

FOCUS ROUTE

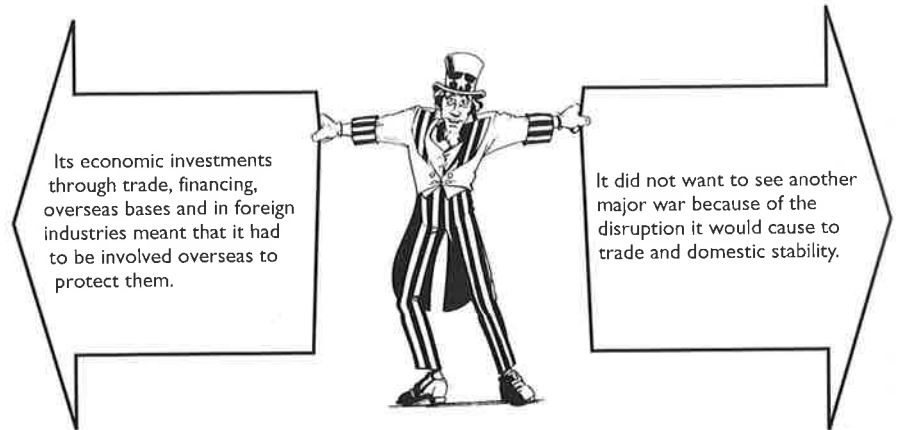
Make notes to answer the following questions.

- 1 What were America's global interests?
- 2 What were the major challenges to America's interests?
- 3 What international problems did the conference and treaties of the 1920s try to solve?
- 4 What were the strengths and weaknesses of each attempt from the USA's perspective?
- 5 How successful had the USA been in achieving its foreign policy aims by 1932?
- 6 Mark key events and policies on your Focus Route chart from page 72.

B

How did the policy of 'independent internationalism' support American global interests, 1920–32?

■ 5B Which direction?

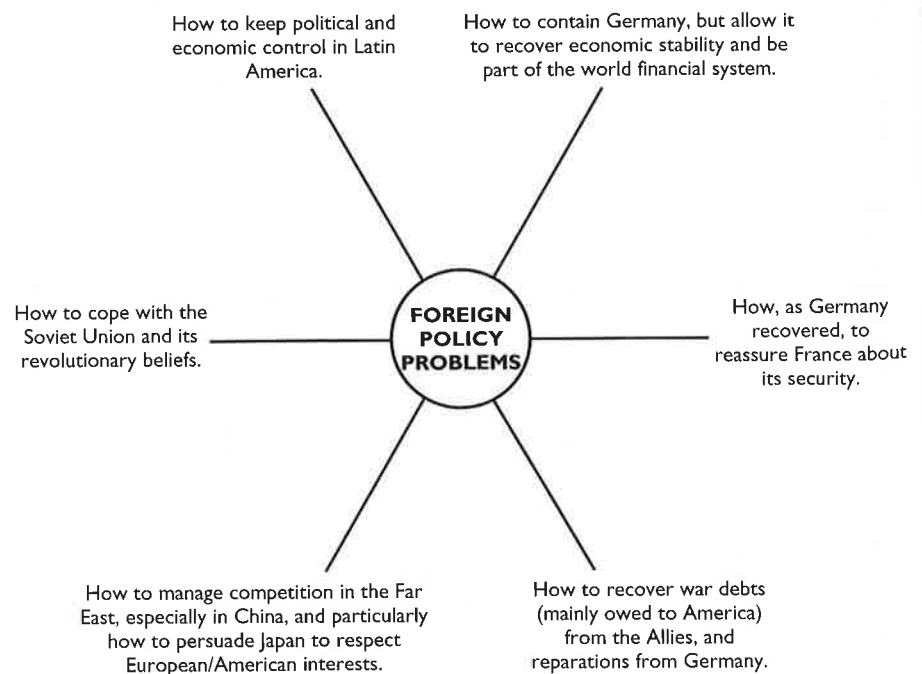


After 1919 the USA tried to follow a policy of 'independent internationalism', which meant active involvement with other nations, but also an insistence on freedom of action to protect national interests. The aim was to create a world order in which the USA could prosper. Because of this desire to have the best of both worlds, foreign policy emphasised:

- preventing another war by controlling the arms race
- maintaining America's economic supremacy.

