

May 16, 1933

[Invitation to Heads of State - Participating in the World
Economic Conference]

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FDR Speech File

May 16, 1933

FOR THE PRESS

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CAUTION: This message of the President to the Sovereigns and Presidents of the Nations participating in the World Economic Conference and the Disarmament Conference is AUTOMATICALLY RELEASED FOR PUBLICATION at 10:00 A.M., Eastern Standard Time today.

Extreme care must be exercised to avoid premature publication.

STEPHEN EARLY
Assistant Secretary to the President

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The message was cabled early today direct to the Sovereigns and Presidents of the Nations listed below:

His Majesty Zog I, King of the Albanians, Tirana, Albania.	His Excellency Ricardo Jimenez, President of Costa Rica, San Jose, Costa Rica.
His Excellency Agustin P. Justo, President of the Argentine Nation, Buenos Aires, Argentina.	His Excellency Lin Sen, President of the National Government of the Republic of China, Nanking, China.
His Excellency Wilhelm Miklas, President of the Confederation of Austria, Vienna, Austria.	His Excellency Gerardo Machado, President of the Republic of Cuba, Habana, Cuba.
His Majesty Albert, King of the Belgians, Brussels, Belgium.	His Excellency Thomas G. Masaryk, President of Czechoslovakia, Praha, Czechoslovakia.
His Excellency Getulio Vargas, President of the United States of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.	His Majesty Christian X, King of Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark.
His Excellency Enrique Olaya Herrera, President of the Republic of Columbia, Bogota, Colombia.	His Excellency Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, President of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
His Excellency Daniel Salamanca, President of Bolivia, La Paz, Bolivia.	His Excellency Juan de Dios Martinez Mira, President of the Republic of Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador.
His Majesty Boris III, King of the Bulgarians, Sofia, Bulgaria.	His Majesty Fouad I, King of Egypt, Cairo, Egypt.
His Excellency Arturo Alessandri, President of the Republic of Chile, Santiago, Chile.	

His Excellency
Konstantin Pata,
Head of State,
Tallinn, Estonia.

His Imperial Majesty,
Haile Selassie I,
Emperor of Ethiopia,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

His Excellency
Pehr Evind Svinhufvud
The President of Finland,
Helsingfors, Finland.

His Excellency
M. Albert Lebrun,
President of the French Republic,
Paris, France.

His Excellency
Field Marshal Paul von
Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg,
President of the Reich,
Berlin, Germany.

His Majesty
George V,
The King of Great Britain,
Ireland, and the British
Dominions beyond the Seas,
Emperor of India, etc., etc.,
London, England.

His Excellency
Alexander Zaimis,
President of the Hellenic
Republic,
Athens, Greece.

His Excellency
Jorge Ubico,
President of the Republic
of Guatemala,
Guatemala, Guatemala.

His Excellency
Stenio Vincent,
President of Haiti,
Port au Prince, Haiti.

His Serene Highness
Admiral Nicholas De Morthy,
Regent of the Kingdom of
Hungary,
Budapest, Hungary.

His Excellency
Tiburcio Carías A.,
Constitutional President of
the Republic of Honduras,
Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

His Majesty
Faisal I,
King of Iraq,
Baghdad, Iraq.

His Majesty
Victor Emanuel III,
King of Italy,
Rome, Italy.

His Majesty
Hirohito,
Emperor of Japan,
Tokyo, Japan.

His Excellency
Alberts Kviesis,
President of the Republic
of Latvia,
Riga, Latvia.

His Excellency
Antanas Smetona,
President of the Republic
of Lithuania,
Kaunas, Lithuania.

Her Royal Highness
Charlotte,
Grand Duchess of Luxembourg,
Luxembourg, G.D.

His Excellency
General Abelardo L. Rodriguez,
President of the United
Mexican States,
Mexico City, Mexico.

Her Majesty
Wilhelmina,
Queen of the Netherlands,
The Hague, Netherlands.

His Excellency
Juan P. Sacasa,
President of the Republic
of Nicaragua,
Managua, Nicaragua.

His Majesty
Haakon VII,
King of Norway,
Oslo, Norway.

His Excellency
Harmodio Arias,
President of Panama,
Panama, Panama.

His Excellency
Eusebio Ayala,
President of the Republic
of Paraguay,
Asuncion, Paraguay.

His Imperial Majesty
Reza Shah Pahlavi,
Shah of Persia,
Teheran, Persia.

His Excellency
Ignace Moscicki,
President of the Republic
of Poland,
Warsaw, Poland.

His Excellency
General Oscar Benavides,
President of Peru,
Lima, Peru.

His Excellency
General Antonio Oscar de
Fragoso Carmona,
President of the Republic
of Portugal,
Lisbon, Portugal.

His Majesty
Carol II,
King of Rumania,
Bucharest, Rumania.

President Mikhail Kalinin,
All Union Central Executive
Committee,
Moscow, Russia.

