FDR’s 1940 victory was narrower than his landslide triumphs in 1932 and 1936.

Yet he was reelected by a comfortable margin. While Republicans picked up five Senate seats, Democrats still controlled Congress with large majorities.

The President could claim a mandate to provide assistance to Great Britain and other nations resisting Hitler. But he still needed to proceed with caution. His own words during the campaign would later haunt him. In October, seeking to rebut accusations that he would pull the nation into war, he told a crowd in Boston, “I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.” He ignored advice to add the words “except in case of attack.”