FDR Speech File

Jos Robinson
Neutrality - a little unfavorable
no trouble

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE
PAN AMERICAN UNION ON THE OCCASION
OF THE CELEBRATION OF PAN AMERICAN
DAY, APRIL 14, 1937.

Gentlemen of the Governing Board:

We of the Americas have cause for rejoicing today. We meet to celebrate Pan American Day under the happiest of auspices. All of the nations of the Western Hemisphere are enjoying the boon of peace, and with it, the orderly pursuit of the arts and sciences upon which the happiness and security of nations, no less than of individuals, depend. Four years ago it was my privilege to meet with you in the celebration of Pan American Day and now, as then, I bring to you and through you to the governments and peoples of your respective countries the cordial and fraternal greetings of the people of the United States.

We have every reason to congratulate ourselves on the situation today as compared with that in 1933. At that time we were in the throes of a devastating economic depression. In our international relations we were confronted by the unfortunate spectacle of two of our sister nations engaged in bitter warfare; and two

other states on the verge of war. We were living in a period dominated by the destructive forces of suspicion and fear.

It is, therefore, with a feeling of profound satisfaction that we may today contemplate the great gains in our national economies, as well as in the international relations between the nations of the American Continents during this four-year period.

The war which was raging has happily been terminated; the controversy which almost led to war has also fortunately been solved. The nations of America mutually recognize their interdependence. They know today that the welfare and prosperity of each is largely dependent upon the welfare and prosperity of all. By pursuing a policy of reciprocal concessions, in which the Government of the United States is happy to have had a part, the nations of America have made important contributions to the healthy flow of trade and improved economic conditions.

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Peace at Buenos Aires, at which significant and far-reaching conclusions were reached. As you are aware, it was my personal privilege to attend the opening session and to meet many of the leaders of American thought and action. The deepest impression which I carried away was the potency of the unity of the Americas in developing democratic institutions in the New World and by example in helping the cause of world peace.

One of the outstanding lessons of the Conference was the clear perception on the part of the delegates of the close relation existing between international security and the normal development of democratic institutions. Democracy cannot thrive in an atmosphere of international insecurity. Such insecurity breeds militarism, regimentation and the denial of freedom of speech, of peaceful assemblage and of religion. Such insecurity challenges the ideals of democracy based on the free choice of government by the people themselves. And as a logical development we of the Americas believe that the continued maintenance

and improvement of democracy constitute the most important guarantee of international peace.

Moreover, the delegates to the Buenos Aires Conference well understood that peace is something more significant than the mere absence of conflict. A durable peace, one that will resist the onslaught of untoward or temporary circumstance, is something far more positive and constructive. It demands a policy based on positive international cooperation, on mutual confidence, and on united effort in the solution of problems of common concern. In the conventions and resolutions promoting intellectual cooperation and advancing mutual comprehension the Conference gave to the world an example which is destined to have far-reaching influence.

Gentlemen of the Governing Board:

During the past four years we have travelled far, farther, I believe than many of us four years ago thought possible. I am certain I interpret correctly

your sentiments and those of your Governments and your peoples, when I say that we are determined to move forward toward the goal already in sight. On this Day, dedicated to the twenty-one Republics constituting the Pan American Union, let us pledge ourselves to giving practical effect to the conclusions reached at Buenos Aires, and let us dedicate ourselves anew to the strengthening of the bonds that unite us in the great American family of nations.

I express to you on behalf of the government and people of the United States, a deep sense of obligation and gratitude for the unswerving devotion which your respective governments and peoples have given to the cause which we all have so much at heart, - the maintenance of peace on our continent. In this beautiful building, dedicated to the cause of peace, it is most fitting that we assemble today to reaffirm our faith in the high destiny of the Americas.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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(This is the original reading copy)

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
delivered at a special session of the
Governing Board of the Pan American Union
on the occasion of the celebration of Pan American Day
Pan American Union
April 14, 1937, 11.00 A.M.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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(The President at this point went off the air, the broadcasters making their concluding remarks. The President then said, informally and extemporaneously:)

