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**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**

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**File No. 1381-B**

**1941 September 11**

**Fireside Chat #17 –  
Maintaining Freedom of the Seas**

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

SEPTEMBER 11, 1941

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MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

The Navy Department of the United States has reported to me that on the morning of September fourth the United States destroyer GREER, proceeding in full daylight towards Iceland, had reached a point southeast of Greenland. She was carrying American mail to Iceland. She was flying the American flag. Her identity as an American ship was unmistakable.

She was then and there attacked by a submarine. Germany admits that it was a German submarine. The submarine deliberately fired a torpedo at the GREER, followed later by another torpedo attack. [ In spite of what Hitler's propaganda Bureau has invented, and in spite of what any American obstructionist organization may prefer to believe, I tell you the blunt fact that the German submarine fired first upon this American *See* destroyer without warning, and with deliberate design to sink her. ]

Our destroyer, at the time, was in waters which the Government of the United States had declared to be waters of self-defense -- surrounding outposts of American protection in the Atlantic.]

In the North, outposts have been established by us in Iceland, Greenland, Labrador and Newfoundland. Through these waters there pass many ships of many flags. They bear food and other supplies to civilians; and they bear materiel of war, for which the people of the United States are spending billions of dollars, and which, by Congressional action, they have declared to be essential for the defense of their own land.

The United States destroyer, when attacked, was proceeding on a legitimate mission.

If the destroyer was visible to the submarine when the torpedo was fired, then the attack was a deliberate attempt by the Nazis to sink a clearly identified American warship.

On the other hand, if the submarine was beneath the surface and, with the aid of its listening devices, fired in the direction of the sound of the American destroyer without even taking the trouble to learn its identity -- as the official German communique would indicate -- then the attack was even more outrageous. For it indicates a policy of indiscriminate violence against any vessel sailing the seas -- belligerent or non-belligerent.

This was piracy -- legally and morally. It was not the first nor the last act of piracy which the Nazi Government has committed against the American flag in this war. Attack has followed attack.

A few months ago an American flag merchant ship, the ROBIN MOOR, was sunk by a Nazi submarine in the middle of the South Atlantic, under circumstances violating long-established international law and every principle of humanity.

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The passengers and the crew were forced into open boats hundreds of miles from land, in direct violation of international agreements signed by the Government of Germany. No apology, no allegation of mistake, no offer of reparations has come from the Nazi Government.

In July, 1941, an American battleship in North American waters was followed by a submarine which for a long time sought to maneuver itself into a position of attack. The periscope of the submarine was clearly seen. No British or American submarines were within hundreds of miles of this spot at the time, so the nationality of the submarine is clear.

Five days ago a United States Navy ship on patrol picked up three survivors of an American-owned ship operating under the flag of our sister Republic of Panama -- the S. S. SESSA. On August seventeenth, she had been first torpedoed without warning, and then shelled, near Greenland, while carrying civilian supplies to Iceland. It is feared that the other members of her crew have been drowned. In view of the

established presence of German submarines in this vicinity, there can be no reasonable doubt as to the identity of the attacker.

Five days ago, another United States merchant ship, the STEEL SEAFARER was sunk by a German aircraft in the Red Sea two hundred and twenty miles south of Suez. She was bound for an Egyptian port.

[ Four ~~of~~ the vessels sunk or attacked flew the American flag and were clearly identifiable. Two ~~of~~ these ships were warships of the American Navy. In the fifth case, the vessel sunk clearly carried the flag of Panama.]

In the face of all this, we Americans are keeping our feet on the ground. Our type of democratic civilization has outgrown the thought of feeling compelled to fight some other nation by reason of any single piratical attack on one of our ships. We are not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion. Therefore, what I am thinking and saying does not relate to any isolated episode.

Instead, we Americans are taking a long-range point of view in regard to certain fundamentals and to a series of events on land and on sea which must be considered as a whole -- as a part of a world pattern.

[ It would be unworthy of a great nation to exaggerate an isolated incident, or to become inflamed by some one act of violence. But it would be inexcusable folly to minimize such incidents in the face of evidence which makes it clear that the incident is not isolated, but part of a general plan.] *J.P.S.*

The important truth is that these acts of international lawlessness are a manifestation of a design which has been made clear to the American people for a long time. [ It is the Nazi design to abolish the freedom of the seas, and to acquire absolute control and domination of the seas for themselves.] *S* *Strikes*

For with control of the seas in their own hands, the way can become clear for their next step -- domination of the United States and the Western Hemisphere by force. Under *(910)*

Nazi control of the seas, no merchant ship of the United States or of any other American Republic would be free to carry on any peaceful commerce, except by the condescending grace of this foreign and tyrannical power. The Atlantic Ocean which has been, and which should always be, a free and friendly highway for us would then become a deadly menace to the commerce of the United States, to the coasts of the United States, and to the inland cities of the United States.

The Hitler Government, in defiance of the laws of the sea and of the recognized rights of all other nations, has presumed to declare, on paper, that great areas of the seas -- even including a vast expanse lying in the Western Hemisphere -- are to be closed, and that no ships may enter them for any purpose, except at peril of being sunk. Actually they are sinking ships at will and without warning in widely separated areas both within and far outside of these far-flung pretended zones.

This Nazi attempt to seize control of the oceans is but a counterpart of the Nazi plots now being carried on throughout the Western Hemisphere -- all designed toward the same end. For Hitler's advance guards -- not only his avowed agents but also his dupes among us -- have sought to make ready for him footholds and bridgeheads in the New World, to be used as soon as he has gained control of the oceans.

Hitler  
His intrigues, his plots, his machinations, his sabotage in this New World are all known to the Government of the United States. Conspiracy has followed conspiracy. ]

Last year a plot to seize the Government of Uruguay was smashed by the prompt action of that country, which was supported in full by her American neighbors. A like plot was then hatching in Argentina, and that Government has carefully and wisely blocked it at every point. More recently, an endeavor was made to subvert the Government of Bolivia. Within the past few weeks the discovery was made of secret air landing fields in Colombia, within easy range of the Panama Canal. I could multiply instances.

To be ultimately successful in world mastery, Hitler knows that he must get control of the seas. He must first destroy the bridge of ships which we are building across the Atlantic, over which we shall continue to roll the implements of war to help destroy him and all his works in the end. He must wipe out our patrol on sea and in the air. He must silence the British Navy.

[ It must be explained again and again to people who like to think of the United States Navy as an invincible protection, that this can be true only if the British Navy survives. That is simple arithmetic.

For if the world outside the Americas falls under Axis domination, the shipbuilding facilities which the Axis powers would then possess in all of Europe, in the British Isles, and in the Far East would be much greater than all the shipbuilding facilities and potentialities of all the Americas --

(912)

*F.H.P.*

not only greater, but two or three times greater.] Even if  
the United States threw all its resources into such a situation,  
seeking to double and even redouble the size of our Navy, the  
Axis powers, in control of therest of the world, would have  
the man-power and the physical resources to outbuild us several  
times over.

It is time for all Americans of all the Americas to  
stop being deluded by the romantic notion that the Americas  
can go on living happily and peacefully in a Nazi-dominated  
world.

Generation after generation, America has batteld for  
the general policy of the freedom of the seas. That policy  
is a very simple one -- but a basic, fundamental one. It  
means that no nation has the right to make the broad oceans  
of the world at great distances from the actual theatre of  
land war, unsafe for the commerce of others.

That has been our policy, proved time and time again,  
in all our history.

Our policy has applied from time immemorial -- and  
still applies -- not merely to the Atlantic but to the Pacific  
and to all other oceans as well.

Unrestricted submarine warfare in 1941 constitutes  
a defiance -- an act of aggression -- against that historic  
American policy.

[ It is now clear that Hitler has begun his campaign to  
control the seas by ruthless force and by wiping out every  
vestige of international law and humanity. ]

His intention has been made clear. The American people  
can have no further illusions about it.

No tender whisperings of appeasers that Hitler is not  
interested in the Western Hemisphere, no soporific lullabies  
that a wide ocean protects us from him -- can long have any  
effect on the hard-headed, far-sighted and realistic American  
people.

Because of these episodes, because of the movements and operations of German warships, and because of the clear, repeated proof that the present Government of Germany has no respect for treaties or for international law, that it has no decent attitude toward neutral nations or human life -- we Americans are now face to face not with abstract theories but with cruel, relentless facts.

This attack on the GREER was no localized military operation in the North Atlantic. This was no mere episode in a struggle between two nations. This was one determined step towards creating a permanent world system based on force, terror and murder.

[ And I am sure that even now the Nazis are waiting to see whether the United States will by silence give them the green light to go ahead on this path of destruction. ]

The Nazi danger to our western world has long ceased to be a mere possibility. The danger is here now -- not only from a military enemy but from an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion. ]

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There has now come a time when you and I must see the cold inexorable necessity of saying to these inhuman, unrestrained seekers of world conquest and permanent world domination by the sword -- "You seek to throw our children and our children's children into your form of terrorism and slavery. You have now attacked our own safety. You shall go no further".

Normal practices of diplomacy -- note writing -- are of no possible use in dealing with international outlaws who sink our ships and kill our citizens.

One peaceful nation after another has met disaster because each refused to look the Nazi danger squarely in the eye until it actually had them by the throat.

The United States will not make that fatal mistake.

[ No act of violence or intimidation will keep us from maintaining intact two bulwarks of defense: first, our line of supply of materiel to the enemies of Hitler, and second, the freedom of our shipping on the high seas. ]

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No matter what it takes, no matter what it costs, we will keep open the line of legitimate commerce in these defensive waters.

[ We have sought no shooting war with Hitler. We do not seek it now. But neither do we want peace so much, that we are willing to pay for it by permitting him to attack our naval and merchant ships while they are on legitimate business. ]

I assume that the German leaders are not deeply concerned by what we Americans say or publish about them. We cannot bring about the downfall of Nazism by the use of long-range invective.

But [ when you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has struck before you crush him.

These Nazi submarines and raiders are the rattlesnakes of the Atlantic. They are a menace to the free pathways of the high seas. They are a challenge to our sovereignty. They hammer at our most precious rights when they attack ships of the American flag -- symbols of our independence, our freedom, our very life. ]

Sak

It is clear to all Americans that the time has come when the Americas themselves must now be defended. A continuation of attacks in our own waters, or in waters which could be used for further and greater attacks on us, will inevitably weaken American ability to repel Hitlerism.

Do not let us split hairs. Let us not ask ourselves whether the Americas should begin to defend themselves after the fifth attack, or the tenth attack, or the twentieth attack.

[ The time for active defense is now. ]

Do not let us split hairs. Let us not say -- "We will only defend ourselves if the torpedo succeeds in getting home, or if the crew and the passengers are drowned".

[ This is the time for prevention of attack. ]

If submarines or raiders attack in distant waters, they can attack equally well within sight of our own shores. Their very presence in any waters which America deems vital to its defense constitutes an attack.

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[ In the waters which we deem necessary for our defense,  
American naval vessels and American planes will no longer wait  
until Axis submarines lurking under the water, or Axis raiders  
on the surface of the sea, strike their deadly blow -- first. ]

Upon our naval and air patrol -- now operating in  
large number over a vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean -- falls  
the duty of maintaining the American policy of freedom of  
the seas -- now. [ That means, very simply and clearly, that  
our patrolling vessels and planes will protect all merchant  
ships -- not only American ships but ships of any flag --  
engaged in commerce in our defensive waters. They will protect  
them from submarines; they will protect them from surface  
raiders. ]

This situation is not new. The second President of  
the United States, John Adams, ordered the United States Navy  
to clean out European privateers and European ships of war  
which were infesting the Caribbean and South American waters,  
destroying American commerce.

The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, ordered the United States Navy to end the attacks being made upon American ships by the corsairs of the nations of North Africa.

My obligation as President is historic; it is clear; it is inescapable.

It is no act of war on our part when we decide to protect the seas which are vital to American defense. The aggression is not ours. Ours is solely defense.

But [let this warning be clear. From now on, if German or Italian vessels of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for American defense, they do so at their own peril.]

The orders which I have given as Commander-in-Chief to the United States Army and Navy are to carry out that policy-at once. ]

[ The sole responsibility rests upon Germany. There will  
be no shooting unless Germany continues to seek it. ]

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That is my obvious duty in this crisis. That is the clear right of this sovereign nation. That is the only step possible, if we would keep tight the wall of defense which we are pledged to maintain around this Western Hemisphere.

I have no illusions about the gravity of this step. I have not taken it hurriedly or lightly. It is the result of months and months of constant thought and anxiety and prayer. In the protection of your nation and mine it cannot be avoided.

The American people have faced other grave crises in their history -- with American courage and American resolution. They will do no less today.

They know the actualities of the attacks upon us. They know the necessities of a bold defense against these attacks. They know that the times call for clear heads and fearless hearts.