His Majesty
Pradjadhipok,
King of Siam,
Bangkok, Siam.

His Excellency
Aleala Zamora,
President of the Spanish Republic
Madrid, Spain.

His Majesty
Gustaf V,
King of Sweden,
Stockholm, Sweden.

His Excellency
Edmond Schulthess,
President of the Swiss
Confederation,
Berne, Switzerland.

His Excellency
Gazi Mustafa Kemal,
President of the Turkish
Republic,
Ankara, Turkey.

His Excellency
Gabriel Terra,
President of the Republic
of Uruguay,
Montevideo, Uruguay.

His Excellency
Juan V. Gomez,
President of the United States
of Venezuela,
Caracas, Venezuela.

His Majesty
Alexander I,
King of Yugoslavia,
Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

The message follows:

A profound hope of the people of my country impels me, as the head of their government, to address you and, through you, the people of your nation. This hope is that peace may be assured through practical measures of disarmament and that all of us may carry to victory our common struggle against economic chaos.

To these ends the nations have called two great world conferences. The happiness, the prosperity, and the very lives of the men, women and children who inhabit the whole world are bound up in the decisions which their governments will make in the near future. The improvement of social conditions, the preservation of individual human rights, and the furtherance of social justice are dependent upon these decisions.

The World Economic Conference will meet soon and must come to its conclusions quickly. The world can not await deliberations long drawn out. The Conference must establish order in place of the present chaos by a stabilization of currencies, by freeing the flow of world trade, and by international action to raise price levels. It must, in short, supplement individual domestic programs for economic recovery, by wise and considered international action.

The Disarmament Conference has labored for more than a year and, as yet, has been unable to reach satisfactory conclusions. Confused purposes still clash dangerously. Our duty lies in the direction of bringing practical results through concerted action based upon the greatest good to the greatest number. Before the imperative call of this great duty, petty obstacles must be swept away and petty aims forgotten. A selfish victory is always destined to be an ultimate defeat. The furtherance of durable peace for our generation in every part of the world is the only goal worthy of our best efforts.

If we ask what are the reasons for armaments, which, in spite of the lessons and tragedies of the World War, are today a greater burden on the peoples of the earth than ever before, it becomes clear that they are two-fold: First, the desire, disclosed or hidden, on the part of Governments to enlarge their territories at the expense of a sister nation. I believe that only a small minority of Governments or of peoples harbor such a purpose. Second, the fear of nations that they will be invaded. I believe that the overwhelming majority of peoples feel obliged to retain excessive armaments because they fear some act of aggression against them and not because they themselves seek to be aggressors.

There is justification for this fear. Modern weapons of offense are vastly stronger than modern weapons of defense. Frontier forts, trenches, wire entanglements, coast defenses--in a word, fixed fortifications--are no longer impregnable to the attack of war planes, heavy mobile artillery, land battleships called tanks, and poison gas.

If all nations will agree wholly to eliminate from possession and use the weapons which make possible a successful attack, defenses automatically will become impregnable, and the frontiers and independence of every nation will become secure.

The ultimate objective of the Disarmament Conference must be the complete elimination of all offensive weapons. The immediate objective is a substantial reduction of some of these weapons and the elimination of many others.

This Government believes that the program for immediate reduction of aggressive weapons, now under discussion at Geneva, is but a first step toward our ultimate goal. We do not believe that the proposed immediate steps go far enough. Nevertheless, this Government welcomes the measures now proposed and will exert its influence toward the attainment of further successive steps of disarmament.

Stated in the clearest way, there are three steps to be agreed upon in the present discussions:

First, to take, at once, the first definite step toward this objective, as broadly outlined in the MacDonald Plan.

Second, to agree upon time and procedure for taking the following steps.

Third, to agree that while the first and the following steps are being taken, no nation shall increase its existing armaments over and above the limitations of treaty obligations.

But the peace of the world must be assured during the whole period of disarmament and I, therefore, propose a fourth step concurrent with and wholly dependent on the faithful fulfillment of these three proposals and subject to existing treaty rights:

That all the nations of the world should enter into a solemn and definite pact of non-aggression: That they should solemnly reaffirm the obligations they have assumed to limit and reduce their armaments, and, provided these obligations are faithfully executed by all signatory powers, individually agree that they will send no armed force of whatsoever nature across their frontiers.

Common sense points out that if any strong nation refuses to join with genuine sincerity in these concerted efforts for political and economic peace, the one at Geneva and the other at London, progress can be obstructed and ultimately blocked. In such event the civilized world, seeking both forms of peace, will know where the responsibility for failure lies. I urge that no nation assume such a responsibility, and that all the nations joined in these great conferences translate their professed policies into action. This is the way to political and economic peace.

I trust that your government will join in the fulfillment of these hopes.

draft
substantive
participate
community

May 13, 1933.

file

MEMORANDUM

(A)

The happiness, the prosperity and the very lives of the men, women and children who make up the inhabitants of the ^{whole} world in which we live are bound up in the decisions which their governments will make in the immediate future.

