Franklin D. Roosevelt — "The Great Communicator"

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 3: "The Four Freedoms" and FDR in World War II

File No. 1453

1943 February 22

Address: Washington's Birthday Celebration

#1453

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

FEBRUARY 22, 1943

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today this nation, which George Washington helped so greatly to create, is fighting all over this earth in order to maintain for ourselves and for our children the freedom which George Washington helped so greatly to achieve. As we celebrate Washington's birthday, let us remember how he conducted himself in the midst of great adversities. We are inclined, because of the total sum of his accomplishments, to forget his days of trial.

Throughout the Revolution, Washington commanded an army whose very existence as an army was never a certainty from one week to another. Some of his soldiers and even whole regiments could not or would not move outside of the borders of their own states. Sometimes, at critical moments,

they would decide to return to their individual homes to get the plowing done or the crops harvested. Large numbers or the people of the colonies were either against independence or at least unwilling to make great personal sacrifice toward its attainment.

And there were many in every colony who were willing to cooperate with Washington only if the cooperation was based on their own terms.

Some Americans during the War of the Revolution sneered at the very principles of the Declaration of Independence. It was impractical, they said -- it was "idealistic" to claim that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights".

The skeptics, the cynics, of Washington's day did not believe that ordinary men and women have the capacity for freedom and self-government. They said that liberty and equality were idle dreams that could not come true --

We know that it was Washington's simple, steadfast faith that kept him to the essential principles of first things first. His sturdy sense of proportion brought to him and his followers the ability to discount the smaller difficulties and concentrate on the larger objectives. And the objectives of the American Revolution were so large -- so unlimited -- that today they are among the primary objectives of the entire civilized world.

It was Washington's faith -- and, with it, his hope and his charity -- which was responsible for the stamina of Valley Forge -- and the prayer at Valley Forge.

The Americans of Washington's day were at war. We Americans of today are at war.

The Americans of Washington's day faced defeat on many occasions. We faced, and still face, reverses and misfortunes.

In 1777, the victory over General Burgoyne's Army at Saratoga led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air, proclaiming that the war was practically won and that they could go back to their peacetime occupations -- and "normalcies".

Today, the great successes on the Russian front have led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air and proclaim that victory is just around the corner.

Others among us still believe in the age of miracles. They forget that there is no Joshua in our midst. We cannot count on great walls crumbling and falling when the trumpets blow and the peoples shout.

It is not enough that we have faith and that we have hope. Washington himself was the exemplification of the other great need.

Would that all of us could live our lives and direct our thoughts and control our tongues as did the Father of our Country in seeking day by day to follow those great verses:

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil:

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth".

Most of us Americans seek to live up to those precepts. But there are some among us who have forgotten them. There are Americans whose words and writings are trumpeted by our enemies to persuade the disintegrating people of Germany and Italy and their captives that America is disunited -- that America will be guilty of faithlessness in this war and will thus enable the Axis Powers to control the earth.

It is perhaps fitting that on this day I should read a few more words spoken many years ago -- words which helped to shape the character and the career of George Washington.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you".

Those are the truths which are the eternal heritage of our civilization. I repeat them to give heart and comfort to all men and women everywhere who fight for freedom.

Those truths inspired Washington and the men and women of the thirteen colonies.

Today, through all the darkness that has descended upon our nation and our world, those truths are a guiding light to all.

We shall follow that light, as our forefathers did, to the fulfillment of our hopes for victory, for freedom and for peace.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Original reading copy

ADDRESS
OF THE
PRESIDENT
ON
GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY
FEBRUARY 22, 1943
RADIO BROADCAST AT 10.30 P.M., E.W.T.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Today this nation, which George Washington helped so greatly to create, is fighting all over this earth in order to maintain for ourselves and for our children the freedom which George Washington helped so greatly to achieve. As we celebrate (Washington's) his birthday, let us remember how he conducted himself in the midst of great adversities. We are inclined, because of the total sum of his accomplishments, to forget his days of trial.

Throughout the Revolution, Washington commanded an army whose very existence as an army was never a certainty from one week to another. Some of his soldiers, and even whole regiments, could not or would not move outside (of) the borders of their own States. Sometimes, at critical moments, they would decide to return to their individual homes to get the plowing done, or the crops harvested. Large numbers of the people of the colonies were either against independence or at least unwilling to make great personal sacrifice toward its attainment.

And there were many in every colony who were willing to cooperate with Washington only if the cooperation was based on their own terms.

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.

