

April 20, 1936

[D.A.R. - Daughters of American Revolution-]

FDR Speech File

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Mrs. William A. Becker  
President General of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution,  
Mayflower Hotel,  
Washington, D. C.

4-20-36



~~Dear Mrs. Becker~~  
I had looked forward with pleasure to the opportunity to appear  
this year before the 45th annual <sup>Continental</sup> Congress of the Daughters of the American  
Revolution. You will understand, I am sure, why that is not now possible.  
I will be grateful, however, if you will extend my cordial greetings to  
the officers and delegates ~~who were~~ assembled here.

This Administration, as you know, stands for adequate national  
defense. It stands, also, for the policy of the Good Neighbor. These are  
not contradictory principles. As they are followed by this Administration  
they represent an expression of <sup>the purpose of peace.</sup> ~~the same purpose.~~ ~~I should like to point~~  
~~out to you what those purposes are.~~

There is much confusion of thought and some unnecessary apprehension on this matter of national defense. There are sincere and patriotic people who have been led to believe that our military and naval establishments are inferior and inadequate. That, <sup>so stated</sup> ~~is~~, is a totally wrong conclusion. It has been the aim of this Administration to make our national defense efficient and to keep it adequate. Today our defense forces <sup>are</sup> ~~have never been~~ on a more <sup>stronger</sup> ~~satisfactory~~ peace-time basis <sup>than before.</sup>  
It is our purpose to keep them that way.

There are other, equally sincere and patriotic people who look upon our system of national defense as much too large for our needs; an unnecessary expense; a threat, perhaps, to peace. That, too, is a totally wrong conclusion. When we say adequate defense we mean just that. The prospect of a war of aggression has no place in our American policy. It has no place in our military or naval program. We are maintaining a system that will meet our defensive needs. We have no plans for any other kind of a system.

Americans generally will agree that some measure of preparedness for defense is necessary. They disagree as to how much is necessary. The policy of the government on that point is determined by several factors. First of all, it is determined by a very common-sense fact. If we take on any of the obligations of self-protection, it follows that we must take on all the obligations of self-protection. We have, for example, two extensive and widely separated coasts to guard. There would be no ~~reason~~ <sup>only</sup> in a preparedness policy adequate for the defense of one coast, ~~but inadequate~~ for the defense of both. ~~Now~~ Defense must be adequate, ~~not~~ not sectionally adequate, but nationally adequate.

Now our answer to the question as to what is nationally adequate is not always the same. It changes - is bound to change - with ~~the~~ changing international situation. If this were a disarming world it is obvious that our needs would be proportionately decreasing. <sup>I regret that today</sup> This is not that kind of a world. <sup>I regret it deeply.</sup> ~~and that fact affects our plans for defense.~~

But here we confront the question of disarmament. On that issue our policy is clear. That policy has two elements in it. First, we propose to press, continually, for a limitation of armaments by international agreement. Second, failing to get <sup>that we will make one of</sup> ~~that we propose to~~ increase our own armaments <sup>by</sup> ~~unless~~ other powers <sup>increase</sup> ~~increase~~ their armaments, <sup>in other</sup> ~~words,~~ <sup>words,</sup> ~~in the matter of armament reductions we have sought to lead~~ ~~in~~ ~~the matter of armament building we have been willing to follow.~~

~~But there is more to the problem of our international relationship than the problem of armaments. America's leadership for international~~

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~~understanding is not solely dependent upon our success in the limitation of armaments. There is no contradiction between the continuance of that leadership and the maintenance of a program of national defense such as I have outlined to you.~~

If progress in armament limitation has been slow, progress in ~~other~~ other areas has been ~~very~~ rapid. We have stated the principle of the Good Neighbor as the standard for the conduct of our foreign policy. We have begun the practice of that principle. Already that practice has ushered in a new era of good will between ourselves and the great ~~Republics~~ <sup>Republics</sup> of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Americas. One after another we are liquidating the causes of friction and misunderstanding between us. A new confidence has been established. This summer's Pan American Conference will meet in an atmosphere of unprecedented friendliness. What we have achieved in that one area is a measure of what we desire to achieve through the whole range of our international relationships.

That achievement is <sup>wholly</sup> ~~entirely~~ consistent with our program of national defense. It is, ~~an~~ <sup>A</sup> expression of the very objectives on which our national defense ~~program~~ is based.

~~It is my firm belief that our program of national defense is consistent with our foreign policy. Neither in the one nor in the other do~~

<sup>Do it</sup> we give ~~any~~ <sup>no</sup> thought to a war of aggression on the part of the United States.

We stand firmly by our solemn treaty obligations renouncing war as an instrument of national policy.

Very sincerely yours,

*consistent and successful*