[ And with that inner strength that comes to a free  
people conscious of their duty and of the righteousness of  
what they do, they will -- with Divine help and guidance --  
stand their ground against this latest assault upon their  
democracy, their sovereignty, and their freedom. ]

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*Franklin Roosevelt*

Orig. reading copy

should have been a citizen

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
BROADCAST FROM THE WHITE HOUSE  
September 11, 1941, 9:00 P. M., E. S. T.

MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

The Navy Department of the United States has reported to me that on the morning of September fourth the United States destroyer GREER, proceeding in full daylight towards Iceland, had reached a point southeast of Greenland. She was carrying American mail to Iceland. She was flying the American flag. Her identity as an American ship was unmistakable.

She was then and there attacked by a submarine. Germany admits that it was a German submarine. The submarine deliberately fired a torpedo at the GREER, followed later by another torpedo attack. In spite of what Hitler's propaganda Bureau has invented, and in spite of what any American obstructionist organization may prefer to believe, I tell you the blunt fact that the German submarine fired first upon this American destroyer without warning, and with deliberate design to sink her.

Our destroyer, at the time, was in waters which the Government of the United States had declared to be waters of self-defense -- surrounding outposts of American protection in the Atlantic.

In the North of the Atlantic, outposts have been established by us in Iceland, in Greenland, in Labrador and in Newfoundland. Through these waters there pass many ships of many flags. They bear food and other supplies to civilians; and they bear material of war, for which the people of the United States are spending billions of dollars, and which, by Congressional action, they have declared to be essential for the defense of (their) our own land.

The United States destroyer, when attacked, was proceeding on a

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.

legitimate mission.

If the destroyer was visible to the submarine when the torpedo was fired, then the attack was a deliberate attempt by the Nazis to sink a clearly identified American warship. On the other hand, if the submarine was beneath the surface of the sea and, with the aid of its listening devices, fired in the direction of the sound of the American destroyer without even taking the trouble to learn its identity -- as the official German communique would indicate -- then the attack was even more outrageous. For it indicates a policy of indiscriminate violence against any vessel sailing the seas -- belligerent or non-belligerent.

This was piracy -- piracy legally and morally. It was not the first nor the last act of piracy which the Nazi Government has committed against the American flag in this war. For attack has followed attack.

A few months ago an American flag merchant ship, the ROBIN MOOR, was sunk by a Nazi submarine in the middle of the South Atlantic, under circumstances violating long-established international law and violating every principle of humanity. The passengers and the crew were forced into open boats hundreds of miles from land, in direct violation of international agreements signed by nearly all nations including the Government of Germany. No apology, no allegation of mistake, no offer of reparations has come from the Nazi Government.

In July, 1941, nearly two months ago an American battleship in North American waters was followed by a submarine which for a long time sought to maneuver itself into a position of attack upon the battleship. The periscope of the submarine was clearly seen. No British or American submarines were within hundreds of miles of this spot at the time, so the nationality of the submarine is clear.

Five days ago a United States Navy ship on patrol picked up three survivors of an American-owned ship operating under the flag of our sister Republic of Panama -- the S. S. SESSA. On August seventeenth, she had been first torpedoed without warning, and then shelled, near Greenland, while carrying civilian supplies to Iceland. It is feared that the other members of her crew have been drowned. In view of the established presence of German submarines in this vicinity, there can be no reasonable doubt as to the identity of the flag of the attacker.

Five days ago, another United States merchant ship, the STEEL SEAFARER was sunk by a German aircraft in the Red Sea two hundred and twenty miles south of Suez. She was bound for an Egyptian port.

So four of the vessels sunk or attacked flew the American flag and were clearly identifiable. Two of these ships were warships of the American Navy. In the fifth case, the vessel sunk clearly carried the flag of our sister Republic of Panama.

In the face of all this, we Americans are keeping our feet on the ground. Our type of democratic civilization has outgrown the thought of feeling compelled to fight some other nation by reason of any single piratical attack on one of our ships. We are not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion. Therefore, what I am thinking and saying tonight does not relate to any isolated episode.

Instead, we Americans are taking a long-range point of view in regard to certain fundamentals (and) -- a point of view in regard to a series of events on land and on sea which must be considered as a whole -- as a part of a world pattern.

It would be unworthy of a great nation to exaggerate an isolated incident, or to become inflamed by some one act of violence. But it would

be inexcusable folly to minimize such incidents in the face of evidence which makes it clear that the incident is not isolated, but is part of a general plan.

The important truth is that these acts of international lawlessness are a manifestation of a design (which) -- a design <sup>that</sup> has been made clear to the American people for a long time. It is the Nazi design to abolish the freedom of the seas, and to acquire absolute control and domination of (the) these seas for themselves.

For with control of the seas in their own hands, the way can obviously become clear for their next step -- domination of the United States (and the) -- domination of the Western Hemisphere by force of arms. Under Nazi control of the seas, no merchant ship of the United States or of any other American Republic would be free to carry on any peaceful commerce, except by the condescending grace of this foreign and tyrannical power. The Atlantic Ocean which has been, and which should always be, a free and friendly highway for us would then become a deadly menace to the commerce of the United States, to the coasts of the United States, and even to the inland cities of the United States.

The Hitler Government, in defiance of the laws of the sea, (and) in defiance of the recognized rights of all other nations, has presumed to declare, on paper, that great areas of the seas -- even including a vast expanse lying in the Western Hemisphere -- are to be closed, and that no ships may enter them for any purpose, except at peril of being sunk. Actually they are sinking ships at will and without warning in widely separated areas both within and far outside of these far-flung pretended zones.

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in all of Europe, in the British Isles, and in the Far East would be much greater than all the shipbuilding facilities and potentialities of all of the Americas -- not only greater, but two or three times greater, enough to win. Even if the United States threw all its resources into such a situation, seeking to double and even redouble the size of our Navy, the Axis powers, in control of the rest of the world, would have the man-power and the physical resources to outbuild us several times over.

It is time for all Americans, Americans of all the Americas to stop being deluded by the romantic notion that the Americas can go on living happily and peacefully in a Nazi-dominated world.

Generation after generation, America has battled for the general policy of the freedom of the seas. And that policy is a very simple one -- but a basic, a fundamental one. It means that no nation has the right to make the broad oceans of the world at great distances from the actual theatre of land war, unsafe for the commerce of others.

That has been our policy, proved time and (time) again, in all of our history.

Our policy has applied from (time immemorial) the earliest days of the Republic -- and still applies -- not merely to the Atlantic but to the Pacific and to all other oceans as well.

Unrestricted submarine warfare in 1941 constitutes a defiance -- an act of aggression -- against that historic American policy.

It is now clear that Hitler has begun his campaign to control the seas by ruthless force and by wiping out every vestige of international law, (and) every vestige of humanity.

His intention has been made clear. The American people can have no further illusions about it.

No tender whisperings of appeasers that Hitler is not interested in the Western Hemisphere, no soporific lullabies that a wide ocean protects us from him -- can long have any effect on the hard-headed, far-sighted and realistic American people.

Because of these episodes, because of the movements and operations of German warships, and because of the clear, repeated proof that the present government of Germany has no respect for treaties or for international law, that it has no decent attitude toward neutral nations or human life -- we Americans are now face to face not with abstract theories but with cruel, relentless facts.

This attack on the GREER was no localized military operation in the North Atlantic. This was no mere episode in a struggle between two nations. This was one determined step towards creating a permanent world system based on force, on terror and on murder.

And I am sure that even now the Nazis are waiting, waiting to see whether the United States will by silence give them the green light to go ahead on this path of destruction.

The Nazi danger to our western world has long ceased to be a mere possibility. The danger is here now -- not only from a military enemy but from an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion.

There has now come a time when you and I must see the cold inexorable necessity of saying to these inhuman, unrestrained seekers of world conquest and permanent world domination by the sword: "You seek to throw our children and our children's children into your form of terrorism and slavery. You have now attacked our own safety. You shall go no further".

Normal practices of diplomacy -- note writing -- are of no possible use in dealing with international outlaws who sink our ships and kill our citizens.

One peaceful nation after another has met disaster because each refused to look the Nazi danger squarely in the eye until it had actually had them by the throat.

The United States will not make that fatal mistake.

No act of violence, (or) no act of intimidation will keep us from maintaining intact two bulwarks of American defense: First, our line of supply of materiel to the enemies of Hitler; and second, the freedom of our shipping on the high seas.

No matter what it takes, no matter what it costs, we will keep open the line of legitimate commerce in these defensive waters of ours.

We have sought no shooting war with Hitler. We do not seek it now. But neither do we want peace so much, that we are willing to pay for it by permitting him to attack our naval and merchant ships while they are on legitimate business.

I assume that the German leaders are not deeply concerned, tonight or any other time, by what we Americans or the American Government say or publish about them. We cannot bring about the downfall of Nazi-ism by the use of long-range invective.

But when you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has struck before you crush him.

These Nazi submarines and raiders are the rattlesnakes of the Atlantic. They are a menace to the free pathways of the high seas. They are a challenge to our own sovereignty. They hammer at our most precious rights when they attack ships of the American flag -- symbols of our independence, our freedom, our very life.

It is clear to all Americans that the time has come when the Americas themselves must now be defended. A continuation of attacks in our

own waters, or in waters (which) that could be used for further and greater attacks on us, will inevitably weaken our American ability to repel Hitlerism.

Do not let us (split hairs) be hair-splitters. Let us not ask ourselves whether the Americas should begin to defend themselves after the (fifth) first attack, or the (tenth) fifth attack, or the tenth attack, or the twentieth attack.

The time for active defense is now.

Do not let us split hairs. Let us not say : "We will only defend ourselves if the torpedo succeeds in getting home, or if the crew and the passengers are drowned".

This is the time for prevention of attack.

If submarines or raiders attack in distant waters, they can attack equally well within sight of our own shores. Their very presence in any waters which America deems vital to its defense constitutes an attack.

In the waters which we deem necessary for our defense, American naval vessels and American planes will no longer wait until Axis submarines lurking under the water, or Axis raiders on the surface of the sea, strike their deadly blow -- first.

Upon our naval and air patrol -- now operating in large number over a vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean -- falls the duty of maintaining the American policy of freedom of the seas -- now. That means, very simply, (and) very clearly, that our patrolling vessels and planes will protect all merchant ships -- not only American ships but ships of any flag -- engaged in commerce in our defensive waters. They will protect them from submarines; they will protect them from surface raiders.

This situation is not new. The second President of the United States, John Adams, ordered the United States Navy to clean out European

privateers and European ships of war which were infesting the Caribbean and South American waters, destroying American commerce.

The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, ordered the United States Navy to end the attacks being made upon American and other ships by the corsairs of the nations of North Africa.

My obligation as President is historic; it is clear. Yes, it is inescapable.

It is no act of war on our part when we decide to protect the seas (which) that are vital to American defense. The aggression is not ours. Ours is solely defense.

But let this warning be clear. From now on, if German or Italian vessels of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for American defense, they do so at their own peril.

The orders which I have given as Commander-in-Chief (to) of the United States Army and Navy are to carry out that policy -- at once.

The sole responsibility rests upon Germany. There will be no shooting unless Germany continues to seek it.

That is my obvious duty in this crisis. That is the clear right of this sovereign nation. (That) This is the only step possible, if we would keep tight the wall of defense which we are pledged to maintain around this Western Hemisphere.

I have no illusions about the gravity of this step. I have not taken it hurriedly or lightly. It is the result of months and months of constant thought and anxiety and prayer. In the protection of your nation and mine it cannot be avoided.

The American people have faced other grave crises in their history -- with American courage, (and) with American resolution. They will do no less today.

They know the actualities of the attacks upon us. They know the necessities of a bold defense against these attacks. They know that the times call for clear heads and fearless hearts.

And with that inner strength that comes to a free people conscious of their duty, (and) conscious of the righteousness of what they do, they will -- with Divine help and guidance -- stand their ground against this latest assault upon their democracy, their sovereignty, and their freedom.

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HOLD FOR RELEASE

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SEPTEMBER 11, 1941

CAUTION: The following address of the President, to be broadcast from the White House, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE until released.

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 9:00 P.M., E.S.T., September 11, 1941. The same release of the text of the address also applies to radio announcers and news commentators.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

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If the destroyer was visible to the submarine when the torpedo was fired, then the attack was a deliberate attempt by the Nazis to sink a clearly identified American warship. On the other hand, if the submarine was beneath the surface and, with the aid of its listening devices, fired in the direction of the sound of the American destroyer without even taking the trouble to learn its identity -- as the official German communiqué would indicate -- then the attack was even more outrageous. For it indicates a policy of indiscriminate violence against any vessel sailing the seas -- belligerent or non-belligerent.

This was piracy -- legally and morally. It was not the first nor the last act of piracy which the Nazi Government has committed against the American flag in this war. Attack has followed attack.

A few months ago an American flag merchant ship, the NORIN CO., was sunk by a Nazi submarine in the middle of the South Atlantic, under circumstances violating long-established international law and every principle of humanity. The passengers and the crew were forced into open boats hundreds of miles from land, in direct violations of international agreements signed by the Government of Germany. No apology, no allegation of mistake, no offer of reparations has come from the Nazi Government.

