**World War 2 Primary Source Readings Activity from the Human Record**

**Directions: Read both documents from October 1937 addressing the prospect of war. Afterward, write a THREE paragraph letter to FDR from the perspective of a private U.S. citizen either supporting or opposing FDR’s views on war with Japan. Use information presented in this reading for support in your letter.**

**Competing U.S. Policies leading to World War 2**

1. **Speech given by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Chicago October 1937**

“…the peace, the freedom, and the security of 90% of the population of the world is being jeopardized by the remaining 10%, who are threatening a breakdown of all international order and law. Surely the 90% that want to live in peace under law and in accordance with moral standards that have received almost universal acceptance through the centuries, can and must find some way to make their will prevail.

The situation is definitely of universal concern. The questions involved relate not merely to violations of specific provisions of particular treaties; they are questions of war and peace, of international law, and especially the principles of humanity. It is true that they involve definite violations of agreements, and especially the covenant of the League of Nations, the Briand-Kellogg Pact, and the Nine Power Treaty. But they also involve problems of world economy, world security and world humanity.

It is true that the moral consciousness of the world must recognize the importance of removing injustices and well-founded grievances; but at the same time it must be aroused to the cardinal necessity of honoring sanctity of treaties, of respecting the rights and liberties of others, and of putting an end to acts of international aggression.

It seems to be unfortunately true that the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading.

When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease.

It is my determination to pursue a policy of peace and to adopt every practical measure to avoid involvement in war. It ought to be inconceivable that in this modern era, and in the face of experience, that any country could be so foolish and ruthless to run the risk of plunging the whole world into war by invading and violating in contravention of solemn treaties the territory of other nations that have done them no real harm and which are too weak to protect themselves adequately. Yet the peace of the world and the welfare and security of every nations is today being threatened by that very thing.

No nation which refuses to exercise forbearance and to respect the freedom and rights of others can long remain strong and retain the confidence and respect of other nations. No nation ever loses its dignity or good standing by conciliating its differences and by exercising great patience with and consideration for the rights of other nations.

War is a contagion, whether it be declared or undeclared, it engulfs states and peoples remote from the original issues of the hostilities. We are determined to keep out of war, yet we cannot insure ourselves against the disastrous effects of war and the dangers of involvement. We are adopting such measures as will minimize our risk of involvement, but we cannot have complete protection in a world of disorder in which confidence and security have broken down.

If civilization is to survive the Principles of Peace must be restored. Shattered trust between nations must be revived.

Most important of all, the will for peace on the part of peace-loving nations must express itself to the end that nations that may be tempted to violate their agreements and the rights of others will desist from such a cause. There must be positive endeavors to preserve peace.

America hates war. America hopes for peace. Therefore, America actively engages in the search of r peace.

**Competing U.S. Policies leading to World War 2**

1. **Ambassador Joseph C. Grew to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, October 1937**

I have no right, as a representative of the government, to criticize the government’s policy and actions, but that doesn’t make me feel any less sorry about the way things have turned. An architect who has spent five years slowly building what he hoped was going to be a solid and permanent edifice and has then seen that edifice suddenly crumble about is ears might feel similarly. Or a doctor who has worked hard over a patient and then has lost his case. Our country came to a fork in the road which leads not to peace but potentially to war. Our primary and fundamental concept was to avoid involvement in the Far Eastern mess; yet we have chosen the road which leads directly to involvement.

If this sudden turnabout in policy could possibly help the situation either now or in the future, if our branding of Japan as an aggressor and our appeal to the Power Nine Treaty and the Kellogg Pact and our support of the League of Nations, could serve to stop the fighting in China or limit its sphere or prevent similar aggression in the world of the future, my accord with this step would be complete and wholehearted. But, alas, history and experience have shown that *Real Politik* (that is, power politics, with little or no concern for questions of morality) and not ethereal idealism should govern our policy and our acts today. With Manchuria, Abyssinia (Ethiopia has been invaded by Italy) and Spain (where a civil war has broken out) written in big letters across the pages of history how can we ignore the practical experience of those events and the hopelessness of deterring the ***unless we are willing to fight***? Moral suasion is ineffective; economic or financial sanctions have been shown to be ineffective and dangerous to boot. Once again I fear that we will crawl out into a limb – and be left there – to reap the odium and practical disadvantages of our course from which other countries will then hasten to profit. Such is internationalism today. Why, oh why, do we disregard the experience and facts of history which stare us in the face?