To achieve this the USA would therefore have to be involved in three main areas: Europe, the Far East and Latin America. The specific problems the USA faced can be seen in Chart 5C.

■ 5C Foreign policy problems



■ Learning trouble spot

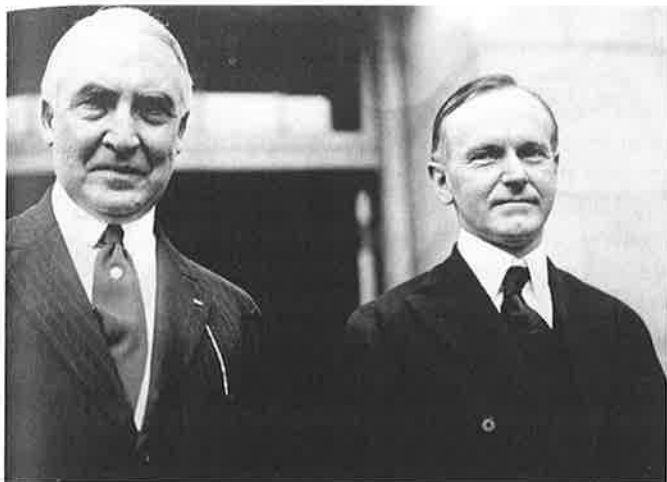
When did a president start work?

Remember that presidential elections are held every four years in November, but until 1933 the new president did not take up the post until 4 March of the next year. The Twentieth Amendment of 1933 changed this to 20 January. The presidency dates given throughout this book are those of the election year, not the year of formally taking office.

Who made foreign policy?

Policy was formally made by the president who appointed a secretary of state. Both men (there was no female secretary of state until 1997) had to take into account the wishes and demands of Congress, and also of popular opinion. After Wilson was defeated in 1920 all the presidents until 1932 were Republicans. The Republican Party believed in limited government, giving more opportunities to state, local and individual interests. They believed in giving aid to corporations, including via tax cuts, to encourage consideration of public interests.

The presidents, 1920–32



SOURCE 5.2 Warren Harding (left) elected in 1920, who died in office in 1923, with his Vice-President, Calvin Coolidge who went on to become president, winning the election of 1924



SOURCE 5.3 Herbert Hoover, president from 1928 to 1932

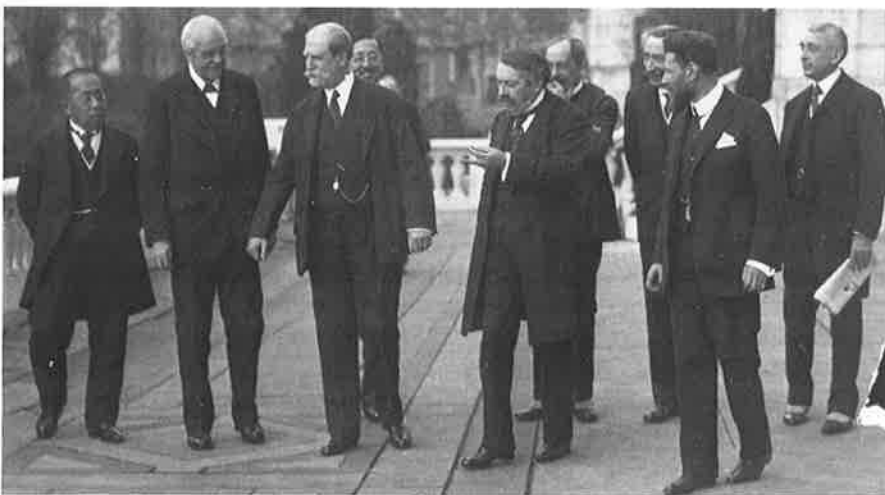
Did conferences and treaties resolve America's worries about foreign involvement?

So the USA pursued a policy of 'independent internationalism', although Chart 5B (page 74) shows you the contradictions. It avoided isolationism through trading involvement, the spread of American culture (music, films, industrial methods) and through initiating international action. These included:

- conferences on arms control in which the USA took the lead
- active support for an 'open-door' trading policy for China
- the refusal to recognise any anti-democratic communist regime
- offers of humanitarian aid for the famines suffered in the Soviet Union in 1923
- the recovery of war debts, since the USA was owed the most.