Some Americans during the War of the Revolution sneered at the very principles of the Declaration of Independence. It was impractical, they said -- it was "idealistic" -- to claim that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights."

The skeptics and the cynics of Washington's day did not believe that ordinary men and women have the capacity for freedom and self-government. They said that liberty and equality were idle dreams that could not come true -- just as today there are many Americans who sneer at the determination to attain freedom from want and freedom from fear, on the ground that these are ideals which can never be realized. They say it is ordained that we must always have poverty, and that we must always have war.

You know, they are like the people who carp at the Ten Commandments because some people are in the habit of breaking one or more of them.

We Americans of today know that there would have been no successful outcome to the Revolution, even after eight long years -- the Revolution that (which) gave us liberty -- had it not been for George Washington's faith, and the fact that that faith overcame the bickerings and confusion and the doubts which the skeptics and cynics provoked.

When kind history books tell us of Benedict Arnold, they omit dozens of other Americans who, beyond peradventure of a doubt, were also guilty of treason.

We know that it was Washington's simple, steadfast

faith that kept him to the essential principles of first things first. His sturdy sense of proportion brought to him and his followers the ability to discount the smaller difficulties and concentrate on the larger objectives. And the objectives of the American Revolution were so large -- so unlimited -- that today they are among the primary objectives of the entire civilized world.

It was Washington's faith -- and, with it, his hope and his charity -- which was responsible for the stamina of Valley Forge -- (and) responsible for the prayer at Valley Forge.

The Americans of Washington's day were at war. We Americans of today are at war.

The Americans of Washington's day faced defeat on many occasions. We faced, and still face, reverses and misfortunes.

In 1777, the victory over General Burgoyne's Army at Saratoga led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air, proclaiming that the war was practically won and that they (could) should go back to their peacetime occupations -- and, shall I say, their peacetime "normalcies."

Today, the great successes on the Russian front have led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air and proclaim that victory is just around the corner.

Others among us still believe in the age of miracles. They forget that there is no Joshua in our midst. We cannot count on great walls crumbling and falling down when the

trumpets blow and the people(s) shout.

It is not enough that we have faith and that we have hope. Washington himself was the exemplification of the other great need.

Would that all of us could live our lives and direct our thoughts and control our tongues as did the Father of our Country in seeking day by day to follow those great verses:

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil:

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth."

I think that most of us Americans seek to live up to those precepts. But there are some among them -- some among us who have forgotten them. There are Americans whose words and writings are trumpeted -- trumpeted by our enemies to persuade the disintegrating people of Germany and Italy and their captives that America is disunited -- that America will be guilty of faithlessness in this war, and will thus enable the Axis Powers to control the earth.

It is perhaps fitting that on this day I should read a few more words spoken many years ago -- words which helped to shape the character and the career of George Washington, words that lay behind the prayer at Valley Forge.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

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"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

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"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

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Those are the truths which are the eternal heritage of our civilization. I repeat them, to give heart and comfort to all men and women everywhere who fight for freedom.

Those truths inspired Washington, and the men and women of the thirteen colonies.

Today, through <u>all</u> the darkness that has descended upon our nation and our world, those truths are a guiding light to all.

We shall follow that light, as our forefathers did, to the fulfillment of our hopes for victory, for freedom, and for peace.

STATEMENTS FILE

HOLD FOR RELEASE HOLD FOR RELEASE HOLD FOR RELEASE

FEBRUARY 22, 1943

CAUTION: The following Washington's birthday address of the President MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE until released.

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 10:30 O'CLOCK, P.M., E.W.T., Monday, February 22, 1943. The same release also applies to radio announcers and news commentators.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

WILLIAM D. HASSETT

from Shd Notes

Ladies and gentlemen:

Today this nation, which George Washington helped so greatly to create, is fighting all over this earth in order to maintain for ourselves and for our children the freedom which George Washington helped so greatly to achieve. As we celebrate ~~Washington's~~ his birthday, let us remember how he conducted himself in the midst of great adversities. We are inclined, because of the total sum of his accomplishments, to forget his days of trial.

Throughout the Revolution, Washington commanded an army whose very existence as an army was never a certainty from one week to another. Some of his soldiers, and even whole regiments, could not or would not move outside ~~of~~ the borders of their own States. Sometimes, at critical moments, they would decide to return to their individual homes to get the plowing done, or the crops harvested. Large numbers of the people of the colonies were either against independence or at least unwilling to make great personal sacrifice toward its attainment.

And there were many in every colony who were willing to cooperate with Washington only if the cooperation was based on their own terms.