In July, 1941, an American battleship in North American waters was followed by a submarine which for a long time sought to maneuver itself into a position of attack. The periscope of the submarine was clearly seen. No British or American submarines were within hundreds of miles of this spot at the time, so the nationality of the submarine is clear.

Five days ago a United States Navy ship on patrol picked up three survivors of an American-owned ship operating under the flag of our sister Republic of Panama -- the S. S. SSMA. On August seventeenth, she had been first torpedoed without warning, and then shelled, near Greenland, while carrying civilian supplies to Iceland. It is feared that the other members of her crew have been drowned. In view of the established presence of German submarines in this vicinity, there can be no reasonable doubt as to the identity of the attacker.

Five days ago, another United States merchant ship, the STEL SEAFARER was sunk by a German aircraft in the Red sea two hundred and twenty miles south of Suez. She was bound for an Egyptian port.

Four of the vessels sunk or attacked flew the American flag and were clearly identifiable. Two of these ships were warships of the American Navy. In the fifth case, the vessel sunk clearly carried the flag of Panama.

In the face of all this, we Americans are keeping our feet on the ground. Our type of democratic civilization has outgrown the thought of feeling compelled to fight some other nation by reason of any single piratical attack on one of our ships. We are not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion. Therefore, what I am thinking and saying does not relate to any isolated episode.

Instead, we Americans are taking a long-range point of view in regard to certain fundamentals and to a series of events on land and on sea which must be considered as a whole -- as a part of a world pattern.

It would be unworthy of a great nation to exaggerate an isolated incident, or to become inflamed by some one act of violence. But it would be inexcusable folly to minimize such incidents in the face of evidence which makes it clear that the incident is not isolated, but part of a general plan.

The important truth is that these acts of international lawlessness are a manifestation of a design which has been made clear to the American people for a long time. It is the Nazi design to abolish the freedom of the seas, and to acquire absolute control and domination of the seas for themselves.

For with control of the seas in their own hands, the way can become clear for their next step -- domination of the United States and the Western Hemisphere by force. Under Nazi control of the seas, no merchant ship of the United States or of any other American Republic would be free to carry on any peaceful commerce, except by the condescending grace of this foreign and tyrannical power. The Atlantic Ocean which has been, and which should always be, a free and friendly highway for us would then become a deadly menace to the commerce of the United States, to the coasts of the United States, and to the inland cities of the United States.

The Hitler Government, in defiance of the laws of the sea and of the recognized rights of all other nations, has presumed to declare, on paper, that great areas of the seas -- even including a vast expanse lying in the Western Hemisphere -- are to be closed, and that no ships may enter them for any purpose, except at peril of being sunk. Actually they are sinking ships at will and without warning in widely separated areas both within and far outside of these far-flung pretended zones.

This Nazi attempt to seize control of the oceans is but a counterpart of the Nazi plots now being carried on throughout the western Hemisphere -- all designed toward the same end. For Hitler's advance guards -- not only his avowed agents but also his dupes among us -- have sought to make ready for him footholds and bridgeheads in the New World, to be used as soon as he has gained control of the oceans.

His intrigues, his plots, his machinations, his sabotage in this New world are all known to the Government of the United States. Conspiracy has followed conspiracy.

Last year a plot to seize the Government of Uruguay was smashed by the prompt action of that country, which was supported in full by her American neighbors. A like plot was then hatching in Argentina, and that Government has carefully and wisely blocked it at every point. More recently, an endeavor was made to subvert the Government of Bolivia. Within the past few weeks the discovery was made of secret air landing fields in Colombia, within easy range of the Panama Canal. I could multiply instances.

To be ultimately successful in world mastery, Hitler knows that he must get control of the seas. He must first destroy the bridge of ships which we are building across the Atlantic, over which we shall continue to roll the implements of war to help destroy him and all his works in the end. He must wipe out our patrol on sea and in the air. He must silence the British Navy.

It must be explained again and again to people who like to think of the United States Navy as an invincible protection, that this can be true only if the British Navy survives. That is simple arithmetic.

For if the world outside the Americas falls under Axis domination, the shipbuilding facilities which the Axis powers would then possess in all of Europe, in the British Isles, and in the Far East would be much greater than all the shipbuilding facilities and possibilities of all the Americas -- not only greater, but two or three times greater. Even if the United States threw all its resources into such a situation, seeking to double and even redouble the size of our Navy, the Axis powers, in control of the rest of the world, would have the man-power and the physical resources to outbuild us several times over.

It is time for all Americans of all the Americas to stop being deluded by the romantic notion that the Americas can go on living happily and peacefully in a Nazi-dominated world.

Generation after generation, America has battled for the general policy of the freedom of the seas. That policy is a very simple one -- but a basic, fundamental one. It means that no nation has the right to make the broad oceans of the world at great distances from the actual theatre of land war, unsafe for the commerce of others.

That has been our policy, proved time and time again, in all our history.

Our policy has applied from time immemorial -- and still applies -- not merely to the Atlantic but to the Pacific and to all other oceans as well.

Unrestricted submarine warfare in 1941 constitutes a defiance -- an act of aggression -- against that historic American policy.

It is now clear that Hitler has begun his campaign to control the seas by ruthless force and by wiping out every vestige of international law and humanity.

His intention has been made clear. The American people can have no further illusions about it.

No tender whisperings of appeasers that Hitler is not interested in the Western Hemisphere, no soporific lullabies that a wide ocean protects us from him -- can long have any effect on the hard-headed, far-sighted and realistic American people.

Because of these episodes, because of the movements and operations of German warships, and because of the clear, repeated proof that the present Government of Germany has no respect for treaties or for international law, that it has no decent attitude toward neutral nations or human life -- we Americans are now face to face not with abstract theories but with cruel, relentless facts.

This attack on the GREER was no localized military operation in the North Atlantic. This was no mere episode in a struggle between two nations. This was one determined step towards creating a permanent world system based on force, terror and murder.

And I am sure that even now the Nazis are waiting to see whether the United States will by silence give them the green light to go ahead on this path of destruction.

The Nazi danger to our western world has long ceased to be a mere possibility. The danger is here now -- not only from a military enemy but from an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion.

There has now come a time when you and I must see the cold inescapable necessity of saying to those inhuman, unrestrained seekers of world conquest and permanent world domination by the sword -- "You seek to throw our children and our children's children into your form of terrorism and slavery. You have now attacked our own safety. You shall go no further".

Normal practices of diplomacy -- note writing -- are of no possible use in dealing with international outlaws who sink our ships and kill our citizens.

One peaceful nation after another has met disaster because each refused to look the Nazi danger squarely in the eye until it actually had them by the throat.

The United States will not make that fatal mistake.

No act of violence or intimidation will keep us from maintaining intact two bulwarks of defense: first, our line of supply of materiel to the enemies of Hitler, and second, the freedom of our shipping on the high seas.

No matter what it takes, no matter what it costs, we will keep open the line of legitimate commerce in these defensive waters.

We have sought no shooting war with Hitler. We do not seek it now. But neither do we want peace so much, that we are willing to pay for it by permitting him to attack our naval and merchant ships while they are on legitimate business.

I assume that the German leaders are not deeply concerned by what we Americans say or publish about them. We cannot bring about the downfall of Nazism by the use of long-range invective.

But when you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has struck before you crush him.

These Nazi submarines and raiders are the rattlesnakes of the Atlantic. They are a menace to the free pathways of the high seas. They are a challenge to our sovereignty. They hammer at our most precious rights when they attack ships of the American flag -- symbols of our independence, our freedom, our very life.

It is clear to all Americans that the time has come when the Americas themselves must now be defended. A continuation of attacks in our own waters, or in waters which could be used for further and greater attacks on us, will inevitably weaken American ability to repel Hitlerism.

Do not let us split hairs. Let us not ask ourselves whether the Americans should begin to defend themselves after the fifth attack, or the tenth attack, or the twentieth attack.

The time for active defense is now.

Do not let us split hairs. Let us not say -- "We will only defend ourselves if the torpedo succeeds in getting home, or if the crew and the passengers are drowned".

This is the time for prevention of attack.

If submarines or raiders attack in distant waters, they can attack equally well within sight of our own shores. Their very presence in any waters which America deems vital to its defense constitutes an attack.

In the waters which we deem necessary for our defense, American naval vessels and American planes will no longer wait until Axis submarines lurking under the water, or Axis raiders on the surface of the sea, strike their deadly blow -- first.

Upon our naval and air patrol — now operating in large number over a vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean — falls the duty of maintaining the American policy of freedom of the seas — now. That means, very simply and plainly, that our patrolling vessels and planes will protect all merchant ships — not only American ships but also of any flag — engaged in commerce in our defensive waters. They will protect them from submarines; they will protect them from surface raiders.

This situation is not new. The second President of the United States, John Adams, ordered the United States Navy to clean out European privateers and European slugs of war which were infesting the Caribbean and South American waters, destroying American commerce.

The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, ordered the United States Navy to end the attacks being made upon American ships by the corsairs of the nations of North Africa.

My obligation as President is historic; it is clear; it is inescapable.

It is no act of war on our part when we decide to protect the seas which are vital to American defense. The aggression is not ours. Ours is ~~total~~ <sup>total</sup> defense.

But let this warning be clear. From now on, if German or Italian vessels of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for American defense, they do so at their own peril.

The orders which I have given as Commander-in-Chief to the United States Army and Navy are to carry out that policy — at once.

The sole responsibility rests upon Germany. There will be no shooting unless Germany contributes to such an act.

That is my obvious duty in this crisis. That is the clear right of the American nation. That is the only step possible, if we would keep tight the wall of defense, which we are pledged to maintain around this island Republic.

I have no illusions about the gravity of this step. I have not taken it hurriedly or lightly. It is the result of months and months of constant thought and anxiety and prayer. In the protection of your nation and mine it cannot be avoided.

The American people have faced other grave crises in their history — with American courage and American resolution. They will do no less today.

They know the essentials of a bold defense against these attacks. They know that the time call for clear heads and fearless hearts.

And with that inner strength that comes to a free people conscious of their duty and of the righteousness of what they do, they will — with Divine help and guidance — stand their ground against this latest assault upon their democracy, their sovereignty, and their freedom.

2nd Draft

- 1 -

The Navy Department of the United States has reported to me that on the morning of September 4 at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock the United States destroyer GREER, proceeding in full daylight towards Iceland, had reached \_\_\_\_\_ latitude and \_\_\_\_\_ longitude, <sup>about</sup> 200 miles southwest of Iceland. She was carrying American mail to Iceland. She was flying the American flag. Her identity as an American ship was unmistakable.

She was then and there attacked by a submarine. Germany now finally admits that it was a German submarine. The submarine deliberately fired a number of torpedoes, all of which missed their mark. In spite of what Hitler's Propaganda Bureau has invented, I tell you the blunt fact that the German submarine fired upon this American destroyer without warning and with deliberate design to sink her.

Our destroyer was not in foreign waters. She was in waters which the government of the United States has declared to be waters of self-defense -- outposts of American defense in the Atlantic.

[The people of the United States made up their minds many months ago that Hitler's obvious threat against the United States, against the Western Hemisphere, and against the entire world, could be

successfully met if we had the far-sightedness and courage to do two things. The first was to send to the nations resisting Hitler, every plane and every ship and every gun which we could. The second was to acquire and maintain outposts of defense far out in the Atlantic from <sup>Hitler's</sup> which to meet ~~the~~ attack before it reached our shores.

The government of the United States is now carrying out both of these determinations of the American people. [ ]

One of these outposts which we have established is Iceland and that part of the Atlantic Ocean surrounding Iceland. Through these waters there pass endless lines of ships, bearing the material of war, for which the people of the United States are spending billions of dollars and which, by formal Congressional action, they have declared to be essential for the defense of their own land, their own homes, their own lives.

The United States destroyer, when it was attacked, was proceeding on a legitimate mission through those very waters. There are many other American ships and planes patrolling those same waters — <sup>and now</sup> ~~here~~ protecting legitimate shipping in the interest of the defense of the United States.

(A) p. 3 not The passengers and the crew were forced into open boats hundreds of miles from land.  
Prudently, and with the odds against them, they were rescued after many days of severe hardships.  
No apology, no allegation of mistake, no offer of reparation has come from the Nazi Government.

JK

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If the destroyer was visible to the submarine when the torpedo was fired, then the attack was a deliberate attempt by the Nazis to sink a clearly identified American warship. On the other hand, if the submarine was beneath the surface and, with the aid of its hearing devices, fired in the direction of the sound of the American destroyer without even taking the trouble to learn its identity -- as the official German communique would indicate -- then the attack was even more outrageous, *F* for it indicates a policy of indiscriminate violence against any vessel sailing the seas -- belligerent or non-belligerent.

This act of piracy is not the first which the Nazi *or the fact* *A* *B* *C* *Attack has followed attack.* Government has committed against the American flag. A few months ago an American merchant ship, the ROBIN LOCH, was sunk by a Nazi submarine under circumstances violating long-established international law and every principle of humanity.

