

# Would Isolationist Presidents Cause War?

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## Abstract

In American politics, it has been seen that the presidents, who came to power from an isolationist perspective, contrary to their rhetoric, find themselves in the greatest wars in American History. In this study, it was researched whether the isolationist rhetoric of some Presidents who were sitting in the presidency during the period of the great chaos experienced in the USA and the world resulted in great wars, or whether the discourses that winning the elections to these Presidents should have an isolationist approach as a result of decomposition of the world and reflection of economic problems to their countries. The assumption of this study is that the Presidents who won the elections with their isolationist rhetoric were later faced with major wars during their presidency as a result of the processes that had laid their foundations before they were President and their infrastructure had been formed in the light of developments in the world. In this context, the internal political and international conjuncture of William McKinley, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt periods will be evaluated. Accordingly, domestic and foreign policy statements and decisions of the presidents will be analyzed. As a result of the analysis carried out in the conclusion section, there will be an inference and foresight on American internal policy and foreign policy regarding the isolationist discourse in the Donald Trump period that is on the agenda.

**Keywords:** Isolationism, Discourse, Economy, International Conjuncture, President

## Introduction

In the world order, there have always been moral leaders and states with dominant power. The executive branch of these states is as important as international conjuncture. The Presidents of the United States, who have been leading the superpower scene since the last century, sometimes led to very important international crises. Sometimes their statements would have been enough to bring another perspective to the international issues. We have witnessed many times the construction of important alliances by these Presidents, as well as the discourses of getting back to their own shell.

The question to be asked here is whether the political discourse of these presidents or the international conjuncture, whose foundations have been laid, determines important outcomes such as crises, resolutions or new alliances in the global affairs. Election campaigns run in the presidential race give tips on the policies that the possible presidents will follow. It was possible to see for some to win the elections with isolationist and some with interventionist discourses. The history mostly shown that these discourses do not literally reflect the original. Isolationism was such an important policy tool in order to focus domestic policies and public welfare. In other words, isolation is a complete retreat of a nation from the world stage.

However, this term often defines an unrelated policy: to prevent foreign alliances and conflicts and to wage war only if they are attacked. Most of US history reflects the tension between the desire to withdraw from messy external problems and the belief that America should serve as the dominant power in global affairs.

Isolationist statements are dated to colonial days in the US history. The colonies were filled by many people who fled Europe where there was religious persecution, economic deprivation and war. Their new homeland has been viewed as a better place than the old ones. The distance and difficulty on the journey from Europe highlighted the distance of the new world from the old world. Despite its alliance with France during the War of Independence, the roots of isolation were founded before independence.

Isolationists saw America's geographical separation from Europe as an ideal opportunity to cultivate the new nation in seclusion. "Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course," George Washington indicated in his 1796 farewell address. Also Thomas Jefferson warned against "entangling alliances," nevertheless he declared war when North Africa's Barbary pirates started to seizing American merchant ships.

We can consider many issues that carry the examples of crossroads of presidents' statements and their administration. Some of them are shinier in the history scene that does why this study takes particular aspects to have more trustful analyze. Hypothesis of this study is to hold a light to isolationist rhetoric's importance to win presidential race and effectiveness on the management of global crises, with comparative method. In the American system, one of the primary tasks of the President is to make a foreign policy, but it is possible to see how effective the underlying order or disorder is, rather than the rhetoric of the decision-making process. At this point, it is natural for presidents to find themselves practicing the opposite of their statements during their term of office, who have won the elections by identifying themselves with isolationist rhetoric. This study tries to interpret the transformation from this isolationist discourse to action in today's international relations by examining some of the events that appear to be milestones in American history.

The American Presidential System is basically based on the separation of powers and the check-balance system. This system prevents the legislative, executive and judicial branches consolidation in one hand and also makes them aware of their responsibilities against each other. Since United States has been founded, many examples of this system can be seen working clearly. However, the most important ones are examples of the Presidents who have revised their decisions because of this system when their opinions are different.

In this context, William McKinley, who has supported with isolationist statements during election campaigns, is the President of the United States-Spain war, which has been seen as the end of American isolation in history, is the first milestone for this study. It is inevitable that Woodrow Wilson's presidency should be taken into consideration in terms of this study, since the United States is not able to move further its integration into the league of nations even they involved the First World War with their European allies.

