



Criticism of the Neutrality Act of 1935

Sen. Tom Connally (D-TX)

August 24, 1935

Is it an expression of neutrality to say to two warring nations, one of which has ambitions for territorial conquest, the other unprepared, the other weak, the other trying to pursue its own destiny—is it neutral to say to those nations, “We shall give arms to neither of you,” thereby insuring the triumph of the prepared nation, the covetous nation, the ambitious nation, the nation which seeks by force of arms to impose its will on a weaker and defenseless nation?

Mr. President, that is not neutrality; that is a form of unneutrality. That is a form of declaration which announces that the United States will take the side of the strong and powerful against the weak, the unprepared, and the defenseless. Why not leave that determination to the President of the United States when and if, in his conduct of our foreign relations, it becomes a sound American policy for him to take a position in a crisis of that kind?

We cannot now put the United States into an international strait jacket and thereby keep out of war. We cannot by an act of Congress put the United States into a concrete cast internationally which will fit all future occasions and solve all future problems.

Source: Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (August 24, 1935), p. 14432.

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