And the United States Navy reports to me that within the past few days another merchant ship, the S.S. S.S.A., was sunk. She also carried the flag of a neutral -- the flag of our sister Republic of Panama. The S.S. S.A. was carrying civilian supplies to Iceland through ~~definite~~ <sup>about 300 miles southwest of Iceland.</sup> these very same waters, when she was attacked. So far only three of her crew are known to have survived.

~~STENCH OF THE PRESIDENT~~

INSET C

*United States*  
Five days ago a Navy ship on patrol picked up three  
survivors of an American-owned ship operating under the  
*the SS. Seawise*,  
flag of our sister Republic of Panama. She had been  
torpedoed near Greenland on August 17th. It is feared that  
*while carrying civilian supplies*  
*to Iceland.*  
the other members of her crew have been drowned. In view  
of the established presence of German submarines in this  
vicinity, there can be no reasonable doubt as to the identity  
of the attacker.

*Four days ago*  
~~"The Seafarer"~~, another U.S. Merchant ship, the  
"Steel Seafarer" was sunk in the Red Sea two hundred and  
twenty miles south of Suez by a German aircraft. She was  
bound for an Egyptian port.

Four of the vessels sunk or attacked flew the American  
Flag and were, in other words, clearly identifiable. Two  
of these ships were warships of the American Navy. In the  
fifth case, the vessel sunk clearly carried the flag of Panama.

*In the face of all this,  
we Americans are keeping our feet on the ground. Our*

type of democratic civilization has outgrown the thought of feeling compelled to fight some other nation by reason of any single piratical attack on one of our ships. We are most decidedly not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion. Therefore, what I am thinking and saying does not relate only to those <sup>apparently</sup> isolated episodes in the Atlantic Ocean.

Instead, we Americans are taking a long-range point of view in regard to certain fundamentals and to a series of events on land and on sea which must be considered as a whole — as a part of a world pattern.

The important truth is that these acts of international lawlessness are a manifestation of a design which has been made clear to the American people for a long time. It is the Nazi design to abolish the freedom of the seas, and to acquire absolute control and domination of the seas for themselves.

For with control of the seas in their own hands, the way can become clear for their next step — domination of the United States and the Western Hemisphere by force. Under Nazi control of the seas, no merchant ship of the United States or of any other

American Republic would be free to carry on any peaceful commerce, except by the grudging grace of this foreign and unfriendly and tyrannical power. The Atlantic Ocean which has been, and which should always be, a free and friendly highway for us would then become a deadly menace to the commerce of the United States, to the coasts of the United States, and to the inland cities of the United States.

This Nazi attempt to seize control of the oceans is but a counterpart of the Nazi plots now being carried on throughout the Western Hemisphere — all designed toward the same end of domination and control. For Hitler's advance guards — not only his avowed agents but also his dupes among us — have sought to make ready for him footholds and bridgeheads in the New World, to be used as soon as he has gained control of the two oceans surrounding us.

His intrigues, his plots, his machinations, his sabotage in this New World are all known to the government of the United States. Widespread attempts at corruption, threats, and actual crimes have been committed by his agents to intimidate or subvert

~~NEW YORK~~

~~must~~  
It ~~must~~ be explained again and again to people who like to think of the U. S. Navy as an invincible protection, that this ~~can be~~ <sup>only</sup> true if the British Navy survives. Everyone should remember that if the world outside the Americas ~~is dominated~~ falls under the domination of <sup>which they would then</sup> ~~the~~ Axis powers, <sup>the</sup> their shipbuilding facilities in all of Europe, in the British Isles, and in the Far East would be greater than all the shipbuilding facilities and potentialities of the Americas -- not ~~slightly~~ <sup>only</sup> greater, but three or four or even five times greater. Even if the United States put ~~them~~ <sup>into</sup> all its resources ~~in~~ such a situation ~~for~~ <sup>doubling</sup> ~~and~~ redoubling the size of our Navy, Axis powers, in control of the rest of the world, would have the <sup>more powerful</sup> ~~population~~ and the <sup>physical</sup> resources to outbuild us several times over.

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It is time for all Americans of all the Americas to accept disillusionment of the romantic notion that the Americas can live happily and peacefully for generations to come in a Nazi-dominated world.

sons of the Governments of the Western Hemisphere. Conspiracy has followed conspiracy. ~~Every resource of jealousy, money, threat, intimidation has been employed.~~

*Inset A.*

To be ultimately successful at any of this, Hitler must get control of the seas. He must first destroy the bridge of ships which we are building across the Atlantic over which we shall continue to roll the implements of war eventually to destroy him and all his fantastic nightmares. He must silence the British Navy. He must destroy our patrol on sea and in the air. So long as the friendly navy of Great Britain and our own ocean patrol stand in the way -- protecting these ships in our defensive waters -- Nazi plans for world domination cannot prevail.

*B*  
Generation after generation, America has battled for the general policy of the freedom of the seas. That policy is a very simple one -- but a basic, fundamental one. It means that no nation has the right, even in wartime and even at great distances from the actual theatre of land war, to make the broad oceans of the world unsafe for commerce.

That was our policy in the French War in 1799; in the Barbary wars in 1805; in the War of 1812 -- and in all our later history.

Unrestricted submarine warfare in 1941 constitutes a defiance — an act of aggression — against that historic American policy today, just as German unrestricted submarine warfare did in January 1917.

That policy of freedom of the seas is the basis of our present system of patrol by our ships and by our planes over the vast expanse of the Atlantic, protecting ships of all nations in peaceful commerce in our protective waters.

Our policy has applied from time immemorial — and still applies — not merely to the Atlantic but to the Pacific as well.

It is now clear that Hitler's campaign to control the seas by ruthless force and by wiping out every vestige of international law and humanity has begun. The Nazi Government has not yet publicly issued any formal declaration of unlimited acts of aggression. But <sup>recent</sup> ~~this series of events~~ must lead any reasonable person to conclude that such a policy has been adopted by them, even though it has not been officially announced.

Hitler's intention has been made clear. The American people can have no further illusions about it.

No tender whisperings of appeasers that Hitler is not

interested in the Western Hemisphere, no soporific lullabies that we have a wide ocean to protect us from him -- can have any effect on the hard-headed, far-sighted and realistic American people.

Because of these episodes, because of the movements and operations of German warships, and because of the clear, repeated proof that the present Government of Germany has no respect for treaties or for international law, that it has no decent attitude toward neutral nations or human life -- we Americans are now face to face not with abstract theories but with cruel, relentless facts.

This attack on the Greer was no localized military operation in the North Atlantic. This was no mere episode in a struggle between two nations. This was one determined step towards creating a permanent world system based on force, terror and murder. This was piracy on the part of the foremost enemy of the human race -- not merely a military enemy but an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion.

And I am sure that even now the Nazis are waiting to see whether the United States will take it lying down -- whether we will give them the green light to go ahead on this path of destruction.

The Nazi danger to our western world has long ceased to

(A)

So we may disregard the statements and excuses of Germany as being unworthy of the consideration of serious people.

But we cannot destroy the increase of danger and the consequent obligation on us to strengthen our defenses. The attack on the destroyer GREENE, off the Greenland coast, means that we are now one of those "states bordering on Germany". It means that the campaign against American safety is already being developed. It marks, in fact, the beginning of a drive to carry out a plan which has long been known to us. That plan was nothing less than a conquest of the Atlantic basin. The campaign to bring this about has already begun.

That plan included two main objectives. Bridgeheads were to be acquired on the American continents. Lines of communication between them and Germany were to be maintained by direct attack on the safety of the high seas through submarines, surface and air raiders.

The attempts to seize land bridgeheads in the American Hemisphere were carried out by a series of plots and intrigues, chiefly in South America. The list is long. [Last year a plot to seize the Government  
Agent A p. 6 ↗

*Handwritten notes:*  
Uruguay was smashed by the prompt action of that country,  
which was supported in full by her American neighbors.  
A like plot was then hatching in Argentina, and that  
Government has carefully and wisely blocked it at every  
point. More recently, an endeavor was made to subvert  
the Government of Bolivia and from that stance to reach  
access to the sea through Ecuador. Within the past few  
weeks the discovery was made of secret air landing fields  
in Colombia, within range of the Panama Canal. We could  
multiply instances.

These conspiracies -- ~~for that is what they were~~ --  
were plainly carried on in conjunction with a design  
through intimidation or otherwise to clear the sea for  
Nazi lines of communication and conquest. On land, every  
resource of cajolery, or money, or planting of fear has  
been employed to acquire the New World terminals. At sea,  
the campaign to control through piracy, commencing in  
the Atlantic, has now fairly opened.

This time there is no possibility of evasion. The  
campaign definitely strikes at us.

I have previously told you that we had long been  
convinced that the policy of Hitler was not merely to

~~conquer~~

*Inart C. p. 9.*

~~TO GO IN SOMEWHERE IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ON SEPT. 11, 1941.~~

A Navy youngster, serving off-shore on the patrol, put it this way in a letter home the other day. "I am afraid some people in civilian life back home just plain don't realize how big and vital the stakes are in the protection of America's future. [Too many people are suffering from a complacent lethargy. I have done much thinking lately as to exactly what are these vital stakes. I believe that we and the other nations opposing Hitlerism are trying to safeguard a world system in which free and equal opportunities will be afforded to all nations. This whole principle is merely the world extension of our South American good neighbor policy. As opposed to this, we have Hitler's scheme of a world feudalism dominated and controlled by Nazi Germany and operated solely for their own benefit. We see this already in Europe where the Nazis have installed the ~~where the Nazis have installed the~~ all but the Germans are starving, and ~~the~~ the oppressive ~~the~~ tyranny ~~means~~ by which their system is maintained.

Inset C pg (continued)

-2-

We are living in, and experiencing, a ~~new~~ changing ~~and~~  
~~order-of-things~~, but we of the younger generation are old  
enough to have known the old, and young enough to live alertly and  
look forward to ~~and take~~ an active part in the formation of the new. But  
~~as an American see it~~ —  
the new order must be based on ~~the~~ <sup>all</sup> fundamentals ~~of~~ equal  
opportunity for <sup>all</sup> very old and tried  
individuals and nations and on the finer  
and simpler teachings of Christianity".

Youngsters like that, and oldsters too, are not  
60% or 80% against war. They are 100% against war, just  
you and I and all of us are.  
~~and I am~~ But there ~~comes~~ a time when you and I must ~~yield~~ yield to  
~~that~~ the cold inexorable necessity of saying to inhuman,  
unrestrained seekers of world conquest and permanent world  
domination by the sword -- "You seek to throw our children  
and our children's children into your form of terrorism  
and slavery. You have attacked our <sup>own</sup> safety. You shall go  
no further".

*but it* ~~be~~ <sup>actually</sup> a probability. The danger is now here.

[As I have stated on other occasions, an attack under the modern lightning system of warfare takes place long before the bombs actually begin to fall or the torpedoes to be shot. From the tragic experience of the rest of the civilized world, the United States learned months ago that it must not wait for the attack to hit our shores, but that it must be ready to meet it as soon as any base is occupied or any course of action is taken which assails the security of the Western Hemisphere.]

The normal practice of diplomacy perhaps would have been for this Government to protest to the offending Nation. We even might have asked for an apology. But these international bandits who sink our ships and kill our citizens do not act, nor can they be treated, as representatives of civilized states.

One peaceful nation after another has met disaster because they each refused to look the Nazi danger squarely in the eye until it actually had them by the throat.

The United States will not make that fatal mistake.

No act of violence or intimidation will keep us from main-

taining intact our two bulwarks of defense; <sup>first,</sup> our line of supply of material to the enemies of Hitler, and ~~second, our shipping on the~~  
~~suspending of our commerce in~~  
the Atlantic Ocean, high seas.

We will not turn over <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ high-seas to barbarous domination. No matter what it takes, no matter what it costs, we will keep open the line of legitimate commerce in these defensive waters. That is what our American air and naval patrol has been doing. That is what it will continue to do.

*bold*  
We want no shooting war with Hitler. But neither do we want peace so much, that we are willing to pay for it by permitting him to attack our naval and merchant ships while they are on ~~our~~  
legitimate business. ~~We are determined to protect American~~  
~~shipping in these waters from these sea-going bandits.~~

*But*, when you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has hit before you crush him.

These Nazi submarines and disguised raiders are the rattlesnakes of the Atlantic. They are a menace to the free pathways of the high seas. They are a challenge to our sovereignty. They hammer at our most precious rights when they attack ships of the American flag — symbols of our independence, our freedom, our very *life*.

INSERT D

p. 10

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

I am not going to talk again at this time about the inherent wickedness of the German leadership. I am not going to use invective against German leaders. I am not greatly worried or concerned when each day that passes I read the rather hysterical names which they ~~sing~~ <sup>call</sup> me personally and ~~to~~ the United States as a whole, in their daily press; and I assume that the German leaders are not deeply concerned by what we Americans say or publish about them. We cannot bring about the downfall of Nazism by the use of long-range invective.