Some Americans during the War of the Revolution sneered at the very principles of the Declaration of Independence. It was impractical, they said -- it was "idealistic" -- to claim that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights."

The skeptics and the cynics of Washington's day did not believe that ordinary men and women have the capacity for freedom and self-government. They said that liberty and equality were idle dreams that could not come true -- just as today there are many Americans who sneer at the determination to attain freedom from want and freedom from fear, on the ground that these are ideals which can never be realized. They say that it is ordained that we must always have poverty, and that we must always have war.

They are like the people who carp at the Ten Commandments because some people are in the habit of breaking one or more of them.

We Americans of today know that there would have been no successful outcome to the Revolution, even after eight long years -- the Revolution that ~~which~~ gave us liberty, had it not been for George Washington's faith, and the fact that that faith overcame the bickerings and confusion and the doubts which the skeptics and cynics provoked.

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objectives. And the objectives of the American Revolution were so large -- so unlimited -- that today they are among the primary objectives of the entire civilized world.

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Others among us still believe in the age of miracles. They forget that there is no Joshua in our midst. We cannot count on great walls crumbling and falling when the trumpets blow and the people shout.

It is not enough that we have faith and that we have hope. Washington himself was the exemplification of the other great need.

Would that all of us could live our lives and direct our thoughts and control our tongues as did the Father of our Country in seeking day by day to follow those great verses:

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"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil:

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth."

Most of us Americans seek to live up to those precepts. But there are some among us who have forgotten them. There are Americans whose words and writings are trumpeted by our enemies to persuade the disintegrating people of Germany and Italy and their captives that America is disunited -- that America will be guilty of faithlessness in this war, and will thus enable the Axis Powers to control the earth.

It is perhaps fitting that on this day I should read a few more words spoken many years ago -- words which helped to shape the character and the career of George Washington, words that lay behind the prayer at Valley Forge.

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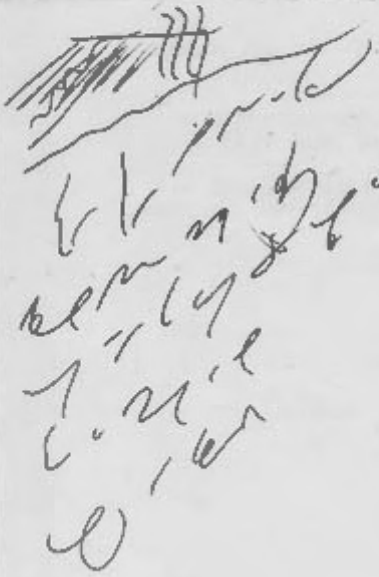

FIRST DRAFT

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

February 22, 1943

On Washington's Birthday I always think of ~~him~~ Lord

~~himself~~ conducted in the midst of great adversities. We

are inclined, because of the sum of his accomplishments,

to forget his days of trial.

We are prone to overlook, for example, that throughout

the Revolution, he was compelled to lead an army whose very

existence as an army was never a certainty from one week

to another -- that some of his [companies] soldiers and even whole regiments

could not or would not move outside of the borders of their

own states -- that sometimes [companies and even regiments] they

would decide at [a] critical moments to return to their

individual homes to get the plowing done or the crops

harvested. [It is probably true that at least half] Large numbers of the

[population] people of the colonies were either against independence

or at least unwilling to make personal sacrifice great toward its

attainment.

And there were [large numbers] many in every colony who

were willing to cooperate with Washington if the cooperation

was based on their own terms.

[I am inclined to think that the people of this country

nearly two hundred years later, have shown improvement in their patriotism and in their unselfishness. But the final proof of the pudding is in the eating.]

A.) Let us always remember that some Americans during the War of the Revolution [turned pale at the idea of independence -- an idle dream that could not come true -- just as today there are many Americans who sneer at any effort in the direction of freedom from fear and freedom from want on the ground that they are ideals which can never be realized. They are like the people who carp at the Ten Commandments because some people are in the habit of breaking one or more of them.

(Yet, in spite of the cynics, it is sometimes worthwhile to realize] that there [might] have been no successful outcome to the Revolution which gave us [independence] had it not been for George Washington's faith and the fact that that faith overcame the bickerings and [lack of support] which the skeptics and cynics created.

We know that it was [the simplicity] of Washington's [simple, steadfast faith] that [led] him to [go back to what we call today] first things first. [The] sense of the essential principles of his sturdy

among the primary

And the objectives of the American Revolution were so large — so unlimited — that today they are the objectives of the entire civilized world.

of proportion [which] brought to him and his followers the ability to discount the smaller [troubles] and concentrate difficulties on the larger objectives. It was Washington's faith — and, with it, his hope and his charity — which [That ability] lead to the stamina of Valley Forge -- to the prayer at Valley Forge.

