# Franklin D. Roosevelt - "The Great Communicator" The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945 

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt's Political Ascension

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Syracuse, NY

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I have often bean told by professional
speakers that the easiest of all tasks was the Fourth of July oration; that, indeed, it had been, through the course of years, developed into somewhat of an exact science, with a regular and orderly course of procedure. The recipe was simple: First one started out with the glorious constitulion of the United States; five minutes was the customary allowance to prove that it was the greatest inspired dockhent in the world, and it was even permissible to hint that the Saints themselves might have taken a pointer or two from Thomas Jefferson. Then one proceeded to tear the individual planets from the skies and plant them firmly and forever on the azure field of our National mablem, after which it was customary to soar on the back of the American Eagle over the entire world and discover that nowhere was there a nation so great and powerful as ours, As a cl max, ton minutes would be devoted to tolling what we could do if we over

"that you was the most beneficial, magnificentest, liberalest, elegantest, splendiferous man what the Lord ever made." "Is that so, Kastus? Well, now, what would you say if I gave you One Hundred Dollars?" . Mastus scratched his head for five minutes in profound silence and finelly replied, "Mir. Jones, I just don't seem to recollect any words in the Bnglish language what fits that situation."

That is about the way I feel, for today, speaking seriously and without exaggeration, the principles of the equal rights of men, of justice toward the veak as well as the strong, of govermment by consent of the governed, as set forth in our constitution, are being recognized by all the great nations on earth as the most wonderful doctrine for the guidance of human conduct that has ever been dovised. Tho world today is remaking its old laws and rem vising its old treaties with our constitution for its toxt
book. Since last Fourth of July the stars in our flag have shone with a brightness amid the darkness of foreign battlefields that no planet's ever equalled. Today it needs no imaginary trip upon eagle wings to prove that our country is recognized as a great and wonderful country with resources beyond the wildest guess work of the past; and all our proud and innocent boasting as to what we could do in war has ceased to be boasting and became a nere recital of deeds achieved.

We are having a double celebration today, for we are also welcoming those who are fortunate enough to have gone forth to meet the common enemy in stricken fields across the sea and who have now returned. How can anyone put into words the joy and pride we feel? For nyself, I confoss in addition a doop envy because Fate ruled that I should sit at Weshingtong doing my bit by
assisting in the direction of the movements of our fleets and the myriad and one things which mast be done to make and keep the Navy efficient in time of war. Not but what my own work has had its thrills; not but what something of the joy of battle has fallen to our lot in Washington. To devise, as we did, a deadly barrier against tine Geman submarine across the wide North Sea; to be told by experts of other nations and some experts of our own that it vas impossible and then to watch it, through cipher cable, stretch out, nevertheless, day by day, catching the enemy's barbarous boats from time to time in its fatal tentacles, until by the time the armistice was declared, it stretched in lines that almost met from shore to shore. That was one of the Navy's tasks, about which Iittle has been said but much
thought. To take the giant guns of our new battleships, to nount then on wailway twuaks of nev and unheardeof
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strength, to master apparently insoluble problems of
construction in one-third the time the most rash and op-
timistic expert allotted, to send them across, mount them
again, to rush them to the eront, and to see what terror
and constermation their thousand pounds of T.N.T. created
when dropped from over twenty miles away into the enemy 's
ranks. All this fell to our lot in partial compensation,
as well as the thrill of thankful and joyful relief as each
convoy laden with troops passed safely through the harbor's
mouth, thanks to the unwearying vigilance of our tireless
gray destroyers. But still, in spite of all this, for
my part I would have preferred to have been in action at the
eront, to have stood side by side with you, now home; to
have met the enemy in physical death grapple rather than
coldy plottad his destruction from an office chair. Mon
from the front, I welocme and I onvy you,
Those in the

Navy's service know, I tnink, of the interest I have taken in you, of how hard I have tried to do my part toward making your part a success, and you of the Army will not forget that the Navy had an interest in General Pershing's forces also. There were, you may remember, some Navy people there. They called them, 1 have heard, "Devil Dogs," ignoring theirofficial title of Marines." They worked by your side in the common cause. So you see, as one of the hoads of the official family, I can welcome both the Army and the Navy home.