Inset E p 11

*The time has come  
when*

*themselves*

It is clear to all Americans that the Americas must now be defended. This is for the clear reason that a continuation of attacks in our own waters or in waters which could ~~seem~~ <sup>be used for</sup> further and greater attacks will inevitably weaken American ability to repel Hitlerism.

Do not let us split hairs. Do not ask yourselves whether the Americas will defend themselves after the fifth attack, or the tenth attack, or the twentieth attack.

*now*  
Active defense starts now.

Do not let us split hairs. Do not let us say -- "We will only defend ourselves if the torpedo ~~hits~~ <sup>succeeds in getting</sup> home or the crew and the passengers are drowned." <sup>If this is the</sup> ~~time~~ <sup>time</sup> for ~~defence to~~ <sup>for</sup> prosecution, ~~not~~ retaliation.

If submarines or raiders attack in distant waters, they can ~~possibly~~ <sup>equally well</sup> attack within sight of our very shores.

Their very presence constitutes an attack.

*in any waters which America  
deems vital to its defense*

*to wait  
merely for*

*E* → Insert E which we deem necessary for our defense  
In the ~~the submarine~~ waters American naval vessels and

American patrol planes will no longer wait until Axis submarines

lurking under the water, or Axis raiders on the surface of the sea,  
strike their deadly blow -- first.

Insert F + G

~~As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Navy, I have instructed our Fleet and our planes to destroy any such Axis submarine or raider that is discovered prowling in those waters. We know now that the very presence of these Axis ships in these waters is sufficient provocation for attacking them at once as a measure of self-defense. Those are the orders in the hands of the commanders of our ships and planes, as they patrol the North Atlantic tonight.~~

That is my obvious duty in this crisis. That is the clear right of this sovereign nation. That is the only step possible, if we would keep tight the wall of defense which we are pledged to maintain around this Western Hemisphere.

I have no illusions about the gravity of this step. I have not taken it hurriedly or lightly. It is the result of months and months of constant thought and anxiety and prayer. *In the protection of your nation and mine it cannot be budged.*  
The American people have faced other grave crises in their

INSERT

F p. 11

~~NEW DRAFT~~

Under the Constitution of the United States, I am  
~~responsible~~  
~~as President and as Commander in Chief of the Army~~  
~~for the adequate defense of~~  
~~and Navy to defend America.~~ The Constitution does not ~~not~~ require  
that this obligation ~~be~~ be carried out only if our own  
~~continental soil is invaded.~~ <sup>For example,</sup> The second President of the  
United States, John Adams, ordered the <sup>United States</sup> Navy to clean out  
European privateers and European ships of war which were  
~~sea,~~ infesting the Caribbean and destroying American commerce.  
The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson,  
~~United States~~ <sup>having made upon</sup> ordered the Navy to end the attacks <sup>on American ships by</sup>  
the CORSAIRS and by the nations of North Africa <sup>on their way</sup>  
to and from the Mediterranean. My constitutional obligation  
is clear; it is inescapable.

Insert 6 p. 11

It is <sup>not</sup> wholly unnecessary for any American to say  
that this is ~~an~~ act of war on our part ~~to~~ <sup>when we decide to</sup> ~~protect the seas~~  
which are vital to American defense. The aggression is not  
ours. Ours is solely defense. If German or Italian vessels  
of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary  
for American defense, they do so at their own peril from now  
on.

*When Shangri-la Commander-in-Chief*  
The orders to the United States Navy ~~was~~ implement

*and Army are to*  
*carry out*  
that policy. P The sole responsibility rests upon Germany.

There will be no shooting unless Germany asks for it.

history -- with American courage and American resolution. They will do no less today.

They know the actualities of the aggression being committed upon them. They know the necessities of a bold defense against this aggression. They know that the times call for clear heads and fearless hearts.

And with that inner strength that comes to a free people conscious of their duty and of the righteousness of what they do, they will -- with Divine help and guidance -- stand their ground against this latest assault upon their democracy, their sovereignty, and their freedom.

SECOND DRAFT

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

The Navy Department of the United States has reported to me that on the morning of September 4 at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock the United States destroyer GREER, proceeding in full daylight towards Iceland, had reached ~~the Icelandic coastline~~, <sup>a point</sup> about 200 miles south <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>EAST</sup> Greenland. She was carrying American mail to Iceland. She was flying the American flag. Her identity as an American ship was unmistakable.

She was then and there attacked by a submarine.

Germany ~~recently~~ admits that it was a German submarine.

The submarine deliberately fired a number of torpedoes <sup>at the Greer, followed</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>of which missed their mark</sup> later by another torpedo attack. In spite of what Hitler's pro-

peganda Bureau has invented, and in spite of what some American ~~obstructionist~~ organizations may prefer to believe, I tell you the blunt fact

that the German submarine fired upon this American destroyer <sup>first</sup> without warning, and with deliberate design to sink her.

~~Our destroyer was not in foreign waters. She was in~~

waters which the government of the United States has declared to be waters of self-defense -- outposts of American protection in the Atlantic.

*In the North*

~~in~~ these outposts ~~were~~ have established ~~in~~  
~~Greenland, Labrador and Newfoundland.~~  
Iceland, Through these waters there pass endless lines of  
ships, bearing the matériel of war, for which the people of  
the United States are spending billions of dollars, and which,  
by ~~a~~ Congressional action, they have declared to be  
essential for the defense of their own land, ~~their own homes,~~  
~~their own lives.~~

The United States destroyer, when it was attacked,  
was proceeding on a legitimate mission, ~~through these very~~  
~~waters.~~ Many other American ships and planes are now patrolling  
~~these Atlantic~~  
~~these~~ waters -- protecting legitimate shipping there in  
the interest of the defense of the United States.

If the destroyer was visible to the submarine when  
the torpedo was fired, then the attack was a deliberate attempt  
by the Nazis to sink a clearly identified American warship.  
On the other hand, if the submarine was beneath the surface  
~~itself~~,  
and, with the aid of its ~~measuring~~ devices, fired in the direction  
of the sound of the American destroyer without even taking the  
trouble to learn its identity -- as the official German

communique would indicate -- then the attack was even more outrageous. For it indicates a policy of indiscriminate violence against any vessel sailing the seas -- belligerent or non-belligerent.

This ~~was~~ piracy is not the first nor the last act of piracy which the Nazi Government has committed against the American ~~in the war.~~

Attack has followed attack. A few months ago an American merchant ship, the ROHIM MOOR, was sunk by a Nazi submarine ~~in the middle of the South Atlantic~~, under circumstances violating long-established

international law and every principle of humanity. The passengers and the crew were forced into open boats hundreds

of miles from land. ~~Provisionally, and with the odds against them, they were rescued after many days of severe hardships.~~

No apology, no allegation of mistake, no offer of reparations has come from the Nazi Government.

In July, 1941, an American battleship in North American waters was followed by a submarine which for hour after hour sought to maneuver itself into a position of attack. The periscope of the submarine was clearly seen. No British

or American submarines were any place within hundreds of miles of this spot at the time, so the nationality of the submarine is clear.

Five days ago a United States Navy ship on patrol picked up three survivors of an American-owned ship operating under the flag of our sister Republic of Panama, the S.S. SESSA. <sup>First and then she had</sup> ~~she had been torpedoed near Greenland~~ <sup>On August seventeenth,</sup> while carrying civilian supplies to Iceland. It is feared that the other members of her crew have been drowned. In view of the established presence of German submarines in this vicinity, there can be no reasonable doubt as to the identity of the attacker.

Five days ago, another United States merchant ship, the "Steel Seafarer" was sunk in the Red Sea two hundred and twenty miles south of Suez <sup>by a German aircraft.</sup> ~~by a German aircraft.~~ She was bound for an Egyptian port.

Four of the vessels sunk or attacked flew the American flag and were ~~sunk~~, clearly identifiable. Two of these ships were warships of the American Navy. In the

fifth case, the vessel sunk clearly carried the flag of Panama.

In the face of all this, we Americans are keeping our feet on the ground. Our type of democratic civilization has outgrown the thought of ~~feeling~~ compelled to fight some other nation by reason of any single piratical attack on one of our ships. We are most decidedly not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion. Therefore, what I am thinking and saying does not relate only to these apparently isolated episodes, in the Atlantic Ocean.

Instead, we Americans are taking a long-range point of view in regard to certain fundamentals and to a series of events on land and on sea which must be considered as a whole -- as a part of a world pattern.

A → The important truth is that these acts of international lawlessness are a manifestation of a design which has been made clear to the American people for a long time. It is the Nazi design to abolish the freedom of the seas, and to acquire absolute control and domination of the seas

(A)

p. 5

~~THESE ARE THE~~  
It would be unworthy of a great nation to exaggerate  
an isolated incident, or to become inflamed by some one  
act of violence. But it would be inexcusable folly to  
minimize such incidents ~~as they attack on the destroyer~~  
~~and~~ in the face of evidence which makes it clear that  
the incident is not isolated, but part of a general plan.

for themselves.

For with control of the seas in their own hands, the way can become clear for their next step -- domination of the United States and the Western Hemisphere by force. Under Nazi control of the seas, no merchant ship of the United States or of any other American Republic would be free to carry on any peaceful commerce, except by the *Condor*, ~~the~~ grace of this foreign ~~and unfriendly~~ and tyrannical power. The Atlantic Ocean which has been, and which should always be, a free and friendly highway for us would then become a deadly menace to the commerce of the United States, to the coasts of the United States, and to the inland cities of the United States.

Insert (B) attached.

This Nazi attempt to seize control of the oceans is but a counterpart of the Nazi plots now being carried on throughout the Western Hemisphere -- all designed toward the same end of domination and control. For Hitler's advance guards -- not only his avowed agents but also his dupes among us -- have sought to make ready for him footholds and bridgeheads in the New World, to be used

B

The Hitler Government, in defiance of the laws of  
the sea and of the recognized rights of all other nations,  
has presumed to declare, on paper, that great areas of the  
~~- even including a vast expanse lying in the Western Hemisphere~~  
seas are to be closed, and that no ships may enter them  
for any purpose, except at peril of being sunk. Actually  
they are sinking ships at will and without warning in  
widely separated areas both within and far outside of  
~~far-flung~~  
these pretended zones.

as soon as he has gained control of the two oceans surrounding us.

His intrigue, his plots, his machinations, his sabotage in this New World are all known to the Government of the United States. [Widespread attempts at corruption, threats, and actual crimes have been committed by his agents to intimidate or subvert some of the Governments of the Western Hemisphere.] Conspiracy has followed conspiracy.

Last year a plot to seize the Government of Uruguay was smashed by the prompt action of that country, which was supported in full by her American neighbors. A like plot was then hatching in Argentina, and that Government has carefully and wisely blocked it at every point. More recently, an endeavor was made to subvert the Government of Bolivia and from that started to reach access to the sea through Buenos Aires. Within the past few weeks the discovery was made of secret air landing fields in Colombia, within range of the Panama Canal. We could multiply instances.

These conspiracies were plainly carried on ~~in~~  
~~in~~ with ~~and~~ through intimidation ~~or otherwise~~  
to clear the sea for Nazi lines of communication and conquest.  
On land, every resource of cajolery, or money, or planting  
of fear has been employed to acquire the New World terminals.  
At sea, the campaign to control through piracy, commencing  
in the Atlantic, has now ~~been~~ opened.

To be ultimately successful ~~in world markets~~, Hitler ~~knows~~  
must get control of the seas. He must first destroy the  
bridge of ships which we are building across the Atlantic,  
over which we shall continue to roll the implements of war  
~~especially to destroy him and all the continental right-wingers,~~  
He must silence the British Navy. He must destroy our patrol  
on sea and in the air. [ So long as the friendly navy of  
Great Britain and our own ocean patrol stand in the way --  
protecting these ships in our defensive waters -- Nazi plans  
for world domination cannot prevail. ]

It must be explained again and again to people who  
like to think of the United States Navy as an invincible

SECOND DRAFT

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protection, that ~~this~~<sup>it</sup> can be true only if the British Navy  
~~This is single without arithmetic. For~~  
survives. ~~Everyone should remember that if the world out-~~  
side the Americas falls under the domination ~~of the axis~~  
~~powers~~, the shipbuilding facilities which ~~they~~<sup>the Axis powers</sup> would then  
own in all of Europe, in the British Isles, and in the Far  
East would be greater than all the shipbuilding facilities  
and potentialities of the Americas -- not only greater,  
but three or four or even five times greater. Even if the  
United States threw all its resources into such a situation,  
for doubling and redoubling the size of our Navy, the axis  
powers, in control of the rest of the world, would have the  
man-power and the physical resources to outbuild us several  
times over.

It is time for all Americans of all the Americas  
~~stop being deluded by~~  
to ~~accept disillusionment~~ of the romantic notion that the  
Americas can live happily and peacefully for generations  
to come in a Nazi-dominated world.

