

# United Nations Origins 1938-1942

## Roosevelt and Churchill Mold a New World Peace Organization

### Introduction

This thematic exhibit focuses on world events and the actions of President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill which influenced the Allied nations' plans for establishment of a new international peace organization to replace a failing League of Nations.



Normal



Error

Certificate VSPV 4'028

1938 Overprinted Swiss issue for exclusive use of the League of Nations  
**Overprint rotated 180° error**  
100 printed

The exhibit development proceeds chronologically from the political rise of Adolf Hitler and the Axis powers, through meetings and declarations by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and other allied world leaders, culminating in the 1942 creation of the **United Nations Information Office**.



United Nations, New York  
First printing with margin inscription

Important items have **bold, italicized descriptions**  
Items with 5 or fewer reported / recorded have **bold, italicized descriptions** and **bright blue mat**

### Exhibit Plan

#### 1 Before the Storm

**Leading into 1938**

Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party *Rise to Political Prominence*. Japan and Germany resign from the League of Nations, the League's ability to maintain world peace is compromised. Hitler's ideology ignites a new found German Nationalism. Hitler tests the enhanced capability of the Luftwaffe in Spain.

#### 2 Political Climate Change

**January 1938 - August 1939**

Roosevelt and Churchill express concerns regarding Germany's *Pro-Aryan (Nuremberg) laws* resulting in political refugees. Germany's *Annexation* of German speaking areas in neighboring countries and their alliance with Italy raises alarms. German *Encroachment* of surrounding German speaking areas in other countries is coupled with propaganda assuring Hitler's limited ambitions and harmless intent.

#### 3 Catalyst for Action

**September 1939 - October 1941**

German *Invasion* of Poland and surrounding European countries and formation of the Axis Powers with Italy and Japan act as a tipping point, spurring defensive actions by free nations.

#### 4 A Plea and a Plan

**May 1940 - August 1941**

Churchill pleads for assistance and the *Inter-Allied Information Center* is established as Roosevelt reacts cautiously with actions to sway American public opinion to support Britain. Churchill rallies Commonwealth nations and remaining free countries to fight the Axis Powers in the *Declaration of St. James Palace* as he plans a top secret meeting with Roosevelt.

#### 5 The First Summit

**2 - 17 August 1941**

Churchill and Roosevelt plan covert ocean voyages to a top secret meeting venue '*Somewhere at Sea*', actually to Argentia Bay in Newfoundland, to confer on U.S. support for the Allies. Attendees discuss support for Britain, China and Russia. A *Joint Statement* (Atlantic Charter) outlines war and peace aims and plans for future conferences on international organization. As Churchill and Roosevelt journey home, the *Atlantic Charter* is announced while they remain at sea. Churchill visits Iceland to speak with leaders and review British and American forces.

#### 6 America Joins the War

**September - December 1941**

German submarines attack U.S.S. Greer and sink U.S.S. Reuben James while U.S. is neutral. Japanese *Attack on Pearl Harbor* pushes the U.S. into WWII and it joins the Allied forces.

#### 7 A Formal Agreement on Cooperation

**22 December 1941 - 2 January 1942**

Churchill is invited to the White House to help Roosevelt plan an agreement for all allied forces to join in defeating the Axis. *A Declaration by United Nations* signed by 26 nations,

#### 8 A New Horizon

**20 January 1942 - November 1942**

Creation of the **United Nations Information Office**, the earliest embodiment of the United Nations more than 2 years before it would actually become an international organization.

#### 9 Epilogue

**January 1945 - July 1946**

The Allied Powers form the *United Nations* in San Francisco and the League of Nations is dissolved.