I The Washington Conference, 1921–22

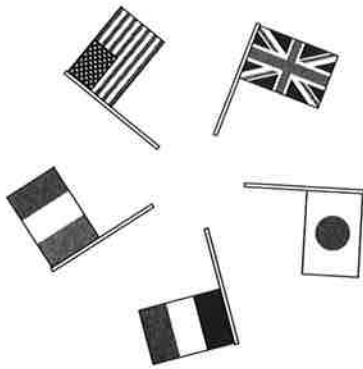
SOURCE 5.4 American Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes (second left) and the French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand (third left) at the Washington Conference, 1921



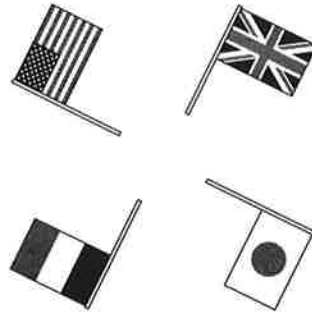
THE SECRETARIES OF STATE

1921–25 Charles E. Hughes
1925–29 Frank B. Kellogg
1929–33 Henry L. Stimson
1933–44 Cordell Hull

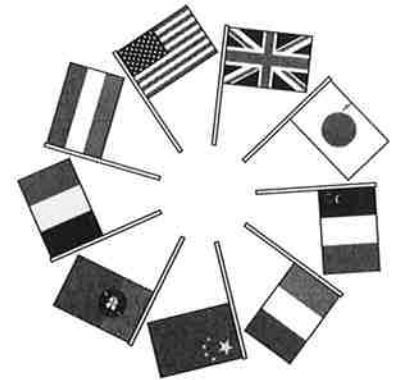
In 1921 nine major powers (America, Britain, Japan, France, Italy, China, Portugal, Belgium and the Netherlands) met to discuss the arms race, particularly the build up of navies. They all realised that arms production was wasteful to economies needing to repay debts, and that arms competition led to war – 1914 was too recent a reminder of that. The USA was particularly anxious to control Japan. So in what has been described as one of the most stunning speeches in diplomatic history, Charles E. Hughes proposed deliberately destroying ships. For the USA it meant the destruction of 30 ships, with equivalent numbers for other nations, and, in total, more tonnage of shipping than all the admirals of the world had sunk in centuries. The conference then passed three treaties:



- **The Five Power Treaty** – limited the tonnage of American, British, Japanese, French and Italian navies.



- **The Four Power Treaty** – ended the Anglo-Japanese alliance and instead offered consultation by America, Britain, Japan and France in the event of an Asian crisis.



- **The Nine Power Treaty** – the five major powers plus China, Portugal, Belgium and the Netherlands established 'open-door' principles as international law, whilst recognising Japan's particular interest in Manchuria.

The Conference was generally regarded as a success. Although tensions between competing countries remained, the rest of the decade stayed peaceful and the signatories abided by the agreements. The Conference certainly recognised Japan as a major power and kept it within international systems for the rest of the decade.