[And with it there was on his part, and on those who gave him all support, a charity born in infinite patience and carried out in the spirit of accepting the calumnies and the streams of objections raised by his enemies and by the little people who could not see the forest for the trees.]

Washington was at war. We Americans of to-day are at war. Washington faced defeat on many occasions. We have [not] faced our share of adversities. won this war yet. [In Washington's day the surrender of the British Army [of] Burgoynne in 1777 [and] at Saratoga led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air, [to] proclaiming That the war was practically won and that they could go back to [to go about] their normal, peacetime occupations — and profits.

Today, our successes in the Southwest Pacific and the great successes on the Russian front have led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air and proclaim that our victory is just around the corner.

Others among us still believe in the age of miracles. They forget that there is no Joshua in our midst. Great walls cannot be counted on today to fall down flat when we count on great walls crumbling and falling the trumpets blow and the peoples shout.

It is not enough that we have ~~hope~~ faith and that we have ~~faith~~ hope. Washington himself was the exemplification or the other great need.

Would that all of us could live our lives and direct our thoughts and curb our tongues, as did the Father of his Country in seeking day by day to follow those two great verses:

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up;

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth."

And it is perhaps fitting that on Washington's Birthday I should read a few more paragraphs spoken many years ago -- words which I am certain were known and loved by Washington.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

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"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

[.....For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, yet shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.]

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W/ 1

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

These are the ~~[illegible]~~ truths which ~~[illegible]~~ are ~~[illegible]~~ the eternal heritage of our civilization.

~~These are the tr~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Those truths inspired Washington and the men ~~of this~~ and women of the thirteen colonies.

Today, through ~~Those truths give light to all men everywhere~~ the darkness that has descended upon our world, those truths give the guiding light to all men everywhere.

We shall follow that light, as our forefathers did, to the fulfillment of our hopes for freedom and for peace.

SECOND DRAFT

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

FEBRUARY 22, 1943

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And there were many in every colony who were willing to cooperate with Washington only if the cooperation was based on their own terms.

Some Americans during the War of the Revolution sneered at the very principles of the Declaration of Independence. It was impractical, they said — it was "idealistic" to claim that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights".

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They are like the people who carp at the Ten Commandments because some people are in the habit of breaking one or more of them.

We Americans of today know that there would have been no successful outcome to the Revolution, which gave us liberty, had it not been for George Washington's faith and the fact that that faith overcame the bickerings and confusion and the doubts which the skeptics and cynics provoked.

INSERT A - PAGE #2

When kind
~~Here again~~ history books tell us of the treason of Benedict Arnold, they omit dozens of other Americans who ~~were~~ beyond peradventure of a doubt were guilty of treason itself.

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We know that it was Washington's simple, steadfast faith that kept him to the essential principles of first things first. His sturdy sense of proportion brought to him and his followers the ability to discount the smaller difficulties and concentrate on the larger objectives. And the objectives of the American Revolution were so large — so unlimited — that today they are among the primary objectives of the entire civilized world.

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INSERT B - PAGE #4

Most of us Americans seek to live up to those precepts. But there are too many among us who have forgotten them -- those whose words and writings are trumpeted forth from Berlin to prove to their disintegrating people and to their captives that America is headed for a disunity that will enable the Axis Powers to control the earth.

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It is not enough that we have faith and that we have hope. Washington himself was the exemplification of the other great need.

Would that all of us could live our lives and direct our thoughts and control our tongues as did the Father of our Country in seeking day by day to follow those great verses:

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And it is perhaps fitting that on Washington's Birthday I should read a few more words spoken many years ago — words which

INSERT C - PAGE #5

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SECOND DRAFT

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

FEBRUARY 22, 1943.

(A)

On Washington's Birthday I always think of how he conducted himself in the midst of great adversities. We are inclined, because of the sum of his accomplishments, to forget his days of trial.

We are prone to overlook, for example, that throughout the Revolution, Washington commanded was compelled to lead an army whose very existence as an army was never a certainty from one week to another. Some of his soldiers and even whole regiments could not or would not move outside of the borders of their own states. Sometimes, at critical moments, they would decide at critical moments to return to their individual homes to get the plowing done or the crops harvested. Large numbers of the people of the colonies were either against independence or at least unwilling to make great personal sacrifice toward its attainment.

