; The leader of Nazi terrorism in Austria was Theo Habicht. Low, Anschluss, 136-137, 147.


Lassner, “Foreign Policy,” 165; Low, Anschluss, 149, 159; Lassner, “War by Other Means,” 97.

Lassner, “Foreign Policy,” 165.

Dallek, American Foreign, 102.


Sullivan, “More than Meets the Eye,” 179; Low, Anschluss, 246-249; Robert Mallett, Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War, 1933-1940 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 31-33; FDR hoped for a blockade because he had jurisdiction over supporting a blockade, whereas Congress held jurisdiction over a boycott or sanction. Dallek, American Foreign, 103; Lassner, “War by Other Means,” 102-103.


Mallett, Mussolini and the Origins, 30.
128 Stiller, *Messersmith*, 64.

129 It is unlikely that an Italian-German alliance would have occurred at this point in history, as Mussolini had been preparing strategically for war against Germany, out of fear of Anschluss, since the mid-1920s. Mussolini not only continued such plans after the rise of the Nazis in Germany, but also committed Italian resources to then Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss to prevent Anschluss. Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins*, 35; Dallek, *American Foreign*, 111-121; Low, *Anschluss*, 255-257.


133 Stiller, *Messersmith*, 89; Lassner, “War by Other Means,” 106; Weinberg, 264-265; By the end of 1936 approximately 18,684 Nazis had been granted amnesty by the Austrian Government. Messersmith to Hull, January 23, 1937, 800, Box 27, RG 84, National Archives and Records Administration [Hereinafter NARA].

134 Messersmith to Hull, July 11, 1936, in: Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1936*, vol. I: *General British Commonwealth* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953), 316 [hereinafter cited as *FRUS*]. Messersmith, however, had special insight into Austrian-German relations, as he had previously been general consul in Berlin; he witnessed both the Nazi rise to power stationed in Berlin and the European crisis while stationed in Vienna. Weinberg, *Foreign Policy*, 255; Messersmith to Hull, July 17, 1936, 800, Box 11, RG 84, NARA.

135 Messersmith to Hull, July 11, 1936, *FRUS 1936*, vol. I, 495-499; The Wilhelmstrasse encouraged trade with Southeastern Europe in the early days of the Third Reich (1934-1936) to increase German political influence (at the time when Hitler was less focused on expansion and “played virtually no role” in the development of trade agreements). Under Hitler’s guidance (1937-End of the War) such trade became a way to fund both German rearmament and expansionist war. Kaiser, *Economic Diplomacy*, 62, 69, 80, 130. Chapters III and VI in *Economic Diplomacy* deal specifically with German trade agreements with countries in Südosteuropa.

136 Stiller, *Messersmith*, 90; Low, *Anschluss*, 140; Dallek, *American Foreign*, 111-121; Although to many the July 11th agreement signaled the beginning of the end for Austrian independence, the agreement was quite popular in the Austrian provinces, as they hoped to see the return of tourism, which had exponentially dwindled to nothing after 1933. In Vienna, the stock exchange was also stimulated by the agreement. Messersmith to Hull, January 23, 1937, 800, Box 27, RG 84, NARA.


138 Hull, *Memoirs*, 485; Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 89; Dallek, *American Foreign*, 131. Austria also favored Franco’s forces to the national government in Spain, and stationed a minister with the rebel forces, but not with the Valenza government (even though the Valenza government had requested five times for Austria to fill the position). Wiley to Hull, November 17, 1937, 800, Box 27, RG 84, NARA; Marks, *Ebbing*, 335.


141 Stiller, *Messersmith*, 91.

142 July 25, 1934 as earlier noted was the day that Mussolini came to Austria’s aid after the murder of Engelbert Dollfuss. Stiller, *Messersmith*, 85.

144 Sullivan, “More than Meets the Eye.” 181. Unnamed Austrian officials admitted to U.S. Ambassador Wiley that de facto recognition of the Franco Government has been granted, but because of the want of avoidance of adhesion to the Rome-Berlin axis, de jure recognition would not happen in the near future. Wiley to Hull, November 17, 1937, 800, Box 27, RG 84, NARA.