SECOND DRAFT

-10-

Generation after generation, America has battled for the general policy of the freedom of the seas. That policy is a very simple one -- but a basic, fundamental one. It means that no nation has the right, ~~even in war~~  
~~time and even at great distances from the actual theatre~~  
of land war to make the broad oceans of the world unsafe  
~~for commerce of the world.~~

That was our policy in the French War in 1799; in the Barbary wars in 1805; in the War of 1812 -- and in all our later history.

*PAC*  
*C.*

Unrestricted submarine warfare in 1941 constitutes  
a defiance -- an act of aggression -- against that historic  
American policy today, just as German unrestricted submarine  
warfare did in January 1917.

Our policy has applied from time immemorial -- and still applies -- not merely to the Atlantic but to the Pacific and to all other oceans as well. *Joint C attached*

It is now clear that Hitler's *far bgn* campaign to control the seas by ruthless force and by wiping out every vestige of international law and humanity. ~~has begun~~. *The Nazi Govern-*  
*ment has not yet publicly issued any formal declaration of*  
*unlimited acts of aggression. But recent events must lead*  
*any reasonable person to conclude that such a policy has been*  
*adopted by them, even though it has not been officially*  
*announced.*

*No* [Hitler's] intention has been made clear. The American people can have no further illusions about it.

No tender whisperings of appeasers that Hitler is not interested in the Western Hemisphere, no soporific lullabies that [we have] a wide ocean [to] protect us from him -- can have any effect on the hard-headed, far-sighted and realistic American people.

Because of these episodes, because of the movements and operations of German warships, and because of the clear, repeated proof that the present Government of Germany has no respect for treaties or for international law, that it has no decent attitude toward neutral nations or human life -- we Americans are now face to face not with abstract theories but with cruel, relentless facts.

This attack on the Greer was no localized military operation in the North Atlantic. This was no mere episode in a struggle between two nations. This was one determined step towards creating a permanent world system based on force, terror and murder. [This was piracy on the part of the foremost enemy of the human race -- not merely a military enemy but an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion.]

And I am sure that even now the Nazis are waiting to see whether the United States will ~~take it lying down~~ <sup>long silence</sup> whether we will give them the green light to go ahead on this path of destruction.

The Nazi danger to our western world has long ceased

to be a probability. The danger is now ~~exists~~ here - <sup>not only from</sup>  
~~a military enemy but an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all honor,~~  
~~A Navy youngster, serving off-shore on the patrol,~~  
put it this way in a letter home the other day. "I am afraid  
some people in civilian life back home just plain don't realize  
how big and vital the stakes are in the protection of America's  
future. We and the other nations opposing Hitlerism are  
trying to safeguard a world system in which free and equal  
opportunities will be afforded to all nations. This whole  
principle is merely the world extension of our South American  
good neighbor policy. As opposed to this, we have Hitler's  
scheme of a world feudalism dominated and controlled by Nazi  
Germany and operated solely for their own benefit. We see  
this already in Europe where all but the Germans are starving  
and where the Nazis have installed the tyranny by which their  
system is maintained.

We are living in, and experiencing, a changing order  
of things, but we of the younger generation are old enough to  
have known the old, and young enough to live alertly and look  
forward to an active part in the formation of the new.

But the new order -- as we Americans see it -- must be based on very old and tried fundamentals -- on equal opportunity for all individuals and nations and on the finer and simpler teachings of Christianity".

Youngsters like that, and oldsters too, are not 60% or 80% against war. They are 100% against war, just as you and I and all of us are.

~~There has~~ <sup>been</sup> come a time when you and I must ~~yield~~ <sup>face</sup> the cold inexorable necessity of saying to inhuman, unrestrained seekers of world conquest and permanent world domination by the sword -- "You seek to throw our children and our children's children ~~into~~ <sup>here</sup> your form of terrorism and slavery. You have now attacked our own safety. You shall go no further".

~~Normal practice of diplomacy perhaps would have~~ — <sup>not writing</sup> — been for this Government to protest to the offending Nation.

~~We even might have asked for an apology. But these inter-~~  
~~is of no possible use in dealing with international culprits~~  
~~national banditti who sink our ships and kill our citizens..~~

~~do not act, nor can they be treated, as representatives of~~  
~~civilized states.~~

One peaceful nation after another has met disaster because ~~they~~ each refused to look the Nazi danger squarely in the eye until it actually had them by the throat.

The United States will not make that fatal mistake.

No act of violence or intimidation will keep us from maintaining intact ~~the~~ two bulwarks of defense: first, our line of supply of material to the enemies of Hitler, and second, our shipping on the high seas.

We will not turn them over to barbarous domination.

No matter what it takes, no matter what it costs, we will keep open the line of legitimate commerce in these defensive waters. [That is what our American air and naval patrol has been doing. That is what it will continue to do.]

<sup>has fought</sup> We ~~want~~ no shooting war with Hitler. <sup>We do not seek it now.</sup> But neither do we want peace so much that we are willing to pay for it by permitting him to attack our naval and merchant ships while they are on legitimate business. I am not going to talk again at this time about the inherent wickedness of the German leadership. I am not going to use invective against German leaders. I am not greatly concerned when each day

that passes I read the rather hysterical names which they call me personally and the United States as a whole, in their daily press; and I assume that the German leaders are not deeply concerned either by what we Americans say or publish about them. We cannot bring about the downfall of Nazism by the use of long-range invective.

But when you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has hit before you crush him.

These Nazi submarines and disguised raiders are the rattlesnakes of the Atlantic. They are a menace to the free pathways of the high seas. They are a challenge to our sovereignty. They hammer at our most precious rights when they attack ships of the American flag -- symbols of our independence, our freedom, our very life.

It is clear to all Americans that the time has come when the Americas themselves must now be defended. [This is for the clear reason that] A continuation of attacks in our own waters, or in waters which could be used for further and greater attacks on us, will inevitably weaken

American ability to repel Hitlerism.

Do not let us split hairs. Do not ask yourselves whether the Americas should begin to defend themselves after the fifth attack, or the tenth attack, or the twentieth attack.

*is in effect*  
Active defense ~~must~~ start now.

Do not let us split hairs. Do not let us say -- "We will only defend ourselves if the torpedo succeeds in getting home or the crew and the passengers are drowned".

This is the time for prevention, not ~~war~~ merely ~~war~~ retaliation.

If submarines or raiders attack in distant waters, they can attack equally well within sight of our very shores. Their very presence in any waters which America deems vital to its defense constitutes an attack.

In the waters which we deem necessary for our defense, American naval vessels and American patrol planes will no longer wait until Axis submarines lurking under the water, or Axis raiders on the surface of the sea, strike their deadly blow -- first.

*Part D*

• Insut D p. 17

Upon our naval and air patrol -  
now operating over a vast expanse of the  
Atlantic Ocean ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> falls the  
duty of maintaining the American policy of  
freedom of the seas. This means ~~not~~ firmly  
and clearly that ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup> patrolling vessels  
and planes will protect all <sup>merchant</sup> ships - not  
only American ships but ships of any  
flag - engaged in commerce in our  
~~and~~ defensive waters. They will protect  
them from submarines; they will protect  
them from surface raiders. ~~They will~~  
~~get them through~~ ~~the~~ ~~plan to get them~~  
~~through them and~~

Under the Constitution of the United States, I am responsible as President and as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy for the ~~adequate~~ defense of America. The Constitution does not require that this obligation be carried out only if our own continental soil is invaded. For example, the second President of the United States, John Adams, ordered the United States Navy to clean out European privateers and European ships of war which were infesting the Caribbean ~~and~~, <sup>and South</sup> American waters — ~~and~~ destroying American commerce. The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, ordered the United States Navy to end the attacks being made upon American ships on their way to and from the Mediterranean by the ~~pirates~~  <sup>corsairs</sup> of the nations of North Africa. My constitutional obligation <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ historic; it is clear; it is inescapable.

It is no act of war on our part when we decide to protect the seas which are vital to American defense. The aggression is not ours. Ours is solely defense. If German or Italian vessels of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for American defense, they do so at their own peril from now on.

The orders which I have given as Commander-in-chief to the United States Navy and Army are to carry out that policy.

The sole responsibility rests upon Germany. There will be no shooting unless Germany asks for it.

That is my obvious duty in this crisis. That is the clear right of this sovereign nation. That is the only step possible, if we would keep tight the wall of defense which we are pledged to maintain around this Western Hemisphere.

I have no illusions about the gravity of this step. I have not taken it hurriedly or lightly. It is the result of months and months of constant thought and anxiety and prayer. In the protection of your nation and mine it cannot be avoided.

The American people have faced other grave crises in their history -- with American courage and American resolution. They will do no less today.

They know the actualities of the aggression being committed upon them. They know the necessities of a bold

*attack inform us.*

SECOND DRAFT

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*Attack:*  
defense against this aggression. They know that the times  
call for clear heads and fearless hearts.

And with that inner strength that comes to a free  
people conscious of their duty and of the righteousness  
of what they do, they will -- with Divine help and guidance --  
stand their ground against this latest assault upon their  
democracy, their sovereignty, and their freedom.

\*\*\*\*\*

THIRD DRAFT

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

*My fellow Americans:*

The Navy Department of the United States has reported to me that on the morning of September 4 at [redacted] o'clock the United States destroyer GREER, proceeding in full daylight towards Iceland, had reached a point southeast of Greenland. She was carrying American mail to Iceland. She was flying the American flag. Her identity as an American ship was unmistakable.

She was then and there attacked by a submarine. Germany admits that it was a German submarine. The submarine deliberately fired a torpedo at the GREER, followed later by another torpedo attack. In spite of what Hitler's propaganda Bureau has invented, and in spite of what <sup>any</sup> [redacted] American obstructionist organization may prefer to believe, I tell you the blunt fact that the German submarine fired first upon this American destroyer without warning, and with deliberate design to sink her.

*at the time,*  
Our destroyer was in waters which the government of the United States has declared to be waters of self-defense — <sup>surrounding</sup> *outposts* of American protection in the Atlantic.

- 2 -

THIRD DRAFT

In the North, ~~these~~ outposts have been established

by us in Iceland, Greenland, Labrador and Newfoundland.

*Many shipping flags. They bear food  
and other supplies to civilians; and they bear  
material of war, for which the people of the United States are*

spending billions of dollars, and which, by Congressional action,

they have declared to be essential for the defense of their own land.

The United States destroyer, when ~~it was~~ attacked, was proceeding on a legitimate mission.

*Many other American ships and planes are now patrolling these Atlantic waters — protecting legitimate shipping there in the interest of the defense of the United States.*

If the destroyer was visible to the submarine when the torpedo was fired, then the attack was a deliberate attempt by the Nazis to sink a clearly identified American warship. On the other hand, if the submarine was beneath the surface and, with the aid of its listening devices, fired in the direction of the sound of the American destroyer without even taking the trouble to learn its identity — as the official German

- 3 -

THIRD DRAFT

communiqué would indicate — then the attack was even more outrageous. For it indicates a policy of indiscriminate violence against any vessel sailing the seas — belligerent or non-belligerent.

This was piracy — legally and morally. It was not the first nor the last act of piracy which the Nazi Government has committed against the American flag in this war. Attack has followed attack.

A few months ago an American flag merchant ship, the ROBIN HOOD, was sunk by a Nazi submarine in the middle of the South Atlantic, under circumstances violating long-established international law and every principle of humanity. The passengers and the crew were forced into open boats hundreds of miles from land. *In direct violation of international agreements signed by the government of Germany.* No apology, no allegation of mistake, no offer of reparations has come from the Nazi Government.

In July, 1941, an American battleship in North American waters was followed by a submarine which for ~~hour after hour~~ sought to maneuver itself into a position of attack. The periscope of the submarine was clearly seen. No British or American submarines were

- 4 -

THIRD DRAFT

~~Many~~ ~~ships~~ within hundreds of miles of this spot at the time, so the nationality of the submarine is clear.

Five days ago a United States Navy ship on patrol picked up three survivors of an American-owned ship operating under the flag of our sister Republic of Panama — the S. S. SESSA. On August seventeenth, she had been first torpedoed, and then shelled, <sup>without warning</sup>, near Greenland, while carrying civilian supplies to Iceland. It is feared that the other members of her crew have been drowned. In view of the established presence of German submarines in this vicinity, there can be no reasonable doubt as to the identity of the attacker.

Five days ago, another United States merchant ship, the "Steel Seafarer" was sunk by a German aircraft in the Red Sea two hundred and twenty miles south of Suez. She was bound for an Egyptian port.

Four of the vessels sunk or attacked flew the American flag and were clearly identifiable. Two of these ships were warships of the American Navy. In the fifth case, the vessel sunk clearly carried the flag of Panama.

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In the face of all this, we Americans are keeping our feet on the ground. Our type of democratic civilization has outgrown the thought of feeling compelled to fight some other nation by reason of any single piratical attack on one of our ships.

We are not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion. Therefore, what I am thinking and saying does not relate ~~only~~ to ~~any~~   
~~these apparently isolated episodes.~~

Instead, we Americans are taking a long-range point of view in regard to certain fundamentals and to a series of events on land and on sea which must be considered as a whole -- as a part of a world pattern.