The Americans left the pursuit of money and entertainment in the 1920s, and the rise of militaristic dictatorships in Europe and Japan in the 1930s after the Great Depression made them more concerned about putting a plate of food on the table. Franklin D. Roosevelt was aware of the danger, but it was also very difficult to establish a decision-making mechanism with the isolationism perception that had been established at the congress. As the last turning point, the Second World War was approaching; the necessity of U.S. intervention became even more apparent.

When we come to today, we see that the parameters of the Cold War era are no longer sufficient to read world politics. The vision and mission of new world leaders in changing politics and leadership are evolving in this direction. Therefore, in the agenda of the new presidential candidates, policies that are not used to world politics have started to exist. This study will investigate whether the factor that enables Trump to win is the isolationist discourses or the groundwork of the decisions that are likely to take is preformed and pushed it to this path. In the conclusion section, this study will bring together the information that we reveal with past actions of isolationist presidents and discuss the reflections of Donald Trump's Presidency. Table 1, summarizes the presidencies' term, policy orientation, campaign slogans, and international crises they faced during their presidency. Presidents evaluated in terms of these items further analyzed in following chapters.

Presidents	William McKinley	Woodrow Wilson	Franklin Roosevelt	Donald Trump
Electoral Vote	271 v 176	277 v 254	472 v 59	304 v 227
Year	1897 - 1901	1913 - 1921	1933 - 1945	2017 -
Policies & Promises	Domestic & Isolationist	Domestic & Isolationist	Domestic & Isolationist	Domestic & Isolationist
Campaign Slogan	Patriotism, Protection, and Prosperity	He has kept us out of war	Happy Days Are Here Again	America First
International Crisis	Spanish-American War	World War I	World War II	***
Reaction	Interventionist	Interventionist	Interventionist	Has not yet to come

**Source:** Own Draft

### 1897 - 1901: William McKinley

Since 19th century, election slogans have become symbols in the presidential race. The role of determining the winner can be discussed, but the direction of the agenda and its impact on the weather are significant. Candidates for the presidency form their own slogans by listening to the requirements of the period and the wishes of the people. On the way to the 1896 election, one of William McKinley's campaign slogans was "Good Money Never Made Times Hard". That slogan defines McKinley's belief in the gold standard (against inflation) and his view that the gold standard is the cause of the country's economic difficulties. On the other hand "Patriotism, Protection, and Prosperity" was become the other slogan for the first term of McKinley. This meant supporting existing policies and protecting the level of welfare.

McKinley, who stated that he would focus on protectionism with the steps he took when he started at the office, approved the Dingley Tariff Act to stand in one of his big words. The tariff was introduced by Maine U.S. representative Nelson Dingley. President McKinley promised to provide additional protection. The law laid tariffs on duty-free wool and hides. In the first year of its operation, the average tariff was raised to 51% in American history. The tariff remained in force until 1909 and became the longest lasting tariff in American history.

When you look at the picture from this side you may see a decisive and quick maker presidential office. But in the reality this quickness is not based on his desire to bring protection to the country's economy. While William McKinley running his campaign for 1896 presidential elections, Northern manufacturers were active donors to his party's presidential aspirations. When McKinley summoned congress to a special session in 1897, he rewarded their donations with a new tariff act. An obvious

protectionist measure resulted in good worker relations for the McKinley administration, while farmer based state representatives in the fight to block new tasks were deprived of the political platoon to prove a tough response. As a matter of fact, the act has been so protectionist in the eyes of many Republicans that they put other issues behind them in the hope of keeping the public's attention away from the tariff. On the other hand, Democrats claim to have created monopolies in high proportions. Overall, the new tariff did not affect larger products, such as steel or iron, but rather had the highest impact on the needs of life. (Dingley 2010)

McKinley was a veteran of Civil War and kept alive memories of the bloody conflict. As president, he unwillingly dragged into to the Spanish-American War in 1898. At first he underestimated the stories of Spanish atrocities against Cuban citizens. However, yellow journalism, which emerged as a result of the competition in the newspaper industry, was used to ignite people's passion with the explosion of the battleship Maine. That big sector, looking to expand its markets, attached to the inflexible forces, pushed the president toward war.