146 Roosevelt, *Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs*, 388.

147 Dodd to Hull, September 3, 1936, *FRUS 1936*, vol. I, 335-338; Memorandum from Messersmith, September 10, 1936, *FRUS 1936*, 342-345. Often thought to be a poor diplomat, William Dodd was a distinguished Professor of History at the University of Chicago prior to his diplomatic service. He was chosen by FDR because of his extensive knowledge of German history, culture and proficiency in the German language. Low, *Anschluss*, 319. Historians differ on their treatment of William Dodd, and as to how effective he was as a United States Ambassador. Franklin Ford and Nancy Hooker stand in stark contrast to Alfred Low’s evaluation of Dodd. Ford and Hooker argue that Dodd was a poor diplomat because he viewed Germany too much through his historic perspective of what Germany had been, and not through what the Nazis currently were. Once it was clear to Dodd that he would be unable to soften the Nazi party’s effect in Germany, he became little more than a sideline reporter who sent back much less information to Washington than his British and French counterparts sent back to London and Paris, respectively. Compared to a diplomat like George Messersmith, Ford and Hooker paint Dodd as an abysmal failure. Dodd certainly was a better diplomat that Ford and Hooker give him credit for being. Franklin L. Ford, “Three Observers in Berlin: Rumbold, Dodd, and François-Poncet,” in: Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert eds., *The Diplomats 1919-1939*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 437-476. Jay Pierrepont Moffat, *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, 1919-1943*, Nancy Harvison Hooker ed., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

148 It was known at the time that Britain’s foreign policy was “arm[ed] heavily for defensive purpose and await a possible military explosion in Central Europe within another year or two.” Hull, *Memoirs*, 522.; Roosevelt, *Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs*, 457.


150 Overy, “Misjudging Hitler,” 98.


153 In 1934, shortly after arriving in Austria as Ambassador and meeting with Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, Messersmith told the Chancellor that due to internal dissension and economic difficulties, the Nazis were on their last leg, “Hitler had two months at most.” Messersmith soon after told Secretary of State Cordell Hull that the Austrian situation needs not concern the United States, see Stiller, *Messersmith*, 59-60, 92.


155 Dodd to Hull, April 30, 1937 in *FRUS 1937*, vol I: *General* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1954), 82; This is also corroborated by the fact that as late as November 1937, as stated in the Hossbach Memorandum, that the Nazis did not know where Italy stood on the *Anschluss*. Hossbach said, “it was impossible at the moment to estimate what [Italy’s] attitude on the Austrian question would be…” Germany. Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents of German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. 1, *From Neurath to Ribbentrop, September 1937-*


159 Transylvania, for example, would not have been incorporated into the Deutsches Reich because they are separated from Germany by another country, Bullitt to Hull, November 23, 1937, FRUS 1937, vol. I, 171.

160 Divine, Illusion, 211; Dallek, American Foreign, 147.


162 Benjamin Welles, Sumner Welles: FDR’s Global Strategist: A Biography (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 204; It was great irony that there was such a big backlash to the quarantine speech, for many in Washington, including Secretary of State Hull thought the speech would be lauded and well accepted. Moffat, Moffat Papers, 153.

163 Franklin D. Roosevelt, Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy, 1933-1941 Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Unedited Speeches and Messages, compiled by Douglas Lurton (New York: W. Funk, Inc. 1942), 133.

164 Welles, Global Strategist, 133.

165 Documents of German Foreign Policy, 29-38; Low, Anschluss, 293-294; Weinberg, Foreign Policy, 36.

166 Weinberg, Foreign Policy, 39.

167 Edward Frederick Lindley Wood was the 1st Earl of Halifax. Welles also served as Assistant Secretary of State from 1933 until he was promoted to Under Secretary in 1936. Gellman, Secret Affairs, xvii; Dallek, American Foreign, 158; Alexander Lassner, “Peace at Hitler’s Price: Austria, the Great Powers, and the Anschluss, 1932-1938” PhD. Diss., The Ohio State University, 2001, 586. The British often sent confusing signals about the importance of peace in Central Europe, going so far as to say that Great Britain did not stand for continental domination, and longed for peace, but at the same time Her Majesty’s government worked against those positions. Low, Anschluss, 293.