It would be unworthy of a great nation to exaggerate an isolated incident, or to become inflamed by some one act of violence. But it would be inexcusable folly to minimize such incidents in the face of evidence which makes it clear that the incident is not isolated, but part of a general plan.

The important truth is that these acts of international lawlessness are a manifestation of a design which has been made clear to the American people for a long time. It is the Nazi design to abolish the freedom of the seas, and to acquire absolute control and domination of the seas for themselves.

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THIRD DRAFT

For with control of the seas in their own hands, the  
way can become clear for their next step -- domination of the  
United States and the Western Hemisphere by force. Under Nazi  
control of the seas, no merchant ship of the United States or  
of any other American Republic would be free to carry on any  
peaceful commerce, except by the condescending grace of this  
foreign and tyrannical power. The Atlantic Ocean which has been,  
and which should always be, a free and friendly highway for us would  
then become a deadly menace to the commerce of the United States,  
to the coasts of the United States, and to the inland cities of  
the United States.

The Hitler Government, in defiance of the laws of the  
sea and of the recognized rights of all other nations, has pre-  
sumed to declare, on paper, that great areas of the seas -- even  
including a vast expanse lying in the Western Hemisphere -- are to  
be closed, and that no ships may enter them for any purpose, except  
at peril of being sunk. Actually they are sinking ships at will  
and without warning in widely separated areas both within and far  
outside of these far-flung pretended zones.

THIRD DRAFT

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This Nazi attempt to seize control of the oceans is  
but a counterpart of the Nazi plots now being carried on throughout  
the Western Hemisphere — all designed toward the same end.<sup>esp</sup>  
~~desirous and~~. For Hitler's advance guards — not only  
his avowed agents but also his dupes among us — have sought to  
make ready for him footholds and bridgeheads in the New World, to  
be used as soon as he has gained control of the two oceans, surround-  
~~and up~~,

His intrigue, his plots, his machinations, his sabotage  
in this New World are all known to the Government of the United  
States. Conspiracy has followed conspiracy.

Last year a plot to seize the Government of Uruguay was  
smashed by the prompt action of that country, which was supported  
in full by her American neighbors. A like plot was then hatching  
in Argentina, and that Government has carefully and wisely blocked  
it at every point. More recently, an endeavor was made to subvert  
the Government of Bolivia. Within the past few weeks the discovery  
was made of secret air landing fields in Colombia, within range of  
the Panama Canal. I could multiply instances.

[These conspiracies were plainly carried on with intimidation to clear the sea for Nazi lines of communication and conquest. On land, every resource of cajolery, or money, or planting of fear has been employed to acquire the New World terminals. At sea, the campaign to control through piracy, commencing in the Atlantic, has now been opened.]

To be ultimately successful in [his] world mastery, Hitler knows that he must get control of the seas. He must first destroy the bridge of ships which we are building across the Atlantic, over which we shall continue to roll the implements of war to help destroy him and all his works in the end. He must [subdue] wipe out our patrol on sea and in the air. He must silence the British Navy.

It must be explained again and again to people who like to think of the United States Navy as an invincible protection, that <sup>the</sup> it can be true only if the British Navy survives. This is simple arithmetic. For if the world outside the Americas falls under Axis domination, the shipbuilding facilities which the Axis powers would then <sup>have</sup> ~~have~~ in all of Europe, in the British Isles, and

2.01

*much*  
in the Far East would be ~~less~~ greater than all the shipbuilding facilities and potentialities of all the Americas — not only *Never* greater, but three ~~or four or even more~~ times greater. Even if the United States threw all its resources into such a situation, *nothing* <sup>to</sup> ~~and~~ doublings and redoublings the size of our Navy, the Axis powers, in control of the rest of the world, would have the man-power and the physical resources to outbuild us several times over.

It is time for all Americans of all the Americas to stop being deluded by the romantic notion that the Americas can *live* <sup>go on</sup> happily and peacefully ~~for generations to come~~ in a Nazi-dominated world.

Generation after generation, America has battled for the general policy of the freedom of the seas. That policy is a very simple one -- but a basic, fundamental one. It means that no nation has the right to make the broad oceans of the world at great distances from the actual theatre of land war, unsafe for the commerce of others.

*has been proved from time of origin*  
That ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> our policy ~~in the French War in 1793, in the~~  
~~Barbary wars in 1805, in the War of 1812,~~ <sup>and in all our later</sup> history.

Our policy has applied from time immemorial -- and still applies -- not merely to the Atlantic but to the Pacific and to all other oceans as well.

Unrestricted submarine warfare in 1941 constitutes a defiance -- an act of aggression -- against that historic American policy, today, just as German unrestricted submarine warfare did in January 1917,

It is now clear that Hitler has begun his campaign to control the seas by ruthless force and by wiping out every vestige of international law and humanity.

His intention has been made clear. The American people can have no further illusions about it.

No tender whisperings of appeasers that Hitler is not interested in the Western Hemisphere, no soporific lullabies that a wide ocean protects us from him -- <sup>long</sup> can have any effect on the hard-headed, far-sighted and realistic American people.

Because of these episodes, because of the movements and operations of German warships, and because of the clear, repeated proof that the present Government of Germany has no respect for treaties or for international law, that it has no decent attitude toward neutral nations or human life -- we Americans are now face to face not with abstract theories but with cruel, relentless facts.

This attack on the Cress was no localized military operation in the North Atlantic. This was no mere episode in a struggle between two nations. This was one determined step towards creating a permanent world system based on force, terror and murder.

And I am sure that even now the Nazis are waiting to see whether the United States will by silence give them the green light to go ahead on this path of destruction.

The Nazi danger to our western world has long ceased to  
~~more~~ <sup>more</sup> ~~danger~~ <sup>danger</sup> be a probability. The danger is now -- not only from a military enemy but an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion.

There has now come a time when you and I must see the cold inexorable necessity of saying to these inhuman, unrestrained seekers of world conquest and permanent world domination by the sword -- "You seek to throw our children and our children's children

into your form of terrorism and slavery. You have now attacked our own safety. You shall go no further."

Normal practices of diplomacy — note writing — <sup>and</sup> of no possible use in dealing with international outlaws who sink our ships and kill our citizens.

One peaceful nation after another has met disaster because each refused to look the Nazi danger squarely in the eye until it actually had them by the throat.

The United States will not make that fatal mistake. No act of violence or intimidation will keep us from maintaining intact two bulwarks of defense: first, our line of supply of material to the enemies of Hitler, and second, the freedom of our shipping on the high seas.

~~We will not turn them over to barbarous domination.~~ No matter what it takes, no matter what it costs, we will keep open the line of legitimate commerce in these defensive waters.

We have sought no shooting war with Hitler. We do not seek it now. But neither do we want peace so much, that we are willing to pay for it by permitting him to attack our naval and merchant ships while they are on legitimate business.

2. ii

~~I am not going to talk again at this time about the inherent wickedness of the German leadership. I am not going to use invective against German leaders. I am not greatly concerned when each day that passes I read the rather hysterical names which they call me personally and the United States as a whole, in their daily press; and I assume that the German leaders are not deeply concerned either by what we Americans say or publish about them. We cannot bring about the downfall of Nazism by the use of long-range invective.~~

But when you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do ~~not~~ <sup>strike</sup> not wait until he has ~~hit~~ before you crush him.

These Nazi submarines and ~~disguised~~ raiders are the rattle-snakes of the Atlantic. They are a menace to the free pathways of the high seas. They are a challenge to our sovereignty. They hammer at our most precious rights when they attack ships of the American flag — symbols of our independence, our freedom, our very life.

It is clear to all Americans that the time has come when the Americas themselves must now be defended. A continuation of attacks in our own waters, or in waters which could be used for

further and greater attacks on us, will inevitably weaken American ability to repel Hitlerism.

*Let us*  
Do not let us split hairs. ~~Do not ask~~ ourselves whether the Americas should begin to defend themselves after the fifth attack, or the tenth attack, or the twentieth attack.

*The time for* active defense is ~~an~~ now.

*Let us*  
Do not let us split hairs. ~~Do not let us say — "We will~~ only defend ourselves if the torpedo succeeds in getting home, or *if* the crew and the passengers are drowned.

This is the time for prevention.

If submarines or raiders attack in distant waters, they can attack equally well within sight of our ~~enemy~~ shores. Their very presence in any waters which America deems vital to its defense constitutes an attack.

In the waters which we deem necessary for our defense, American naval vessels and American patrol planes will no longer wait until Axis submarines lurking under the water, or Axis raiders on the surface of the sea, strike their deadly blow — first.

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Upon our naval and air patrol — now operating over  
a vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean — falls the duty of  
maintaining the American policy of freedom of the seas. That  
means very simply and clearly, that our patrolling vessels and  
planes will protect all merchant ships — not only American  
ships but ships of any flag — engaged in commerce in our de-  
fensive waters. They will protect them from submarines; they  
will protect them from surface raiders.

Under the Constitution of the United States, I am re-  
sponsible as President and as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and  
Navy for the defense of America against attack. The Constitution  
does not require that this obligation be carried out only if  
our own continental soil is invaded.

This situation is not new.  
For example, the second President of the United States,  
John Adams, ordered the United States Navy to clean out European  
privateers and European ships of war which were infesting the  
Caribbean and South American waters, destroying American commerce.

The third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson,  
ordered the United States Navy to end the attacks being made upon  
American ships at their ~~ports~~ ~~ports~~ ~~ports~~ ~~ports~~ by the  
corsairs of the nations of North Africa.

THIRD DRAFT

- 16 -

Re President

My constitutional obligations is historic; it is clear;  
it is inescapable.

It is no act of war on our part when we decide to protect  
the seas which are vital to American defense. The aggression is  
*Please let this warning be clear. From now*  
not ours. Ours is solely defense. If German or Italian vessels  
of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for  
American defense, they do so ~~from now on~~ at their own peril.

The orders which I have given as Commander-in-chief to  
*Air and*  
the United States Navy and ~~Army~~ are to carry out that policy. *at once.*

The sole responsibility rests upon Germany. There will  
*Continue to pursue it.*  
be no shooting unless Germany ~~says few it~~.

That is my obvious duty in this crisis. That is the  
clear right of this sovereign nation. That is the only step possible,  
if we would keep tight the wall of defense which we are pledged to  
maintain around this Western Hemisphere.

I have no illusions about the gravity of this step. I have  
not taken it hurriedly or lightly. It is the result of months and  
months of constant thought and anxiety and prayer. In the protection  
of your nation and mine it cannot be avoided.

The American people have faced other grave crises in their history -- with American courage and American resolution. They will do no less today.

They know the actualities of the attacks upon us. They know the necessities of a bold defense against these attacks. They know that the times call for clear heads and fearless hearts.

And with that inner strength that comes to a free people conscious of their duty and of the righteousness of what they do, they will -- with Divine help and guidance -- stand their ground against this latest assault upon their democracy, their sovereignty, and their freedom.

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RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

SEPTEMBER 8, 1941

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What I am going to say to you tonight will not be regarded by any American citizen as a bellicose or aggressive statement. What I am saying ~~relates~~ <sup>does not relate to</sup> not to the single episode of a clearly established attack by a German ~~submarine~~ <sup>A</sup> submarine a few days ago on the United States ~~destroyer~~ <sup>A</sup> ~~warship~~ "Greer".

Because we Americans are keeping our feet on the ground, and because we, in our type of democratic civilization have outgrown the thought of declaring war on some other nation, by reason of a single piratical attack on one of our ships, we are most decidedly not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion.

Instead, we are taking the long range point of view in regard certain fundamentals and a series of events which must be considered as a whole in relation to the general policies of this nation for more than one hundred and fifty years.

For example, it is clear that, generation after  
generation, we have stood for the general <sup>American policy</sup> preposition of  
the freedom of the seas -- meaning by that that no nation  
has the right, even in war time and at long distances from  
the theatre of land war, to make the broad oceans unsafe.  
<sup>that was true in the French war in 1793 in</sup> <sup>The War of</sup>  
<sup>1803 in the</sup>  
<sup>War of</sup>  
<sup>1812 in the</sup>  
<sup>All over the</sup>  
<sup>later history.</sup>  
for commerce. Unrestricted submarine warfare constitutes  
a defiance -- an act of aggression, -- against our historic  
American policy today, in 1941, just as much as was the  
German policy of unrestricted submarine warfare anywhere  
in the world in January, 1917.

Our policy has applied from time immemorial, not  
merely to the Atlantic waters but to the waters of the  
Pacific as well.

Today the German ~~and Italian~~ Government <sup>has</sup> ~~Government~~  
issued no formal declaration of unlimited acts of  
aggression, but a series of events leads any reasonable  
person to conclude that such a policy has been adopted  
by them, even though it has not been officially announced.

On our part, for over two years, we have made it clear that it is the American policy to oppose what amounts to piracy on the high seas, and especially to prevent wars in Europe or in Africa or in Asia from extending to the Western Hemisphere or to the waters which have definite relationship to the safety of the Western Hemisphere.

