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U.S. Naval War College (Editor)

The thoughts and opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily of the U.S. government, the U.S. Department of the Navy or the Naval War College.

APPENDIX II

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

AUGUST 31, 1935

I have given my approval to Senate Joint Resolution 173—the neutrality legislation which passed the Congress last week.

I have approved this joint resolution because it was intended as an expression of the fixed desire of the Government and the people of the United States to avoid any action which might involve us in war. The purpose is wholly excellent, and this joint resolution will to a considerable degree serve that end.

It provides for a licensing system for the control of carrying arms, etc., by American vessels, for the control of the use of American waters by foreign submarines; for the restriction of travel by American citizens on vessels of belligerent nations, and for the embargo of the export of arms, etc., to both belligerent nations.

The latter section terminates at the end of February 1936. This section requires further and more complete consideration between now and that date. Here again the objective is wholly good. It is the policy of this Government to avoid being drawn into wars between other nations, but it is a fact that no Congress and no Executive can foresee all possible future situations. History is filled with unforeseeable situations that call for some flexibility of action. It is conceivable that situations may arise in which the wholly inflexible provisions of section I of this act might have exactly the opposite effect from that which was intended. In other words, the inflexible provisions might drag us into war instead of keeping us out. The policy of the Government is definitely committed to the maintenance of peace and the avoidance of any entanglements which would lead us into conflict. At the same time it is the policy of the Government by every peaceful means and without entanglement

to cooperate with other similarly minded governments to promote peace.

In several aspects further careful consideration of neutrality needs is most desirable and there can well be an expansion to include provisions dealing with other important aspects of our neutrality policy which have not been dealt with in this temporary measure.