

## Chapter Introduction

This chapter will cover the emergence of totalitarian states following World War I as well as some of the key factors leading to World War II and how the United States became involved in it.

- **Section 1:** Dictators and Wars
- **Section 2:** From Isolation to Involvement
- **Section 3:** America Enters the War



## Objectives

- Understand the course of the early years of World War II in Europe.
- Describe Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policy in the mid-1930s and the great debate between interventionists and isolationists.
- Explain how the United States became more involved in the conflict.



## Terms and People

- **blitzkrieg** – lightning war
- **Axis Powers** – Germany, Italy, Japan, and other nations that fought together during World War II
- **Allies** – Britain, France, the Soviet Union, the United States, China, and other nations that fought against the Axis Powers during World War II
- **Winston Churchill** – British prime minister during World War II

## Terms and People (continued)

- **Neutrality Act of 1939** – American law that allowed nations at war to buy U.S. arms if they paid cash and carried them away on their own ships
- **Tripartite Pact** – three-party agreement establishing an alliance between Germany, Italy, and Japan
- **Lend-Lease Act** – American law that allowed the U.S. to lend, lease, sell, or otherwise provide aid to other nations if doing so helped in the defense of the United States

## Terms and People (continued)

- **Atlantic Charter** – document signed by Roosevelt and Churchill that endorsed national self-determination and an international system of general security



## **How did Americans react to events in Europe and Asia in the early years of World War II?**

Americans were shocked by Japanese and German aggression.

Yet they remained deeply divided over American involvement in another war—especially as they fought the despair of the Great Depression.

**Hopes for peace in Europe faded as it became clear that efforts to appease Hitler had failed.**

- Hitler violated the Munich Pact, taking over the remainder of Czechoslovakia
- Germany launched a series of attacks on its neighbors marked by speed and massive firepower—a **blitzkrieg**, or “lightning war.”

Poland,  
Denmark,  
Norway, and the  
Netherlands fell.

So, too, did France.





## Hitler then turned his fury on Britain.

The **Battle of Britain** was waged in the air as pilots fought for control of the skies.

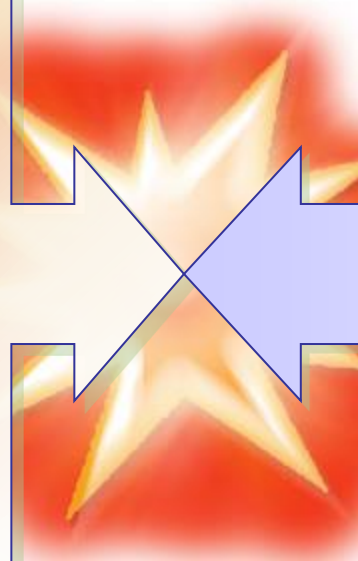
The British hid in shelters and darkened homes as bombs rained down.

Despite terrible destruction, the British held on.