May I add one word? As they say, this is off the record. I have been thinking that it was just four years ago that I came back here to the Pan American Union. There were a few of you people here who were there at that time. At that time I made some remarks which, perhaps, led to hopes. Those remarks were followed up later on by action. Many statements and many speeches had been made before that by American statesmen that were not followed up by action. And, if you will remember, I think it was in August, 1933, that we had the first opportunity to put into practice what we have preached. At that time there was the unfortunate trouble in Cuba and I did something that was perhaps the forerunner, a prophecy, of what came later on at Buenos Aires. I asked the Ambassadors and the Ministers of all the American Republics to come to my office and on that occasion, sitting around my desk, I told the Ambassadors and Ministers that the United States was not going to intervene in Cuba, that we all wanted to help Cuba and that therefore any action that was taken in helping Cuba ought to be the action of the Americas.

On that particular day, in my office, some of the Ambassadors and Ministers were away because it was the middle of summer, but some of the Charges d'Affaires were here. On that day we put into practice, for the first time, what we have been preaching. Out of that first meeting have come the very remarkable, the amazing results

that culminated last autumn in Buenos Aires and that is why, to all of you personally, you old friends of mine who have been here for some time and you new friends of mine who have come more recently, I want to extend this word of personal greeting. I am awfully glad we know each other and have the kind of confidence in each other that is going to lead to a continuance of these past sittings. (Applause)

STATEMENTS FILE

Shorthand By Kannee

HOLD FOR RELEASE HOLD FOR RELEASE HOLD FOR RELEASE

April 13, 1937

This address of the President, to be delivered at a special session of the Governing Board of the Pan American Union on the occasion of the celebration of Pan American Day, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

Release upon delivery, expected about 11:00 A. M., Eastern Standard Time, April 14, 1937

PLEASE SAFEGUARD AGAINST PREMATURE RELEASE.

STEPHEN EARLY
Assistant Secretary to the President

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(add)

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(After finishing mim. drop down a few spaces and add:)

(The President at this point went off the air, the broadcasters making their concluding remarks. The President then said, informally and extemporaneously:)

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DRAFT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE PAN AMERICAN UNION HELD IN HONOR OF PAN AMERICAN DAY, WEDNESDAY MORNING, APRIL 14TH, at 11 O'CLOCK.

Gentlemen of the Governing Board:

Four years ago I enjoyed the privilege of meeting with you in the celebration of Pan American Day and now, as then, I bring to you and through you to the Governments and peoples of your respective countries, the cordial and fraternal greetings of the people of the United States. I like to think of this day as a day set aside to enable us to bring home to every man, woman and child in the Western Hemisphere the essential unity of the mission and destiny of the Americas. We have every reason to congratulate ourselves on the situation today as compared with that in 1933. At that time we were in the throes of a severe economic depression. Our trade with one another and with other states had declined to almost the vanishing point; vast numbers of our people were unemployed; the physical and spiritual well-being of our people had reached a very low ebb.

In our international relations we were confronted by the unfortunate spectacle of two of our sister nations engaged in cruel and bitter warfare, and two other states on the verge of war. We were living in a period dominated by the destructive forces of suspicion and fear; a period

which sadly lacked those elements of confidence, trust and mutual respect on which alone national, as well as international, progress and stability can be achieved.

It is with a feeling of profound satisfaction that we may contemplate the improvement that has taken place in our respective national economies, as well as in the international relations between the nations of the American Continent during this four-year period. Especially heartening is the fact that this progress has been achieved by the recognition and application of those basic principles which are the very foundation of the Pan American movement, namely, mutual helpfulness, sympathetic understanding, and spiritual solidarity.

Through the application of these principles the war which was raging has happily been terminated; the controversy which almost led to war has also fortunately been solved. Several other territorial issues have been or are in process of satisfactory settlement. In fact, we may now confidently look forward to the day, a day not far distant, when all territorial questions on the American Continent will have been disposed of, thus eliminating one of the most fruitful causes of international misunderstanding. Many of these questions have been settled by direct negotiation, others through the good offices or mediation of other American states; but

in every instance it was evident that the questions involving any of our sister nations were the concern of every one of us; and there was apparent not only a constant willingness but also an earnest desire to aid in every possible way in their settlement. That is the spirit of Pan Americanism, the spirit of mutual helpfulness and cooperation in the solution of our common problems, always within a rigid respect for the sovereign rights of each of our states.