How can I describe the feeling that we all have toward you? What welcome can 1 give in words that would be worth saying in camperison with the welcome you have already had from those that you love best at home, the silent welcome of heart spoaking to haart? You know how they felt without a word boinc seld. You know how you folt whon you fisme
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saw them again．I but ask you to believe that that same
feeling，so utterly indescribable，so deep，so strong that
one can no more speak about it or put it into language than one can talk idly and lightly about one＇s religion，is shared by all of us and is the feeling in every heart today．We watched your going，every one of us，with personal anxiety and fear．We read of your brave deeds with personal pride and exaltation；we greet your homecoming with personal joy and thankfulness，with which we all of us mingle，I think， that feeling closely akin to reverence which brave men have inspired in the hearts of mankind since the world began．

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speakers that the easiest of all tasks was the fourth of July oration, that, indeed it had been, through the cor se of years, developed into somewhat of an exact science, with a regular and orderly course of procedure. The recipe was simple: first one started out with the glorious constitution of the United States; five minutes was the customary allowance to prove that it was the greatest inspired document in the world, and it is permissible to hint that
 might have taken a pointer or two from Thomas Jefferson. Then one proceeded to tear the individual planets from the skies and plant them filmy and forever on the azure field of our National Emblem, after which it We customary to soar on the back of the American Eagle over the entire world and discover that nowhere was there a nation so great and powerfull as ours, As a climax, ten minutes would be devoted to telling what we could do ti we over had to fight, foch

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was what might be called the "standard "Pourth of July speech. I doubt if anyone ever took the text seriously or literally or if any orator really imagined it would be so taken. It was a pleasant exercise in exaggeration which decoived no one. But on this Fourth of Juis sen astounding thing has happened. We have dreaned dreams and they have come true. What we thought was pleasant hyperbole has proved to be fact, and 1, for one, find as a result that a rourth of July speech under these circumstances is one of the most difficult things to make, instead of the easiest. I am someviat in the situation of the colored gentleman who was asked,
Mastus, what would you say if I gave you
a dollerf" "Mry. Jones," replied kastus, "I would say that you vas the most benoficial, magnificentest, liberalest, elagantest, splendiforous man what the Lord ever made."
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#### Abstract

HIs that so, Rastus? Well, now, what would you say if I gave you One Hundred Dollars" Rastus scratched his head for five minutes in profound silence and finally replied, "Ir. Jones, I just don't seem to recollect any words in the


 whet $\xrightarrow{2}$ English language that fits that situation." That is about the way I feel, for today, speaking seriously and without exaggeration, the principles of the equal rights of men, of justice toward the weak as well as the strong, of government by consent of the governed, as set forth in our constitution, GEne are recognized by all the great nations on earth as the most wonderful doctrine for the guidance of human conduct that has ever been devised. The world today is remaking its old laws and revising its old treaties with our constitution for its text book. Since last Fourthly of July the stars in our flag have shone with a brightness and the dames of foreign battlefisida that no planet's ever equaled, Today It needs no imaginavy tip upon essie wings to prove thatour country is recognized as a great and wonderful country with resources beyond the wildest guess work of the past; and all our proud and innocent boasting as to what we could do In war has ceased to be bossting'and become a mere reital of deeds achieved. (Stop and dainic-ieenwert titer


We are having a double celebration today, for we are also welcoming those who are fortunate enough to have gone forth to meet the common enemy in stricken fields across the sea and who have now returned. How can anyone prat Into words the joy and pride we feel? For myself, 1 confess In addition a deep envy


Washington, doing my bit by assisting in the direction of the movements of our fleets and the myriad and one things Whish mast bo dons to make and kop the Wavy efficient in time of way. Hot but what my Own works has had its thrills

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not but what something of the joy of battle has fallen to our lot in Washington, To devise, as we did, a deadly barrier against the German submarine across the wide North Sea;
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q coneturetern to master apparently insoluble problems $1^{\text {In }}$ one-third the time the moons optimistic expert allotted, to send them across, mount them again, to rush them to the front, and to see what torpor and constomation thai thousand pounds of

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T.N.T. oreated dropped from over twenty-aine miles away
into the enemy's ranks. All this fell to our lot in parm tial compensation, with as the thrill of thankful and joyful relief as each convoy laden with troops passed safely
through the harbor's mouth, thanks to the unwearying vigilance of our tireless gray destroyers. But still, in spite of all this, for my part I would have preferred to have been in action at the front, to have stood side by side with you, now hame; to have met the enemy in physioal death grapple rather than coldly plotted his destruction from an office Plom
chair. from the front, 1 welcome and I envy you. Those in the Navy's service know, I think, of the interest I have taken in you, of how hard I have tried to do my part tovard making your part a success, and you of the Army wile Porghing's forces slso, There were, you may yemomber,
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official family, 1 can welcome both the Army and the Navy home.