Yellow journalism was a type of competitive journalism. It has been used to emphasize sensationalism over the facts. The word meaning originates from the competition on the New York City newspaper market between major newspaper Publishers Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. After this expression came together, the sensational styles used by the two publishers in the snow-guided news of world events, especially in Cuba, have been reached. Cuba has long been a Spanish colony and the revolutionary movement, which had been boiling and off there for much of the 19th century, activated during the 1890s. The rise of yellow journalism helped to create a climate conducive to the outbreak of international conflict and the rise of U.S. influence overseas, but it did not lead to war on its own. In fact, the dramatic style of yellow journalism has contributed to the creation of popular support for the Spanish-American War, a war that would expand the global reach of the United States.

The reasons that led President McKinley to protectionist discourses during the candidacy race have become different as a result of events taking place in the international arena and have allowed him to move away from these discourses. The Venezuelan Boundary Dispute was building another dimension of this conversion when you look at the history. There are always been some issues that presidential office cannot ignore. Not only because of expectations of other countries, but also you need to show your power capacity to your people which means popular vote.

The hateful conflict in Cuba between 1895 and 1898 attracted the attention of the Americans because of the economic and political instability it produces in a region that is so close to the United States. In that matter we may consider Spanish-American war as and end of long term isolationism. The mind that keeping America first perspective has formed to another shape.

McKinley, who has not yet completed the first half of the second year, has found himself in the midst of an international problem that people expected him to solve. Although this responsibility was not met by the president with a willingness, it was a not an affordable risk that he would not take necessary steps to be taken. Even after the explosion of Maine, President McKinley tried to take precautions for the war and tried to convince the Spanish government to adopt a compromise policy with Cuban rebels.

The Spanish government has been too late to prevent the popular demand of involvement in the United States. On April 11, 1898, President William McKinley asked Congress of authority to end the war between the rebels and Spanish forces in Cuba and to establish a “stable government” to “maintain order” and “ensure peace and security” on the island of Cuba and US citizens. That means leaving the international problems behind is not a policy tool anymore. (<https://www.globalresearch.ca/selling-empire-american-propaganda-and-war-in-the-philippines/5355055>)

On April 20, The US Congress adopted a joint resolution accepting Cuba's independence, demanding that the Spanish government give up on controlling the island, not foresee any intention for the United States to add Cuba, and that McKinley take military steps that he deems necessary to ensure Cuba's independence. The Spanish government refused the US demand and urgently cut diplomatic affairs with the United States. In a week Spain government announced war on the United States, and as a natural reaction the U.S. Congress voted to go to war against Spain on April 25. (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/spanish-american-war>)

The reasons and consequences of wars may not always be consistent. Within this context, it is necessary to use a wider range of parameters to establish a link between the results of the reasons for entering the war. The McKinley government also used the war as an excuse to ensure the independence of the state of Hawaii. Supporters of the participation said Hawaii was vital to the U.S. economy, because would serve as a strategic base in Asia that could help protect U.S. interests, and if the United States would not take steps, other nations would intend to take over the island. After these discussions, with McKinley's demand, a resolution of Congress made Hawaii a U.S. territory on August 12, 1898. As another result of this war the United States expanded its lands to the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

The experience of the American continent on the way to becoming the United States has made it manifest in a different way. At this point the role of colonial experience is indisputable but the fact is, these staying away from big issues policies were temporary for this kind of potential. While McKinley has again stand on the themes of economic sustainability and stability on his way to his second term, that is obvious in his statements that his general attitude has changed. You can observe the change even in the public speeches. One of McKinley's statements was become "Isolation is no

longer possible or desirable," which means exclusiveness is not able to build a wall alone. Expansions of trade and commerce treaties bring larger problems and pressure within. (Merry 2017)

The result is that trying to manage the future with the perception of a current period is futile effort. The most robust way of being prepared to the needs of tomorrow is keeping the values flexible for any demands.

### **1914–1921: Woodrow Wilson**

In America, the re-escalation of isolation and the return of votes to isolationist approaches occurred as the elections were upcoming 1912. When the First World War was approaching, we could have heard the footsteps of its reasons. The News Network spreading through the development of communication technology allowed the regional crisis to become global issues. We may witness new trends such as nationalism or militarism in that period. The rise of nationalism first threatened imperialism. The spread of this understanding meant a heavy burden on the existence of the great powers of the first 20th Century. Such a variety of these kinds of threats have brought together the alliances of fear in Europe.

It was perhaps most important to ensure the continuity of democracy in these periods. In this context, it was the most profitable choice for the United States not to intervene in the tension of a continent which has no territorial connections. It is possible to observe the reflection of this on election campaigns and rhetoric. All campaign slogans in the 1912 were about economy and social rights besides of global affairs. Nevertheless, it would be insufficient to say that the only effective factor in winning the elections is the election campaign.