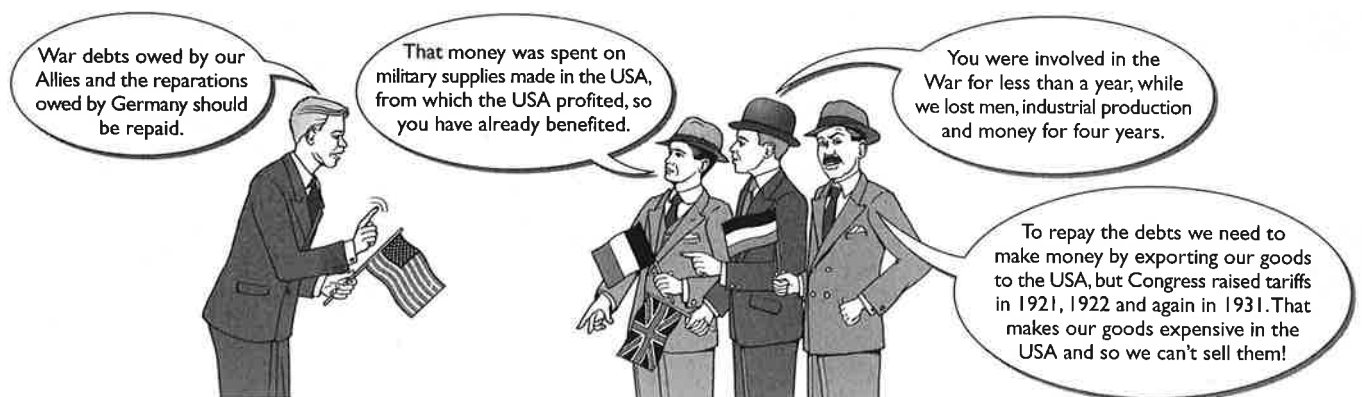
ACTIVITY

Defaulting on war debts angered the American people. What would they have replied to each of the three arguments put forward in Chart 5D?

2 The Dawes Plan, 1924

This American-created plan prodded other nations into dealing with the problem of reparations. It proposed reducing Germany's annual reparations payments (which totalled \$33 billion) so that the payments were, in future, related to the level of Germany's financial recovery.

5D Debt repayments by the Allies and Germany were a constant source of friction



3 The Locarno Pact, 1925

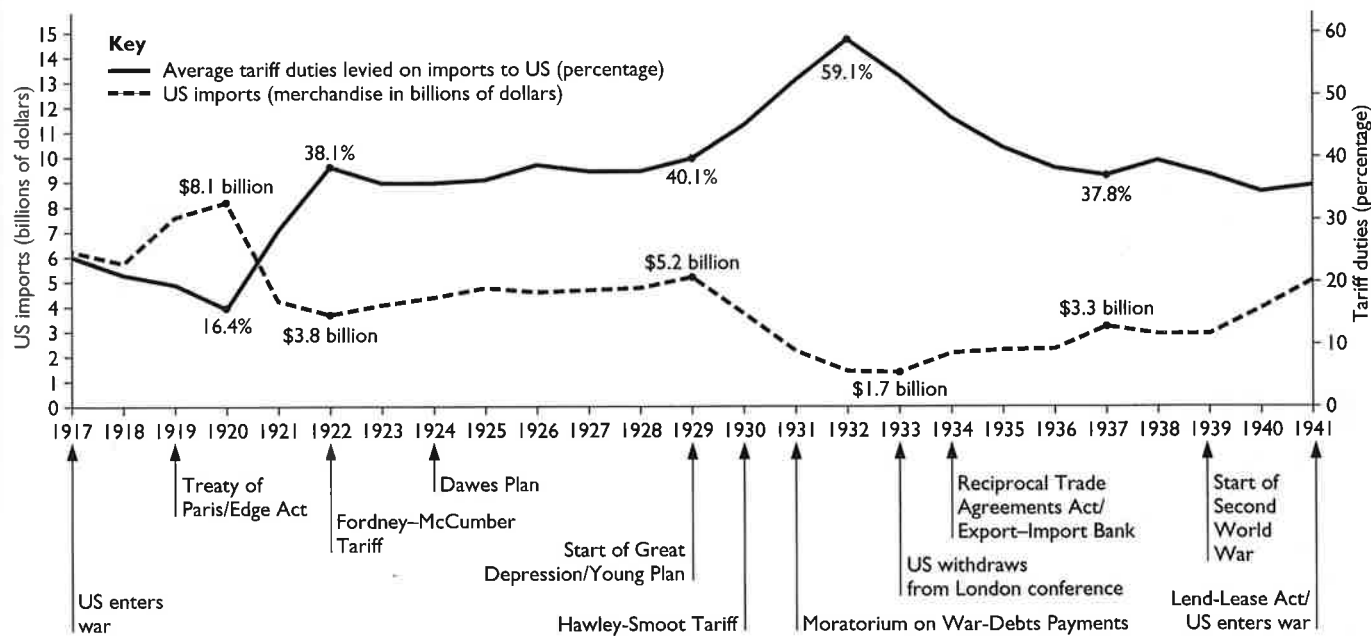
In this pact Germany, France and Belgium guaranteed each other's boundaries.

