**US Foreign Policy: Then and Now**

Leading a country isn’t an easy job, and presidents often have to make tough decisions. One of the toughest is deciding how to protect people inside your borders while also being responsive to those outside who need help.

**FDR’s refugee policy**

FDR inherited a policy that was enacted nearly a decade before he took power. In 1924, the US adopted the 1924 Immigration Act. This created a quota system, limiting the number of refugees who could come from each country. The quota was based upon the population of each group that was living in the United States at that point. This system persisted through the beginning of World War II, and it restricted German and Austrian immigration to about 35,000 per year, a tiny number compared to demand. The State Department also reinforced many regulations that made it hard to even fill the quota. FDR didn’t intervene until he was asked to by Jewish leaders, many of whom had family in Europe. Initially, FDR himself expressed suspicion of refugees and fears that they could be spies even though he knew of the threat of Hitler. However, he faced pressure from Jewish community members, and eventually he created the War Refugees Board. The WRB aimed to help all refugees fleeing Hitler and accomplished most of its success through diplomatic means. Ultimately, the WRB is estimated to have saved 200,000 lives, yet over 6 million died in the Holocaust. I believe that Roosevelt could’ve done much more to help refugees.

**Trump’s refugee policy**

Although Donald Trump is a relatively new president, he has made his views on refugees very clear. He has blamed refugees, from both Latin America and the Middle East for terror attacks and a dangerous environment within the United States. He acted on his comments in January 2017 when he signed a travel ban, which many believe is actually a ban on Muslims. Trump argues that it is not, but it targeted those from seven predominantly Muslim countries. It shut down the refugee program temporarily and indefinitely stopped Syrian refugees from entering the US. There was a huge outcry when the ban was put into place, and a judge has blocked Trump’s second attempt at a ban, which removes Iraq from the list. I think that Trump’s refugee policy is discriminatory and does not make us safer. In fact, I think he risks angering people around the country, which could endanger the lives of Americans. America is a diverse country, and it is against our principles to shut out those that are different.

***How do we balance keeping our country safe with our responsibility to help those who need it?***

I believe that part of the strength of our country is acceptance of those who need it. So much of our success is built upon the contributions of generations of immigrants. On the other hand, I understand the need to keep our country safe. However, the more we turn people away, the more resentful they will get. I believe that our current screening process is detailed and thorough, and we already do a good job of monitoring those who come into the country. However, I think we could increase the immigrants we do accept. Specifically, I believe that the US could give priority to immigrants from war-torn countries and those with skills that can contribute to the economy.