The shooting of Theodore Roosevelt was one of the turning points in the 1912 election, which was perhaps the first time in American history, three powerful candidates were competing. In addition, Theodore Roosevelt's founding of the Progressive Party has undoubtedly given more advantage to his opponents than himself. Republicans votes were divided between former President Theodore Roosevelt and his successor President William Howard Taft.

Wilson defeated both Taft and Roosevelt in the general election, won a large majority in the Electoral College, and won 42% of the popular vote, while his closest rival, 27%, received. Wilson was the only elected president of the Democrats between 1892 and 1932. (<https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-1912>)

Woodrow Wilson brought new perspective to U.S. foreign policy which contains idealism and concerns for new balances of power in Europe. From his point of view, the deterioration of peace would reveal serious flaws that would have to be corrected in the international system. In order to see the United States as a dominant voice in the international arena, perhaps the last thing the administration would want is to



pick a side in the upcoming World War.

This protectionist perception was successfully carried out by Wilson and turned into a serious voting potential. In the 1916 elections, even if there was a decline in the Electoral College, it increased its popular votes by one and half times.

In 1916, another explosion of law followed. A new law prohibits child labor; another one was limiting railroad worker is on an eight-hour day. Thanks to this law and the slogan "it kept us out of war", Wilson won with a little difference re-election. But after the elections, Wilson concluded that America could not stay neutral in World War anymore. On April 2, 1917, he asked Congress to declare war on Germany.

If we talk about the background of this decision; in 1917, the restart of the submarine attacks on the passenger and merchant ships by Germany led to Wilson's core motivation to take the United States into World War I on February 26, Wilson requested Congress to authorize U.S. Naval to arms the U.S. merchant ships.

While Wilson weighed his options regarding the submarine issue, he also had to address the question of Germany's attempts to cement a secret alliance with Mexico. On January 19, 1917, British naval intelligence intercepted and decrypted a telegram sent by German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmermann to the German Ambassador in Mexico City. The "Zimmermann Telegram" promised the Mexican Government that Germany would help Mexico recover the territory it had ceded to the United States following the Mexican-American War. In return for this assistance, Germany asked for Mexican support in the war. However, after the Germany's restart of the submarine attacks in February, the British side decided to send a help note to the United States in exchange for their participation in the war. One thing is apparent that the events which have pulled United States into World War I were not the policies of Woodrow Wilson. Eventually, The British sent the captured Telegram to President Wilson on February 24. The US press carried the story to the news on the following week. (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/yellow-journalism>)

The exact reasons Wilson chose the war in 1917, especially after the sinking of British cruise ship *Lusitania* and *Arabic* in 1915, continue to be the subject of discussion among historians in the light of attempts to avoid the war that killed 131 U.S. citizens. These reasons contributed to President Wilson's request for help from Congress to declare war on Germany. Also encouraged Congress at Wilson's request and declared war on Germany.

So how did the owner of "kept us out of the war" election slogan find himself in the war at his second period? The thing is, you can't really determine the discourse that will bring you a victory in a presidential race. In politics, it is clear which perceptions of the public interest are gathered and politicians are fed by those perceptions in order to get these votes. So, Woodrow Wilson was aware of the voting potential of his country because of he had kept away from the war. Instead of winning the election



with such logic, it would be meaningless for coming in front of the public to announce the opposite of the policy he pursued. The principle of consolidating the votes we are accustomed to in politics made isolationist discourses more attractive at that time. In addition, while participating in the First World War, it is important to remember that the aim is not only self-defense but also to determine the limits of power.

After the war, a new world would be established and the countries would have to settle for the role given to them if they did not determine their own role. President Wilson, in his war message to Congress, announced that the U.S.'s goal was to "defend the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world."

When Woodrow Wilson presented fourteen points in Congress, and eight of them were the principles that pointed to regional problems between warring countries. Five of the remaining six points were pointing to open agreements that could provide peace and prosperity in the world. These include some points about free trade that could make the world a more open market, liberalization of the seas, and self-determination as a solution to the imperialist crisis which one of the causes of the war.

Point fourteenth points out the establishment of the League of Nations as an institution capable of guaranteeing the political independence of the small states and even the larger ones, which have increased in number by the nationalist movement.

