

Part Six: Pact of Berlin, Pact of Aggression

Narrator: In return we acquired further protection of our shores. We received a chain of bases stretching from Newfoundland to British Guiana. These bases threw a steel wall around the Caribbean. These bases gave new safety to the Panama Canal.

It was now clear to the aggressors that we were conscious of the threat they represented to our country. Mr. Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, will tell us how they got together and tried to scare us off.

Adolf Berle: From 1936 on, it became increasingly clear to the world that Germany, Italy, and Japan were pursuing a common pattern of aggression, both in Europe and in the Far East. On September 27, 1940, these three powers signed the so-called Pact of Berlin or Tripartite Pact, a treaty of far-reaching alliance. By that treaty, it was provided that the three countries would assist one another with full political, economic, and military means when one of the powers was attacked – note particularly the use of the word attack – by a power not then involved in the European war or in the Chinese-Japanese conflict. The last of these provisions was aimed directly at the United States.

Narrator: Tokyo celebrated. Rome cheered. Berlin Heiled itself hoarse. It was clear now that the three Axis countries definitely stood against us. More anxious than ever, we watched the life and death struggle for the possession of the skies over Britain.

Charles A. Lindbergh: Despite the propaganda and confusion of recent months, it is now obvious that England is losing the war.

Wendell Willkie: England will not only survive, England will win!

Narrator: So, when we were asked, “Should we keep out of war or aid Britain, even at the risk of war?” Aid Britain, even at the risk of war, 68 percent. Thus the march of conquest of the self-termed master races changed our national attitude from 1936, when only 1 out of 20 Americans thought we would be involved in war, to 1941, when 14 out of 20 Americans were willing to risk war if war was necessary to ensure Axis defeat.