168 Gellman, Secret Affairs, 149.

169 Marks, Ebbing, 327.


171 Roosevelt, Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy, 135.

172 Hull, Memoirs, 573-574.

173 Roosevelt, Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy, 136.

Welles, *Global Strategist*, 207; Dallek, *American Foreign*, 156; Low, *Anschluss*, 282-283; Although on the surface Eden’s resignation seems like politics running its course, there were significant implications to this event. Moffat, for instance, noted that the American people felt that with the resignation of Eden that Britain was throwing in the towel, and that the United States ought to increasingly withdraw to its own hemisphere. The smaller European states also interpreted this move by Eden to mean that the “chief democracy has ceased fighting and that… totalitarianism…[would be allowed to] proceed forward unchecked.” Moffat, *Moffat Papers*, 189-191.


Suvich was born in South Tyrol, which was formerly part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but was not part of the Austria that emerged from the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Macmillan, *Paris 1919*, 247-248; Memo from Sumner Welles, February 1, 1938, *FRUS 1938*, vol. I, 6-13.


Shlaes, *Forgotten Man*, 356.


Austrian Foreign Minister Guido Schmidt told Wiley that Seyss-Inquart was pro-Austria and loyal to Schuschnigg. Wiley thought it was strange that Hitler would appoint someone in Austria who was pro-Schuschnigg. With the appointment of Seyss-Inquart, Hitler agreed to the principles of the July 11, 1936 agreement. Wiley to Hull, February 14, 1938, *FRUS 1938*, vol. I, 391-393; Low, *Anschluss*, 151, 365-366.

Low, *Anschluss*, 334; Moffat also noted that the situation was much worse than he had anticipated, and admitted that he was a known pessimist! Moffat, *Moffat Papers*, 189.


Iriye, *Globalizing of America*, 159; Schuschnigg told Messersmith that no matter how bad things looked in Austria that he would remain Chancellor as long as he had hope. If he ever resigned it would be because he had given up that hope. Moffat, *Moffat Papers*, 189.

Phillips to Hull, February 17, 1938, *FRUS 1938*, vol. I, 400-401; Seyss-Inquart had seemingly gained the trust of Schuschnigg based on their meetings, see Low, *Anschluss*, 217-219.


Messersmith to Hull, February 18, 1938, *FRUS 1938*, vol. I, 17-24; Low, *Anschluss*, 136, 323; Ironically, and to show the disunited nature of the State Department, on the same day that Messersmith wrote to Hull that the fall of Czechoslovakia would follow soon after Austria, Moffat noted that Wilber Carr, US Ambassador to Czechoslovakia,
continued to hold the position that the sovereignty of Czechoslovakia was under no immediate threat! Moffat, *Moffat Papers*, 189.


203 That Britain and France were blatant appeasers of Hitler, is the thesis, and a point well proven by Dr. Lassner’s dissertation.

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Vita

John Scott Berteau was born 9 May 1979 in Metairie, Louisiana. He graduated from Crescent City Baptist High School in Metairie, Louisiana in May 1997. From there he attended Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and pursued a Bachelor’s Degree in Chemistry from August 1997 until June 1999 at which time he transferred to the University of New Orleans. He changed majors in early 2000 from Chemistry to History and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from UNO in December 2001. He has worked at the main office of Whitney National Bank since May 2003 in the Environmental Department employing both his science background with his research abilities. He has also, since 2006 been taking Ministry/Leadership classes through the Vineyard Leadership Institute via the Vineyard Church in Kenner, Louisiana. He will complete his Ministry training in June 2008 at which time he will decide whether or not to pursue further university education.