Although the Versailles Treaty did not satisfy all the relevant parties until President Woodrow Wilson returned to the United States in July 1919, the U.S. public overwhelmingly supported the treaty's ratification, including the Charter of the League of Nations. Although the U.S. public strongly supported the establishment of the League of Nations, the only legislative branch's veto to the agreement came from the US Senate.

These developments have revealed that even the most powerful state of the world, in terms of economy and military, is able to make such a sharp turn from interventionist understanding to isolationist policies. At this point, the opinion of those who do not want U.S. to participate in the League of Nations is that this organization can force the United States to engage in high-cost activities. They say that such activities could undermine the US self-defense capability and deprive it of the virtue of protecting its own interests.

The well-established check-balance and separation of powers in the US system prevented decisions that could take a critical role in the future of the state from being made by one hand. However, we cannot say that the isolationist approach in theory has completely isolated the United States. In the 1920s, the United States played critical roles in restructuring relations in both Europe and Latin America, and of course, the biggest role in this story was belongs to commerce.

## **1933 – 1945: Franklin D. Roosevelt**

Material and moral losses after the First World War have aroused the public's desire in the United States to stay away from the problems of Europe and Asia. Without any preparation, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans offered the United States an effortless security opportunity to avoid these problems. Thus, while the social and political consequences of World War emerged in the 1930s, the United States was able to avoid the political relations of continental Europe.

Of course, as an important part of this transformation, you should not overlook the Great Depression. One of the primary causes of the Great Depression is that the actors who perform their economic roles in the World Order before the war can no longer play that role. The governments of the states that have turned into themselves and are experiencing a lack of communication have accelerated the transition to crisis. It was clear that the causes of the Great Depression were complex, and for many years had been discussed, but the impact of the collapse caused by the Great War it was obvious. The U.S., The Great States of Europe and Japan's efforts for Reconstruction and development could have been visible, but the resilience to the shocks of the restructuring markets has reduced.

We understand from here that the United States was an isolationist in foreign policy, and in economic terms it was an attitude that sought to make it feel freer.

During this period, we see that the two presidential candidates run similar election campaigns on the way to the 1932 elections. The fact that Franklin Delano Roosevelt has chosen "Happy Days Are Here Again" as his song and slogan makes it apparent to the public a desire to comfort them after an economic crisis.

The failure of Republican Former President Hoover in his economic policies has led to a large reduction of his popularity in the public. Thus, with the effects of Wall Street crash and the Great Depression, the 1932 elections resulted in the overwhelming victory of Roosevelt. Roosevelt's isolationist perspective was so effective starting from the day that he took over the office. Therefore, the good neighbor policy, which he clearly stated at the inauguration ceremony, contains the basis for economic cooperation instead of military alliances with the countries in which he is in good relationships.

As the name implies, this good neighbor policy aims to establish closer relations with Central and South America. However, it would be wrong to mention that this is an only U.S. policy. Many countries have gone to similar reconstruction after the war. We observe this clearly in the changing trade volume figures after the Great Depression.

It is interesting that the Presidents who have isolationist discourses show practically contradictory practices. Immediately after the Tsarist Russia collapsed, Wilson decided to not to recognize the Soviet Union and cut all diplomatic relations. Of course, the underlying reason for this decision was to protect the interests of the

United States, as was the case with all the isolationist rhetoric. This practice, continued by his successors for 16 years, could only have been broken by one of the first acts of the Roosevelt era. The Bolshevik regime refused to accept the debts remaining from Tsarist Russia, and additionally the fact that Russia secretly made the Brest-Litovsk treaty with Germany which ended the Russian involvement in the World War I, built easier situation for Wilson's decision.

Roosevelt, as soon as he took over the office, while the conditions were forcing him to deal with domestic problems, focused on the issue of the Soviet Union. Because he believed that the recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States was of strategic importance for US interests in Asia. In either case, protecting the interests of the United States was the focus of the Presidents. It is considered to be diplomatic success in every sense to bring a government that come to the power with a revolution to the table you want in the international arena.

Roosevelt hoped that improving relations with the Soviet Union would hinder Japan's expansion in Asia. It could be also possible to prevent the communist society's enlargement in the United States which was supported by the Soviets thanks to these developments.