*attack on the safety policy has followed other*

During the past six months an American flag merchant ship was sunk by a German submarine in the middle of the southern part of the Atlantic Ocean. The passengers and the crew were forced into open boats hundreds of miles from land. Providentially, and with the odds against them, they were rescued after many days of severe hardships. No apology, no allegation of mistake, no offer of reparations has come from the German Government.

In July an American battleship, in North American waters, was followed by a submarine which for sometime sought to manoeuvre into a position of attack. The periscope of the submarine was clearly seen. No British or American submarines were within many hundreds of miles of the spot at the time.

*JAS*

Last week an American destroyer on her way to Iceland, and not far from Greenland, was attacked in daylight several times by a submarine. By great good fortune the torpedos fired at her made no hits. In view of the repetition of attacks, there could have been no mistake on the part of the submarine as to the nationality of the vessel attacked if the submarine had her periscope above water at any time. If the periscope was not above water, and if the torpedos were fired by sound methods rather than visual methods, the attacks were equally reprehensible in that they were made against a vessel whose nationality had not been established.

*LA*

In either case the attacks can well be labeled piratical from the standpoint of international law and specific international conventions.

In this case also the attacker or attackers must have been German or Italian because it is well established that no British and no American submarines were anywhere near the place of attack.

*Merchant Marine  
ship lost at sea*

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Because of these episodes, because of the actions,  
~~the~~ the movements and operations of German ~~succes~~<sup>warship</sup>,  
and because of the unfortunate conclusion, based on scores  
of episodes, that the Government of Germany has no respect  
for treaties, for international law or the decent treatment  
of neutral nations or human life, we Americans are faced  
not with theories but with unpleasant facts.

TO GO IN SOMEWHERE IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ON SEPT. 11, 1941.

A Navy youngster, serving off-shore on the patrol, put it this way in a letter home the other day. "I am afraid some people in civilian life back home just plain don't realize how big and vital the stakes are in the protection of America's future. Too many people are suffering from a complacent lethargy. I have done much thinking lately as to exactly what are these vital stakes. I believe that we and the other nations opposing Hitlerism are trying to safeguard a world system in which free and equal opportunities will be afforded to all nations. This whole principle is merely the world extension of our South American good neighbor policy. As opposed to this, we have Hitler's scheme of a world feudalism dominated and controlled by Nazi Germany and operated solely for their own benefit. We see this already in Europe where all but the Germans are starving, and we know the oppressive means by which their system is maintained."

We are living in and experiencing a new and changing order of things, but we of the younger generation are old enough to have known the old and young enough to live alertly and take an active part in the formation of the new. But the new order must be based on the old fundamentals of equal opportunity for individuals and nations and on the finer and simpler teachings of Christianity".

Youngsters like that, and oldsters too, are not 60% or 80% against war. They are 100% against war, just as I am. But there comes a time when you and I must think about the cold inexorable necessity of saying to inhuman, unrestrained seekers of world conquest and permanent world domination by the sword -- "You seek to throw our children and our children's children into your form of terrorism and slavery. You have attacked our safety. You shall go no further".

It is clear to all Americans that the Americas must now be defended. This is for the clear reason that a continuation of attacks in our own waters or in waters which could serve further and greater attacks will inevitably weaken American ability to repel Hitlerism.

Do not let us split hairs. Do not ask yourselves whether the Americas will defend themselves after the fifth attack, or the tenth attack, or the twentieth attack.

Active defense starts now.

Do not let us split hairs. Do not let us say -- "We will only defend ourselves if the torpedo gets home or the crew and the passengers are drowned." The time for defense is now.

If submarines or raiders attack in distant waters, they can equally attack within sight of our very shores. Their very presence constitutes an attack.

It is wholly unnecessary for any American to say that this is an act of war on our part to protect the seas which are vital to American defense. The aggression is not ours. Ours is solely defense. If German or Italian vessels of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for American defense, they do so at their own peril from now on.

The orders to the United States Navy now implement that policy. The sole responsibility rests upon Germany. There will be no shooting unless Germany asks for it.

DRAFT

Attention: Mr. Early

TELEGRAPHED TO MR. HOPKINS:

THE PRESIDENT'S RADIO ADDRESS

What I am going to say to you tonight will not be regarded by any American citizen as a bellicose or aggressive statement. What I am saying does not relate just to the single episode of a clearly established attack by a German submarine a few days ago on the U. S. Destroyer "GREER".

Because we Americans are keeping our feet on the ground, and because we, in our type of democratic civilization have outgrown the thought of declaring war on some other nation by reason of a single piratical attack on one of our ships, we are most decidedly not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion.

Instead, we are taking the long-range point of view in regard to certain fundamentals and to a series of events which must be considered as a whole in relation to the general policies of this nation for more than one hundred and fifty years.

For example, it is clear, generation after generation, we have stood for the general American policy of the freedom of the seas -- meaning by that that no nation has the right, even in wartime and at long distances from the theatre of land war, to make the broad oceans unsafe for commerce. That was true in the French War in 1799, in the Bourbon War in 1830, and in the War of 1812, and in all our later history. Unrestricted submarine warfare constitutes a defiance -- an act of aggression -- against our historic American policy today, in 1941, just as much as was the German policy of unrestricted submarine warfare anywhere in the world in January 1917.

Our policy has applied from time immemorial, not merely to the Atlantic waters but to the waters of the Pacific as well.

Today, the German Government has issued no formal declaration of unlimited acts of aggression, but a series of events leads any reasonable person to conclude that such a policy has been adopted by them, even though it has not been officially announced.

On our part, for over two years, we have made it clear that it is the American policy to oppose what amounts to piracy on the high seas and especially to prevent wars in Europe, or in Africa, or in Asia from extending to the Western Hemisphere or to the waters which have definite relationship to the safety of the Western Hemisphere.

During the past six months, an attack on the safety policy has followed attacks. An American Flag Merchant Ship was sunk by a German submarine in the middle of the southern part of the Atlantic Ocean. The passengers and the crew were forced into open boats hundreds of miles from land. Providentially, and with the odds against them, they were rescued after many days of severe hardships. No apology, no allegation of mistake, no offer of reparations has come from the German Government.

In July, an American battleship, in North American waters, was followed by a submarine which for some time sought to maneuver into a position of attack. The periscope of the submarine was clearly seen. No British or American submarines were within many hundreds of miles of the spot at the time.

Last week, an American destroyer on her way to Iceland, and not far from Greenland, was attacked in daylight several times by a submarine. By great good fortune, the torpedoes fired at her made no hits. In view of the repetition of attacks, there could have been no mistake on the part of the submarine as to the nationality of the vessel attacked if the submarine had her periscope above water at any time. If the periscope was not above water and if the torpedoes were fired by sound methods rather than visual methods, the attacks were equally reprehensible in that they were made against a vessel whose nationality had not been established.

In either case, the attacks can well be labeled piratical from the standpoint of international law and specific international conventions.

Because of these episodes, because of the actions, the movements, and the operations of German warships, and because of the unfortunate conclusion based on scores of episodes that the Government of Germany has no respect for treaties, for international law or the decent treatment of neutral nations or human life, we Americans are faced not with theories but with unpleasant facts.

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ELEGRAM

The White House

Washington

September 6 1941

Memo for the President

Since the present World war broke out, I have periodically reported to the people of the United States the outstanding facts as they arose. I have also endeavored to make clear their implications.

Unhappily, events compel me to report a new development in the situation.

The Navy Department reports that on the morning of September fourth the United States Destroyer Greer was proceeding in full daylight towards Iceland. She was carrying American mail, and was flying the American flag. A German submarine attacked her by firing a number of torpedoes which missed their mark.

Several months ago the rising danger to the safety of this Hemisphere compelled the United States and the other American nations to extend the outposts of Hemispheric defense far into the Atlantic. This action was dictated by the considerations of the clear right of each nation to protect itself against every threat of danger. The Greer was proceeding through a portion of the Atlantic ocean included in the recognized area of self-defense on legitimate mission in connection with the defense of the Western Hemisphere.

TELEGRAM

The White House  
Washington

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Under the circumstances, if the Greer was visible to the submarine when it attempted to torpedo her, the attack must have been a deliberate attempt by a foreign naval vessel to sink an American warship. If the submarine was beneath the surface, and launched its torpedoes in the direction of the sound of the propellers of the American destroyer, and without knowledge as to the kind or nationality of the vessel thus attacked, it is terribly plain that the attack was an act of unrestricted violence launched indiscriminately against vessels, belligerent or non-belligerent.

The Navy likewise reports that the steamship Sessa, of American ownership proceeding to Iceland carrying civilian supplies, has been sunk within the past few days. So far, only three of her crew are known to have survived.

Under the circumstances it is incontrovertible that we are faced, either with a deliberate act of intimidation against the United States, or with the beginning of a general reign of unrestricted terrorism on the high seas like the general policy of frightfulness which has already become only too familiar on land. It will be recalled that only a few months ago an American ship, the Robin Moor, was actually sunk by a German war vessel under lawless and inhuman circumstances.

TELEGRAM

The White House

Washington

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Many of us remember that a very similar attack in the previous World War was soon followed by a general and murderous attack on all non-belligerent vessels sailing the high seas in the belief on the part of its authors that frightfulness at sea would intimidate the United States into terminating her intercourse with friendly countries.

We have long known, and I have previously reported to you, that the program and purpose of Hitler was to conquer all land areas possible, and having done so, to reach and secure control of the high seas. I have pointed out that if this plan were ever carried into execution, no ship of the United States could sail the seas, save by the grace of a foreign and unfriendly power. Upon the execution of the plan, the Atlantic ocean, which has been and should be a fair and free and friendly highway, would become an area filled with deadly peril to the commerce, the coasts, and the cities of the United States.

We know that an integral part of that plan was designed to be a conquest of the Atlantic basin. For more than a year we and the other American republics have been ceaselessly observing and combating intrigues and plots on this side of the ocean which were designed to give to Hitler's forces bridgeheads in the New World for use whenever he should have gained control of the Atlantic ocean. These have included tangible preparations such as the setting up of secret air landing fields and widespread attempts through corruption, threats and crime to intimidate or subvert certain American governments. Conspiracy has followed conspiracy; every resource of cajolery, or money, or planting of fear has been employed. All of these

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The White House  
Washington

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have been steps to acquire terminals in the New World against the time when they could be connected with the reservoir of Hitler's power through control of the seas. To execute this design nothing remained but to begin the campaign to control the seas, commencing with the Atlantic.

We are now faced with evidence that that beginning is being made. The policy of world conquest by force, which has already devastated an entire continent, is now being extended in the Atlantic ocean, this time definitely striking at us.

Hitler could not possibly have given clearer notice by overt acts of his paramount intent to dominate, not only the continents adjacent to Europe, but also the high seas of the earth. I have previously told you that we were convinced that his policy was not merely to conquer Europe but to conquer the world. Today I am compelled to bring to your attention new proof.

With this new evidence, with these warnings, and with the indications now given through overt acts of the German navy, it would be the height of folly for nations and peoples not yet brought under the heel of this would-be conqueror, to fail to take full notice. The only course left open for free peoples, of which we are one, is to prepare in every way to defend themselves whenever they travel the high seas, or in these areas where Hitler is in control or seeks to acquire control. Any journey on water or on land beyond this Hemisphere must now become a journey protected by arms.

TELEGRAM

The White House  
Washington

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We are further aware that the policy of acquiring control by force and domination by terror at sea and frightfulness on land is no longer a movement merely in aid of localized military operations, is not merely an attempt to acquire military advantage over an opposing foe, but is an attempt to create a permanent world system based on force by terror, by murder or by massacre; by threat or by fact of piracy. Hitler has demonstrated himself to be the foremost enemy of the human race. He is not merely a military enemy. His government has boasted that it is also the enemy of law, the enemy of religion, the enemy of morality, the enemy of liberty, the would-be conqueror of all other peoples. By methods of brutality and inhumanity without parallel in civilized history, the Nazi regime has proposed to destroy everything worthwhile in the fabric of organized society throughout the world. This is Hitler's own boast, ceaselessly repeated by his satellites and abundantly proved by his deeds.

The time has passed for discussion as to whether interests of the United States are involved in this business. It has ceased to be even rational to consider seriously the casual statements of Nazi propagandists, sometimes repeated by well-meaning dupes in this country, that Hitler has no designs on the United States. The danger has ceased to be merely possible, or even probable. It is here.

Other nations have met disaster because they abandoned, under intimidation, their lines of outer defense. Unless we are gradually but certainly to turn over the high seas to those who seek to conquer through processes of terrorism like that of the Nazi submarine on the

TELEGRAM

The White House  
Washington

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~~Greece~~ and like the sinking of the ~~Bossa~~, it becomes necessary for every country promptly to perfect defenses for its people on the highways of the world, and especially in the Atlantic.

It necessarily follows that every American vessel must have increased means and improved methods of defense against the increased dangers and threats of danger which have been pointed out. There is no other safe course.

HULL

(end)