4 The Kellogg–Briand Pact (also known as the Pact of Paris), 1928

French mistrust of Germany had not ended in 1918 or with the Locarno Pact. The 62 signatories of this international pact pledged to settle disputes peacefully. War should only be resorted to for self-defence. However, without the power of sanctions the agreement was, in effect, meaningless.

By 1929 the world seemed to be more stable and the USA was certainly flourishing economically. The USA produced half the world's industrial goods. It was the major creditor nation, the major exporter and an investor across the globe. It had wealth and stability and there had been no further war. But then came the worst financial crisis of the twentieth century, the Wall Street Crash in New York in October 1929 (see Chapter 6 pages 100–3 for more details). The Crash led to the collapse of American banks, made people less willing to invest and resulted in the mistrust of government economic policy. The Crash was primarily responsible for increased tariffs against imports and the resentment over unpaid foreign debts. Its effects spread throughout Europe, Asia and Latin America. It was like the wash from a speedboat and no one knew how to deal with its wake. Apart from its financial impact, it also had a major impact on confidence. This was not just the confidence of investors, but also of peoples and politicians who wanted stability for themselves and their countries.

5E The US economy: tariffs and exports 1917–41 (from US Bureau of Census)



ACTIVITY

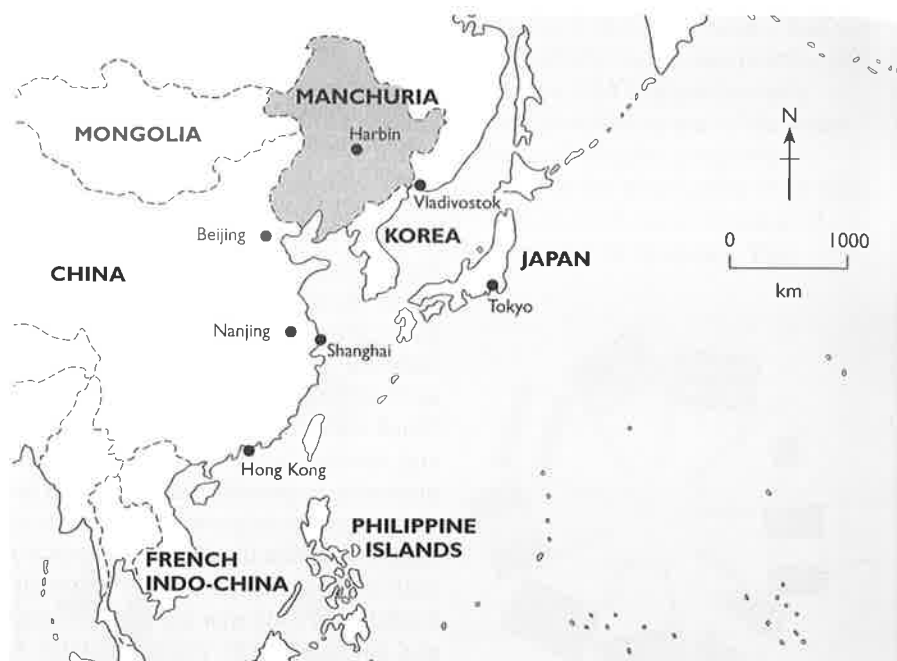
Using Chart 5E answer the following questions:

- 1 What specific changes were there to tariff duties during these years?
- 2 What was happening to export levels at the same time?
- 3 Why do you think these changes made the economy unstable?
- 4 Which world events also affected this pattern?

Why did Asia become a threat to peace?

By the 1930s Japan, which had been treated as one of the major world powers in the 1920s, was anxious to assert its power more widely in Asia. Japan had few natural resources and needed raw materials, mainland markets for its products and naval protection for its trading if it was to feel secure. Japan had strong ties with America, being America's third largest customer but, at the same time, the Japanese government knew that China was a rival for American support. Another complication was that many Japanese resented the racially motivated restrictions on Japanese immigration to the USA.