In fulfillment of the enlightened principles of economic policy incorporated in the resolutions adopted at Montevideo in 1933, there has been a gratifying revival in the international trade of the American Republics. The nations of America mutually recognize their interdependence, and are fully aware that the welfare and prosperity of each is largely dependent upon the welfare and prosperity of all. By pursuing a policy of reciprocal concessions, in which my Government is happy to have had a part, as well as by individual action, the nations of America have made important contributions to the healthy flow of trade and improved economic conditions.

The progress of the last four years culminated in the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace, at which significant and far-reaching conclusions

were reached. As you are aware, it was my privilege to attend the opening session and to establish personal contact with some of the leaders of American thought and action. The deepest impression which I carried away was how far-reaching is the influence of the unity of the Americas on the development of democratic institutions in the New World and how important the part which this unity is destined to play in the maintenance of world peace.

One of the outstanding lessons of the Conference, a lesson destined to be of greater significance and moment with each succeeding year, was the clear perception on the part of the delegates of the close relation existing between international security and the normal development of democratic institutions. If there is any one lesson which history should teach us it is that democracy cannot thrive in an atmosphere of international insecurity. Such insecurity inevitably carries with it militarism, regimentation, the undermining of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and ultimately of religious freedom, - in a word, the destruction of the essential bases of democracy.

A further lesson which I believe impressed itself on all the delegations was the definite recognition of the fact that the maintenance and further development

of democracy constitute the most important guarantee to the maintenance of international peace. What we must strive for throughout the Americas is an increasing sensitiveness of national and international policy to the standards of public opinion. Only in this way can we divorce international policy from the play of personal ambitions and individual aggrandizement.

It is appropriate, in this connection, that I should refer to another lesson to be learned from the Buenos Aires Conference which I regard as of the very greatest moment to the future of international relations on the American Continent. The delegates to the Conference realized, and in their deliberations gave effect to the principle, that peace is something far more significant than the mere absence of conflict. A really durable peace, one that will resist the onslaught of untoward circumstances, is something far more positive and constructive. It demands a policy based on positive international cooperation, on mutual confidence, and on united effort in the solution of problems of common concern. In the conventions and resolutions promoting intellectual cooperation and advancing mutual comprehension through interchange of students and professors, the Conference gave to the world an example which is destined to have far-reaching influence.

Another cardinal principle which received recognition at the Buenos Aires Conference and which is of much moment to the peace of this Continent is the gradual elimination of those obstacles to inter-American trade which in the last few years have clogged the channels of commerce and have been a constant menace to international good feeling. If the spirit which prevailed at Buenos Aires can be made effective in our trade relations, we need have no misgivings as to the future.

Important as were the positive achievements of the Buenos Aires Conference, I am convinced that the intangible results are quite as valuable. Actuated by a unity of purpose almost unique in the history of international assemblies, the Conference concentrated its attention on assuring the peace of this Continent. No selfish purpose either obscured or delayed the singleness of purpose which the delegates had in view. In this connection, let me point out that the unity thus achieved by America does not involve the slightest antagonism or threat to any other section of the world. On the contrary, America, because of her unity, because of her high objectives, and because of her unswerving devotion to the cause of peace, has become a great stabilizing influence in world affairs.

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farther, I believe, than many of us ~~at the time~~ four years ago thought possible. I am certain I interpret correctly your sentiments and those of your Governments and your peoples, when I say that we are determined to move forward toward the goal already in sight. On this Day, dedicated to the twenty-one Republics constituting the Pan American Union, let us pledge ourselves to giving practical effect to the conclusions reached at Buenos Aires, and let us dedicate ourselves anew to the strengthening of the bonds that unite us in the great American family of nations.

In closing, I wish to express to you on behalf of the government and people of the United States, a deep sense of obligation and gratitude for the unswerving devotion which your respective governments and peoples have given to the cause which we all have so much at heart, - the maintenance of peace on our continent. In this beautiful building, dedicated to the cause of peace, it is most fitting that we should have assembled today to reaffirm our faith in the high destiny of the Americas.

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