**Europe was again at war. In time, major powers around the world joined in alliances.**

### **Axis Powers**

- Germany
- Italy
- Japan

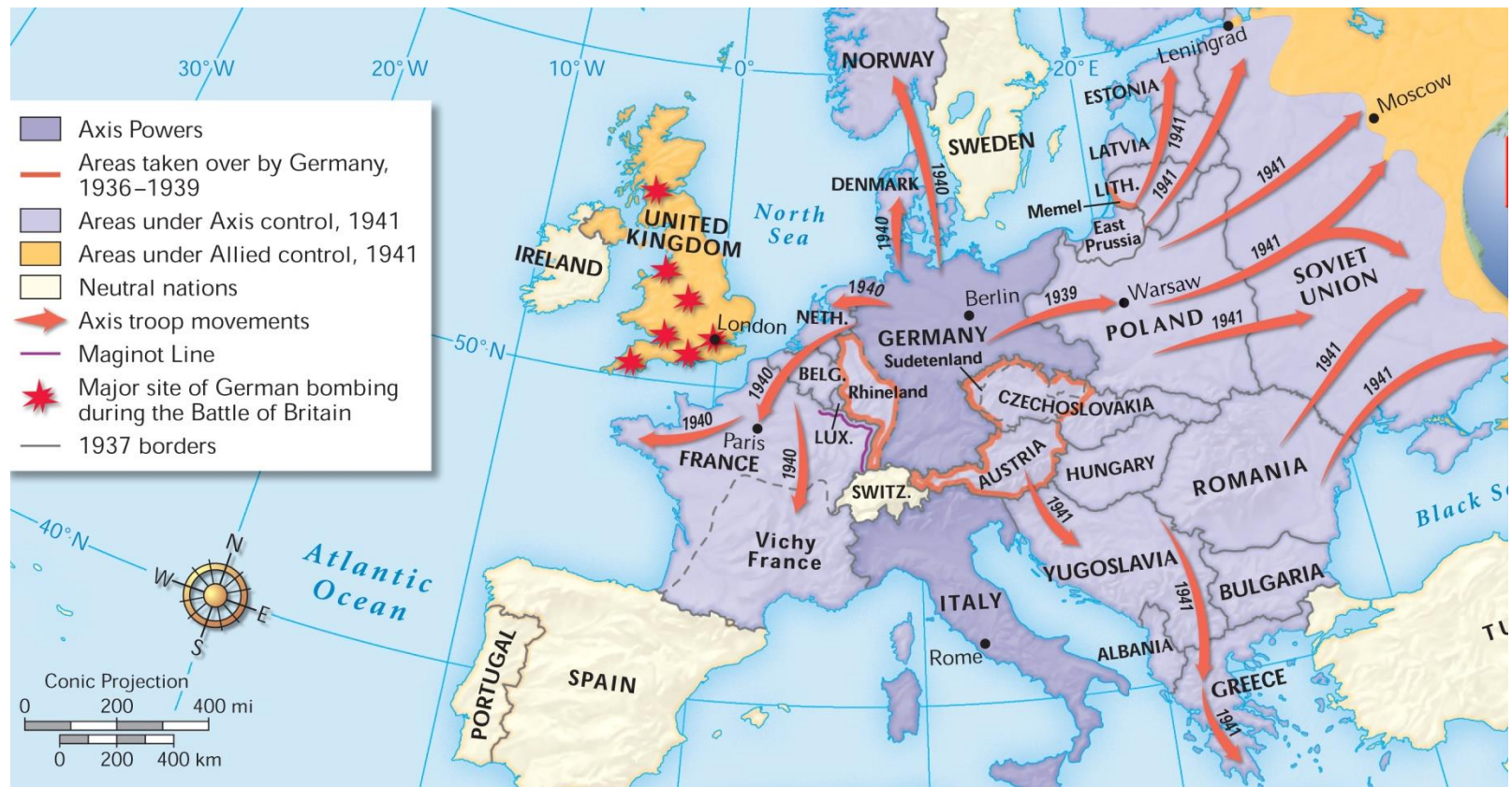


### **Allies**

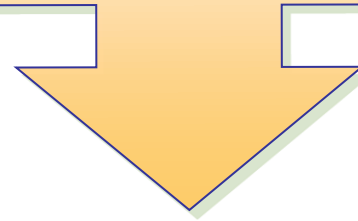
- Britain
- France
- Soviet Union
- United States
- China

# German Aggression, 1936-1941

Many feared that Hitler was unstoppable.



**In the early days of the war, Congress declared neutrality. But as the war raged on in Europe, the United States began to take steps to support Europe's democracies.**



- The **Neutrality Act of 1939** contained a **cash-and-carry provision** favoring the Allies.
- The **Selective Service Act** provided for a military draft.
- FDR agreed to **give Britain battleships** in exchange for defense bases.

**Not everyone agreed with FDR’s pro-Allies position. A loud debate soon raged between **isolationists** and **interventionists**.**

**Should the United States Enter World War II?**

**Isolationist Viewpoint**

- The United States should avoid alliances with other nations.
- Americans should focus on issues at home, such as the depression.
- Complete neutrality was the way to keep the United States safe.
- Intervention in a foreign war would be a mistake, just as World War I was.

**Interventionist Viewpoint**

- The United States should work with other nations to promote collective security.
- Axis aggressions were wrong and threatened American interests.
- The United States should aid the Allies, who were fighting for democracy and freedom.
- The United States should put pressure on the Axis Powers and prepare for war.

**As conditions worsened overseas, Roosevelt described what was at stake in an address to Congress.**

He highlighted four freedoms precious to Americans.

- freedom of speech
- freedom of worship
- freedom from want
- freedom from fear

All of these freedoms, he argued, were threatened by German and Japanese militarism.

## Congress then took another step to aid the British.


The **Lend-Lease Act**, symbolically numbered 1776, amounted to an economic declaration of war.

Many people, however, remained divided over American involvement in the war.

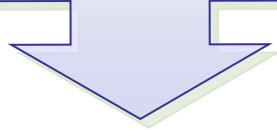


In 1941, Roosevelt and British Prime Minister **Winston Churchill** signed the **Atlantic Charter**, deepening the alliance between the two nations.

German submarines began to **fire on American ships** supporting the Allies.



Roosevelt ordered the navy to attack the **U-boats** on sight.



**War seemed inevitable.**