In 1934, the Roosevelt administration, made two attempts to signify his desire about improves economic relations with rest of the world. The first was the creation of the Export-Import Bank. In February 1934, Roosevelt established a bank as an institution especially designed to finance U.S. trade with the newly-recognized Soviet Union. He created a second Export-Import Bank in the next month; this was intended to finance trade with Cuba. In 1935, two banks were merged and Congress passed a law giving the new United Bank more power and more capital. (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/export-import-bank>)

The second foreign economic policy initiative in 1934 was the Law on Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act (RTAA). In March 1934, Roosevelt declared, "a full and lasting internal recovery depends on partly on a revived and reinforced international trade", and he asked Congress to negotiate trade agreements with other countries on the basis of tariff cuts. Signed by the law On June 12, 1934, the RTAA represented a fundamental change in U.S. trade policy. (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/export-import-bank>)

When we get to the mid-1930s, we see that the signs of a new World War emerge in Europe and Asia. The US Congress wanted to ensure the neutrality of the country by recognizing this danger in advance. In 1935, the first act of neutrality came out of Congress to ensure the Export License of the U.S. military munitions manufacturers. In addition, in the event of a possible war by virtue of the neutrality act, the US sale of arms to any foreign state was prohibited by this act. Even if President Roosevelt did not share the same opinion with the Congress as a logic, he remained silent to the neutrality acts in the name of not to taking the Congress in front of him and ignoring

public opinion against him.

In general, neutrality acts represent a compromise so that the United States Government accommodated isolationist sentiments of the American people, but still retained some of its ability to interact with the world. Finally, the conditions for neutrality actions became irrelevant when the United States joined the Allies in the fight against Nazi Germany and Japan in December 1941. There is no doubt that China and Japan relations, who were strained between 1937 and 1941, also affected the U.S. attitude towards the two countries.

Roosevelt, whose first two terms were passed with popular trend such as neutrality, was preparing for the most changeful period. The conflict between China and Japan has clearly disturbed the United States. The United States, which sought to provide advantage to China against Japan, was also concerned about the spread of the rising fascism movement. The economic embargo and diplomatic sanctions against Japan, although the United States actually excluded from the war, were in theory distorting its neutrality.

However, in such a war environment, any proposal for a solution that the United States could offer would not be acceptable by Japan. The Roosevelt side seemed to have not given up on the basis of Agreement and possible solutions until the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941 pulled them directly into the war. In the following process, Germany declared war on the United States with the motivation of being with an ally of Japan, which caused Roosevelt to find himself in war in both Europe and Asia.

To sum up, when the Second World War broke out, Roosevelt had little choice. The 1939, "Neutrality Act" could have started the sale of arms from the United States relatively, but there was no country to benefit from the sale because of the credit limit it still had. Moreover, the public was vehemently opposed to the re-entry of the United States into war. Another opinion expressed concern that the ammunition could be moved to Nazi Germany if the war would have been lost, in case of arms aid to the Great Britain. Under these circumstances, Roosevelt should have made such a decision that he should not have opposition of the public and protect the interests of the United States in the western hemisphere.

On September 2, 1940, President Roosevelt signed a "Destroyer for bases" agreement. According to the Agreement, the United States gave the British more than fifty destroyers in exchange of ninety nine-year lease contracts of Newfoundland and Caribbean land which would be used as U.S. Air and naval bases. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill demanded that Roosevelt provided the destroyers as a gift, but the President knew that the American people and Congress would oppose such an agreement. (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945>) For this reason, the United States decided that an agreement providing long-term access to British bases could be justified on the grounds that it was necessary for the security

of the western hemisphere, thus eliminated the concerns of the people and the US military.

Such lend-lease agreements were so successful, that The United States and the United Kingdom were just the starters of this Agreement, till the end of the war, more than thirty countries signed for it.

It is clear from these developments that both foreign policy and domestic policy within the United States cannot be viewed as a single product. All decisions must serve the interests of the United States and to a certain extent include legislative, executive and judicial branches' predictions.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Election campaigns are an opportunity for presidential candidates to present their arguments. In this way, they send their messages to the international arena for foreign policy while making politics for the votes of the voters to whom they share the same opinion in public. While some candidates try to create a different vision, the majority use their chances for popular discourses.

There are some issues that I would like to draw attention to when this discussion is started in the American history. First of all, there are many similarities between these Presidents. For instance, all of these leaders were sitting in the American presidential post before the great chaos eras. Including President Donald Trump. Most of them have had problems with their appointed cabinet members. For example, McKinley worked with three secretary of state during his four-year presidency. If we try to find the answers by examining the examples mentioned above, McKinley became President while United States has been in the restructuring process and establishing its own infrastructure since the 1860s, but difficulties in changing world order as every country has experienced, especially in Latin America, where economic and nationalism arguments loudly took place.