How can I describe the feeling that we all have toward you? What welcome can I give in words that
would be worth saying in comparison with the welcane you have already had from those that you love best at home, the silent welcome of heart speaking to heart? You know, how they felt without a word being said. You lonow how you felt when you first saw them again. I but ask you to beLove that that same feeling, so utterly indescribable, so

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one's religion, is shared by all of us and is the feeling

In every heart today. We watched your going, every one
of us, with personal anxiety and fear. We read of your brave
deeds with personal pride and exaltation; we greet your home-
coming with personal joy and thankfulness, with which we all
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in the least mon mind which brave men have inspired since the world began.

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Then one proceeded to tear the individual planets from the skies and plant them ifmaly and forever on the azure field was of our national Bublem, after which it the customer to sos y on the back of the Americas sage over the entire world and discover that nowhere was there a nation so great and power n Al as ours, As climax ten minutes moved be devoted to sol ding whet wo could do If we over had to flatt. Bush
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"Rastus, what would you ssy if I gave you e dolisy" "Mr. Jomes," Foplied Kantus, "I would say that you was the mont boseficial, magnifisemtest, Liborsieet, eleganteets eplendiserose mon what the Lovi evor made."


#### Abstract

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 "utr. Jomes, I jugt don't seem to recollect awy words in the Inglish languago that ifta that situation," That is about the way I feel, for today, spoaking saxiously and withont exagererion, the prinoiples of the equal rights of mem, of justice toward the weak as wall as the atrong of govemment by consent of the goverued, as set forth in our constitution, aro racognized by ail the great nations on earth as the most vonderiul doctrine for the guidance of human condnot that has ever been devised. The world today in remaking its old Iaws and rovising its old treaties with our constitution for Its text book. Singe isst Yoarth of July the stars in our t2eg have shone wh the brightmess and the daycness of forelgis bettiotiolds thet mo planet's over oqnalied. Todey 15 needs 80 imegimary trip upon eaghe winge to prove thetour country is recognised as a great and wonderfal country with resources begond the wildeat geess woric of the past; and sil our proud and innocent bosating ias to what we could do In war has ceased to be boasting and becone a mere seoital of deeds achieved. (Stop and drink lee water after this to allow the applamse to die down.)

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not but what something of the jor of battle hes fellen to
our lotfin Mashington, to deviso as we did a deadiy barrior ageinst the Gomme aqbarine across the wido sorth Sea; to be told by experts of other nations and many experts of our own that it wes imposilble and then to watoh it, through of phor canlo, stretch out, nevertioless, day by day, oatch Ing the eneay's barbarous boats irom time to tive in its


IInes that almost met from shore to shore. That wes one Of the Javy ${ }^{2}$ s tasks, about which little has been sald but much thought. To take the gient guns of our nev battleships, to mount them on railway truacs of new and wheard-02 atromethe to mastor apparentiy insoluble probleits in ong-third the time the raghest and tiost optimistio expert allotted, to send them
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F.I.\%. orcated dropped from over treaty-five miles away Into the enemy's rankles. All this fell to our lot in pare as mule as trial compensation, anility the thrill of thanicfal and joyfoil relief as each convoy laden with troops passed safely through the harbor's mouth, thanks to the unvarying vigilance of our tireless gray destroyers. But still, in spite of all thill, for my part I would have preferred to have been in action at the front, to have stood side by side with you, now home; to have met the enemy in physical death grapple rather than coldly plotted his destruction from an office chair. Boys from the front, 1 welcome and I envy you. Those in the Wavy's service know, in think, of the interest I here taken in you, of how hard I have tried to do mi s part toward matedig your part in maces, and you of the Army mast not forget that tho lava had an interest in Goners Porahleg's so rocs also. There were, you may remember,
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some Flavy people there. Thoy aalled them, 1 have heard,
"Devil Dogn," Lenoring thoir official title of Marimes.
(ranso for prolonged applause from all but the regular

Anuy boys who whll probably conmence throwing bricks at this point.) So you see, as one of the heads of their official family, I can welcome both the Army and the Iavy home.

How cen I desoribe the foeling that we all
have toward you? What welcome can I Give in words that
would be worth saying in comparison with the welcone you have already had from those that jou love best at home, the sileat welcome of heart speaking to heart? Tou know, boys, how they folt without a word boing sald. You bnow how you folt when gou first sew them agais. I but ask gou to boLiove that thet same feoling, so utterly indescribable, 90 Ceop, 30 atrong that one onn mo more spank about it or yut

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onets religion, is shared by all of us and is the feeling
in every heart today. Wo watohed your going, evory one
of us, with personal anxiety and fear. Wo read of your brave
deeds with peraonel price and exaltation; we greet your home-
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of us mingle, 1 think, that feeling alosely arcin to reverence

Which brave men have inspirod since the world began.
(Bo sure and stand atill until the bouquet is presented and until the pioture man gets througho)

