Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945
Series 2: “You have nothing to fear but fear itself:” FDR and the New Deal

File No. 1064

1937 August 1

Radio Address re Dedication of American Monument at Montfaucon, France
Remark made by Ambassador Bullitt in conversation with the President: "France is carrying on in the tradition of a great civilization".

SUGGESTED DRAFT OF REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO BE BROADCAST INTERNATIONALLY ON AUGUST 1,
1937, IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEDICATION
OF THE MEUSE-ARGONNE MEMORIAL, MONTFAUCON, FRANCE.

M. le President de la Republique Francaise, M. le Marechal Petain,
Ambassador Bullitt, General Pershing, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is for the Day of Triumph. We are dedicating in

though the seas divide us, the people of France and of the United States

find union today in common devotion to the ideal which the memorial

at Montfaucon symbolizes. That ideal, to which both nations bear

faithful witness, is the ideal of freedom under democracy in the govern-

ment. In a real sense this monument, which we have reared on the

French hillside to commemorate the victory of our First Army in the

Meuse-Argonne offensive, symbolizes the triumph of spiritual power over

materiel force. Feats of arms mean little if they are ends in themselves,

mere triumphs of physical force. But they have a deeper and loftier

significance when they are translated into the national life in spiritual

terms, and symbolize reconsecration of all endeavor to spiritual ends.

I like to think that today we reaffirm our faith in

the democratic ideal. It was in defense of that ideal that we entered

the great war twenty years ago. In the Meuse-Argonne, we fought as
champions of the rights of mankind. Neither France nor the United States seeks conquest. Both have imperial designs. Both desire to live at peace with all nations. We seek kinship with lovers of liberty wherever they are found, whether our neighbors in this hemisphere or dwellers in the far corners of the earth. "These liberty-dwells there is my country."

France is carrying on in the tradition of a great civilization, a civilization with which our own culture has had full communion from our very beginnings as a nation. We, of this country, have not forgotten nor could we ever forget the aid given us by France in the dark days of the Revolution.

In token of our appreciation of that aid, the Congress of the United States has put up two monuments — one to the immortal La Fayette, the other to Rochambeau — just across the street to stand as sentinels over the White House, from which I am speaking.

Our historic friendship finds apt expression in the following quotation from a letter which Washington wrote to Rochambeau, and which is inscribed on the base of the monument to the great Frenchman to which I have just referred: "We have been contemporaries and fellow-laborers in the cause of liberty, and we have lived together as brothers should do, in harmonious friendship."

Many things have gone into the making of the France which we revere and with whose culture we find ourselves in close
communion. When we think of France we think of her, not in isolation from her history, but as the result of all that has gone before.

All of the past speaks to us in the living present, and out of the shadows of a thousand years emerge the glory and the achievement which are France. We see again the pomp and color and growing power of the Middle Ages; the windows of Chartres; the valor of Joan of Arc; the Gothic mystery of Notre Dame de Paris; the ceaseless struggle to maintain and perpetuate the nation whose cultural achievements in the arts, in science and in letters and in the boundless land of ideas have shed light over all the world.

These things we remember today, nor do we forget the living face of France: the green fields around Montfaucon, with broad farms and contented dwellers on the soil; the vast expanse of the ocean; the might of mountain peaks; the magic of the Mediterranean — all these have through the ages gone into the making of the France we hail today, as a Nation, carrying on in the tradition of a great civilization.

With that tradition we have a sympathy and spiritual affinity which have survived all of the vicissitudes of our national history, and which I pray God no hazard of the future may ever dissipate or destroy.

In the spirit of mingled gratitude and hope I greet our friends in the Republic of France, firm in the confidence that a friendship as old as the American nation will never be suffered to grow less.

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To the preservation of this civilization American soldiers and sailors contributed their lives and were buried on this land and other battlefields. They died brothers in arms with Frenchmen. And in their memory America and France gained deeper devotion to the ideals of democracy.

In their name, for their sake, I
M. le President de la Republique Francaise, M. le Marechal Pétain, Ambassador Bullitt, General Pershing, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Though the seas divide us, the people of France and the people of the United States find union today in common devotion to the ideal which the memorial at Montfaucon symbolizes. That ideal, to which both nations bear faithful witness, is freedom under democracy -- liberty attained by government founded in democratic institutions.

In a real sense this monument, which we have reared on the French hillside to commemorate the victory of our First Army in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, symbolizes that devotion.

Today we reaffirm our faith in the democratic ideal. It was in defense of that ideal that we entered the great war twenty years ago. In the Meuse-Argonne, we fought
as champions of the rights of mankind. Neither France nor the United States sought or seeks conquest--neither had nor has imperial designs. Both desire to live at peace with all nations. Both seek kinship with lovers of liberty wherever they are found.

France is carrying on in the tradition of a great civilization, a civilization with which our own culture has had full communion from our very beginnings as a nation. We, of this country, have not forgotten nor could we ever forget the aid given us by France in the early days of the American Revolution.

Our historic friendship finds apt expression in the words of the quotation from a letter which Washington wrote to Rochambeau, and which is inscribed on the base of our monument to the great Frenchman: "We have been contemporaries and fellow-laborers in the cause of liberty, and we have lived together as brothers should do, in harmonious friendship."
Many things have gone into the making of the France which we revere and with whose culture we find ourselves in close communion. All of the past speaks to us in the living present, and out of the shadows of a thousand years emerge the glory and the achievement which are France.

These things we remember today, nor do we forget the living France: the green fields around Montfaucon, with broad farms and contented dwellers on the soil; the villages and cities with their artists and artisans — all these make and preserve the France we hail today.

To the preservation of this civilization American soldiers and sailors contributed their lives and lie buried on this and other battlefields. They died brothers-in-arms with Frenchmen. And in their passing America and France gained deeper devotion to the ideals of democracy.

In their name, for their sake, I pray God no hazard of the future may ever dissipate or destroy that common ideal.
I greet the Republic of France, firm in the confidence that a friendship as old as the American nation will never be suffered to grow less.

Timothy M. Pearsall

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Original reading copy—
This was made from U.S. Putnam alongside wheat at Quantico.
This address of the President, to be delivered by
radio on the occasion of the dedication of the American
Monument at Montfaucon, France, on Sunday, August 1, 1937,
MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

Release upon delivery, expected about 9:55 A. M.,
Eastern Standard Time, Sunday, August 1, 1937.

Please safeguard against premature release.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

M. le President de la Republique Francaise, M. le Marechal Petain,
Ambassador Bullitt, General Pershing, Ladies and Gentlemen:

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