Therefore, a reflection of that day's world conjuncture is the policies that he had to apply to be elected. As a result, the start of the Spanish-American War in 1898 was an inevitable end for the United States, especially with the impact of the victimization of American citizens in Cuba. Therefore, this is not the result of a discourse; it is a situation in which the discourse triggers the process towards war.

In fact, it would be useful to give an interesting example which can be interpreted today and may be very familiar to you. William McKinley said that he had to expel the Spanish government from the region, and that it was only necessary to leave them to the power of the Americans. Day, on the contrary, believed that it was necessary to be embracing and to bring difficulties to a positive point through trade agreements. But the economic structure and political stance of the society at that time was more appropriate for President McKinley than for Secretary Day's statements and was dismissed from the task. It is possible to observe the same situation in the Trump-

Tillerson process.

Woodrow Wilson's presidency is not very different. Wilson says the U.S. economy is of great importance. He mentions that the United States must be renewed in itself first. However, the economic conditions of that time and the existing conditions before Wilson's election have already laid the foundations of the World War I, and the United States found itself in the war because it couldn't be insensitive to it. In fact, it should not be forgotten that Wilson, who said that he advocated isolation, was the President of the United States, who ruled the famous Wilson Principles and the Versailles process after the end of the World War I, who stayed away from his country for the longest time in American history for six months in Paris. Perhaps it would have been possible to see that the League of Nations, which laid the foundations of today's United Nations, is still alive without the U.S. Senate's veto.

The last example is Frank D. Roosevelt. The fact that Roosevelt who said "Our priority should be to raise the American economy" found himself in the Second World War does not arise from his commitment to the economy, the United States, or to isolationist rhetoric. The main point here is that Roosevelt had already said what he had to say in order to come to power in the construction of the world towards this conclusion, and as a result, America had to take its place in the World War itself as natural.

On the way to the 2016 elections, presidential candidate Donald Trump's rhetoric was about putting America first and giving priority to its own people. So much so that "Make America Great Again", which he described as the slogan of the election, was in the mood to appeal to the Middle West. The election promises and even the post-election agenda were about economic decisions. Behind these discourses, there were the workers who wanted to protect their rights were demanding those kinds of politics. Although Trump has not taken a role in politics during his career, it is necessary to discuss whether the public has benefited from the demands of a non-political candidate.

However, The US presidential system is one of the most powerful systems of the president, but it is necessary to have acknowledged that it has prevented the monopoly decisions with its check-balance system. For this reason, Trump was able to achieve almost only a tenth of what he had promised. In particular, the domestic policy decisions he wanted to carry out were initially disrupted by local courts.

In the past 120 years, while the United States has witnessed the most important wars, it is interesting that the Presidents who were in charge of the administration have the agenda that cares about domestic politics and follows the isolationist line. History shows that the economic and cultural integration created by the United States in the world order has made the difference between the old and the new world invisible. In world politics, it is possible for you to make your own plans at the same time that if the role given to you in the world order conforms to that plan. Therefore, it will be

possible for you to remove the United States from its role, and not according to your own policy as a president, but according to only the needs of the International conjuncture.

The loneliness that the isolationist perspective wanted to bring was only provided in military terms in the three periods we examined. Consequently, Trump's policy will not be met in public, or in Congress, unless it serves the interests of the United States. Because even the decisions made by the isolationist Presidents at the most interventionist times only could be responded for as long as they served the interests of the United States. Donald Trump's intention to renegotiate all relations and decisions in this direction, although the international public opinion has reacted, has had an important impact on the U.S. economy.

In summary, it can be seen in mentioned examples that there are Democrats as well as Republicans, and there are many similarities between them. Actually these leaders raised the situation in the current world conjuncture in order to come to power and this path led them to be labeled as an isolationist and economic-oriented president. The crises that followed were not the personal preferences of these leaders. But the basics of the problems were laid long before they were president and left them alone with the consequences on their presidency periods.

Therefore, the events that they could encounter when they take over the office of the President candidates are the ones that have started to be formed years ago. As a result, the discourses of the presidents should be considered not as reasons or consequences of international events, but as a reaction to the potential vote of the time between the cause and the outcome.

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