B

The improvement of social conditions and the furtherance of social justice are ^{dependent not} ~~closely associated~~ ^{upon these decisions.} ~~with an improvement in economic conditions.~~

These economic conditions, now in a greater condition of chaos than at any time within our memory, can be bettered only through an honest effort on the part of all nations to seek reduction of tax burdens by reduction of government costs, through the stabilization of currencies, and through the more free exchange of commodities.

All of these objectives will be discussed and sought by a great conference of the nations this summer.

fact that the modern weapons of offense are vastly stronger than the modern weapons of defense. Frontier forts, trenches, wire entanglements, coast defenses - in other words, fixed fortifications - are no longer impregnable if there can be brought against them airplanes, heavy mobile artillery, land battleships called tanks, and the use of poisonous gas.

If any one nation insists on retaining these weapons of offense warfare, it is obvious that other nations must retain them for self-preservation and counter attack.

If, on the other hand, all nations will agree wholly to eliminate ^{from} ~~their~~ possession and use the weapons which make an attack of aggression possible, the weapons of defense automatically become impregnable against attack and the frontiers and independence of every nation become secure.

The nations of the world have already undertaken not to use poisonous gas in the event of a future war. If such an agreement has any authority or weight, other agreements for the elimination of

of other weapons of attack would have the same validity. If any treaty is worth signing it is because the signatories assume that it will be lived up to.

If the world, or if any nation, has no faith in the effectiveness of international agreements, the world might just as well cancel all treaties and revert to the conditions of the dark ages.

C A Disarmament Conference is now being held in Geneva. The fundamental plan before that conference is to take the first step towards the ultimate goal which I have outlined. The immediate objective is reduction in and **elimination** of many weapons of offensive warfare: the ultimate objective is the ultimate elimination of all such weapons. ~~The United States~~ ^{we do} does not believe that the proposed immediate steps go far enough nor that the ultimate goal is made sufficiently clear.) Nevertheless, the United States will go along with the definite steps proposed and will continue to exert its influence towards the attainment of the further successive steps as rapidly and definitely as possible.

One of the essential ~~elements~~ in the broad objective is the ~~setting~~ of a definite date for the

completion of the ultimate objective of the removal of offensive weapons of warfare.

The ~~very~~ other definite objective is that in the meantime and during the years in which the successive steps are being taken, no one nation shall increase its existing armament over and above its present status.

I propose a third element to bind all nations during the period of disarmament. I propose a solemn and definite pact of non-aggression during the period, by which each and every nation will agree that under no circumstances and under no conditions will that nation permit the invasion of the territory of any neighbor nation by land, sea or air, by any armed force or by any instrument of war.

Stated in the most simple way, there are 3 steps
we agreed upon in the present discussions:

- 1st The setting up of a definite date for attaining the ultimate objective of eliminating offensive weapons of warfare.
- 2nd The immediate taking of the first definite step towards this objective.

3rd - The making certain that while the first and successive steps are being taken no nation shall increase its existing armament over & above the limitations of its treaty obligations

4th That the peace of the world may be secure during the whole period of disarmament I propose a fourth ~~and~~ ^{immediate} step concurrent with and ~~wholly~~ ^{wholly} dependent on the ~~fulfillment~~ ^{fulfillment} of this program: That all the faithful fulfillment of the ~~first~~ foregoing three proposals ^{and} ⁱⁿ ^{only} ^{cut} to existing Treaty rights: That

PART 2

It has been objected by Germany that while that Nation does not wish any real rearmament, Germany seeks as a matter of prestige increases in armament which she has bound herself by treaties not to acquire. I think I speak for an overwhelming world opinion that Germany would gain vastly more in prestige by carrying out her treaty agreements and by seeking no increases. Such a course would make it far easier for nations now heavily armed to carry out the elimination of heavy armaments and weapons of offensive warfare which I propose.

In the Far East the problems presented by recent events can be far more readily solved if the Empire of Japan will go along with the rest of the world in a binding agreement with the other nations.

We are all aware in every continent and in every nation that if one strong nation balks at disarmament that one nation can block the probability of political peace and of economic peace. But in that event the civilized world seeking both forms of peace will know where the responsibility for failure lies.

(A)

It is

~~At this time it seems to me right that~~
I should acquaint you, and through you the
citizens of our sister nation, with what I
~~of your country, and~~ ^{is not only} ~~the~~ ^{disregard} the Government
of the United States but also a deep seated
hope of the ~~overthrowing~~ ^{injury} of the
people of this Republic.

regions of excessive warfare which I propose
In the far East the problem presented by recent events
of China will go
along with the rest of the world in a binding agreement with
the other nations.
We are all aware in every continent and in every nation
that if one strong nation at disengagement that one nation
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peace of peace will know where the responsibility for failure

lies.