General Information

Source: NBC Nightly News  
Resource Type: Video Commentary  
Creator: John Chancellor  
Copyright: n/a  
Event Date: 1945  
Copyright Date: 1989  
Air/Publish Date: 04/20/1989  
Clip Length 00:01:28

Description

NBC's John Chancellor analyzes the impact of Adolf Hitler on American foreign policy, forcing isolationist America to become a partner of other democracies and the protector of other nations.

Keywords

Adolf Hitler, World War II, Isolationism, Neutrality, NATO, American Foreign Policy, Germany, Invasion of Poland, Pearl Harbor, American Economy

Citation

MLA
Hitler's effect on U.S. Foreign Policy

JOHN CHANCELLOR: You can argue that the most important change in American history after the American Revolution was the great shift from going it alone in the world to becoming a protector and a partner of other democratic countries, more important than the Civil War. This shift took place while Franklin Roosevelt was here in the White House, and it came about largely because of Adolf Hitler. In the years following World War I isolationism was respectable, even fashionable. In 1939 with Hitler’s armies on the march in Europe, 95 percent of Americans polled by gallop said don’t go to war in Europe. But Hitler’s excesses were changing American opinion and by 1941, before Pearl Harbor, 70 percent said the most important thing was to defeat Hitler’s Germany.

The American people had made up their minds about Adolf Hitler, even before the Japanese attacked us. America was weakened by the depression when Hitler came to power; by the time of his death it had become a military and economic colossus. And after the war when the danger came from the Soviet Union, that American strength rebuilt Europe and Japan, created NATO and established a web of American alliances around the planet. America had joined the world and that is where it is today. So it’s worth thinking about the effect Hitler had on history. If this evil man hadn’t come to power, if he hadn’t set in motion unspeakable crimes, if he hadn’t gone to war in Europe, the world, and America’s role in it would be much different.