■ 5F Map of Manchuria



In 1931 in an attempt to solve its geopolitical problems, Japan invaded Manchuria and renamed it Manchuko. It was a first step to both more economic security and to satisfying a militarist group in the government. Manchuria provided coal, iron, timber and farm produce. It provided more space for Japanese settlement from the overcrowded islands, as well as acting as a buffer against any possible Soviet invasion.

The League of Nations condemned the invasion of Manchuria, but took no action. The USA responded by issuing the Stimson Doctrine (Stimson was the secretary of state), which refused to recognise Japan's control of Manchuria. Japan then attacked the important port of Shanghai. The USA was alarmed at this continuing aggression and began to fear that Japan might ally with the Soviet Union, a nation still mistrusted by America. Might Japan and the USSR block and harm American interests in the Far East?

Stimson therefore threatened that if Japan did not keep the Nine Power Treaty (which allowed an open-door trading policy with China), then the USA would not keep to the restrictions on naval size agreed in the Five Power Treaty. War was becoming a possibility, but at this point President Hoover and Stimson reached stalemate. The President refused to challenge Japan further by threatening other retaliation. He hoped that leaving things as they were would deter further aggression. He thought that Japan might be fearful of being crushed between the Soviet Union's ambitions for expansion and the resistance of China against further attacks. However, there was a strengthening of nationalistic feeling and anti-Americanism in Japan. Here, as elsewhere, the economic failures after 1929 had ended confidence in American money and treaties.



SOURCE 5.5 Cartoon on the Kellogg Pact, 1932, entitled 'The Open Door'; the easy destruction of Manchuria, with its gateway to the riches of China, was a practice for further aggression by Japan

ACTIVITY

Study Source 5.5. This contemporary cartoon shows a grinning Japanese soldier attacking the helpless teddy bear figure of the Kellogg Pact at the gates of Manchuria.

- 1 What are the typical features of the soldier (look out for them in later representations)?
- 2 Do you think you are supposed to sympathise with Japan's attack? What are the reasons for your opinion?
- 3 Identify the reasons for Japan's attack on Manchuria. Are these reflected in the cartoon?

FOCUS ROUTE

Make notes on the benefits to the USA brought about by the 'good neighbour' policy, using the following headings:

- economic
- geographic
- political.

C Getting involved – being a 'good neighbour' in Latin America

One effect of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 was to revive criticism of the USA as an imperial power in Latin America. The USA may have contributed social benefits to the area (road-building, new schools, tariff reform, generous loans), but its involvement had also been for American gain. The USA was too deeply involved economically in Latin America to withdraw (with as much as \$3.5 billion invested) and too conscious of the need to maintain geographical security to let other countries become powerful in the area. The solution was President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbour' policy with its idea of 'give them a share'.

■ 5G How to be a 'good neighbour' (when you're big and powerful)

Remove military occupations.

Support strong leaders, with training if necessary.

End the Platt Amendment of 1901, which gave the USA the right to intervene in Cuban affairs.



Respect international treaties regarding non-intervention in other states' affairs.

Give more support for economic development so that Latin America would become less dependent on Germany, Italy and Japan.

Initiate a policy of Pan-Americanisation, i.e. a community of North, Central and South American states, setting out policies of non-intervention by one nation in the affairs of another.

Such policies were aided by the influence of American culture, through music and films. In turn Latin America, through immigrants and its more exotic culture, influenced American tastes.

But even good neighbours have arguments:

- America's strong-arm tactics in supporting dictators went undiminished. Somoza in Nicaragua, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic and Batista in Cuba were favoured as leaders prepared to support American interests so long as the USA was not too concerned about their often corrupt and brutal methods of acquiring and keeping power.
- Mexico was the nearest and probably richest of America's neighbours. Its interest in maintaining its unique culture and keeping control of natural resources had been encouraged in 1934 by President Cardenas' pledge of 'Mexico for the Mexicans'. The practical result of this was strikes against US corporations for higher wages by oil workers in 1937. When these demands were refused President Cardenas nationalised the oil companies' properties. The American responses of economic retaliation and diplomatic pressure were met by the threat of Mexico buying Japanese and German goods, and even of oil sales to Hitler. By 1940 the international situation (war in Europe and discontent in the Pacific) forced the Americans to make a compensation settlement and to give control of the Mexican oil fields to a nationalised company, PEMEX.