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From the Papers of
Samuel I. Rosenman

And there were many in every colony who were willing to cooperate with Washington if the cooperation was based on their own terms.

Let us always remember that some Americans during the War of the Revolution sneered at the very principles of the Declaration of Independence. It was impractical, they said -- it was "idealistic" to claim that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights".

The skeptics, the cynics, of Washington's day did not believe that ordinary men and women have the capacity for freedom and self-government. They said that liberty and equality were idle dreams that could not come true -- just as today there are many Americans who sneer at the determination ~~effort in the direction of~~ to attain freedom from want and freedom from fear on the ground that these are ideals which can never be realized. They say that it is ordained that we must always have poverty and we must always have war.

They are like the people who carp at the Ten Commandments because some people are in the habit of breaking one or more of them.

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We Americans of today know that there would have been no successful outcome to the Revolution, which gave us liberty, had it not been for George Washington's faith and the fact that that faith overcame the bickerings and confusion and the doubts which the skeptics and cynics ~~created~~ provoked.

We know that it was Washington's simple, steadfast faith that kept him to the essential principles of first things first. His sturdy sense of proportion brought to him and his followers the ability to discount the smaller difficulties and concentrate on the larger objectives. And the objectives of the American Revolution were so large — so unlimited — that today they are among the primary objectives of the entire civilized world.

It was Washington's faith — and, with it, his hope and his charity -- which ~~lead to~~ was responsible for the stamina of Valley Forge -- and to the prayer at Valley Forge.

The Americans of Washington's day were at war. We Americans of today are at war.

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SECOND DRAFT

The Americans of ^ day
Washington faced defeat on many occasions. We have faced our share of adversities.

In 1777, the victory over General Burgoyne's Army at Saratoga led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air, proclaiming that the war was practically won and that they could go back to their normal, peacetime occupations -- and profits.

Today, our successes in the Southwest Pacific and the great successes on the Russian front have led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air and proclaim that our victory is just around the corner.

Others among us still believe in the age of miracles. They forget that there is no Joshua in our midst. We cannot count on great walls crumbling and falling when the trumpets blow and the peoples shout.

It is not enough that we have faith and that we have hope. Washington himself was the exemplification of the other great need.

Would that all of us could live our lives and direct our thoughts and control ^ our tongues as did the Father of our ^ Country in seeking day by day to follow those great verses:

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"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth".

And it is perhaps fitting that on Washington's Birthday I should read a few more words spoken many years ago -- words which helped to shape the character and the career of George Washington. I am certain were known and loved by

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

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"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you".

Those are the truths which are the eternal heritage of our civilization.

Those truths inspired Washington and the men and women of the thirteen colonies.

Today, through the darkness that has descended upon our world, those truths give the guiding light to all men everywhere.

We shall follow that light, as our forefathers did, to the fulfillment of our hopes for freedom and for peace.

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(A) P.1

THE WILLARD HOTEL
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Today, this nation, of which so greatly George Washington helped to create, are spread all over this earth, fighting for the very freedom which George Washington helped so greatly to achieve.

As we celebrate Washington's birthday, let us remember how he

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Today this nation, which George Washington helped so greatly to create, is fighting all over this earth in order to maintain for ourselves and for our children the freedom which George Washington helped so greatly to achieve. ~~As we celebrate Washington's birthday, let us remember how he conducted himself in the midst of great adversities.~~ We are inclined, because of the total sum of his accomplishments, to forget his days of trial. Throughout the Revolution, Washington commanded an army whose very existence as an army was never a certainty from one week to another. And there were many in every colony who were willing to cooperate with Washington only if the cooperation was based on their own terms.

The skeptics, the cynics, of Washington's day did not believe that ordinary men and women have the capacity for freedom and self-government. They said that liberty and equality were idle dreams that could not come true — just as today there are many Americans who sneer at the determination to attain freedom from want and freedom from fear on the ground that these are ideals which can never be realized. They say that it is ordained that we must always have poverty and that we must always have war. They are like the people who carp at the Ten Commandments because some people are in the habit of breaking one or more of them.

We Americans of today know that there would have been no successful outcome to the Revolution, which gave us liberty, had it not been for George Washington's faith and the fact that that faith overcame the bickerings and confusion and the doubts which the skeptics and cynics provoked. When our history books tell us of Benedict Arnold, they omit dozens of other Americans who, beyond peradventure of a doubt, were also guilty of treason. We know that it was Washington's simple, steadfast faith that kept him to the essential principles of first things first.

objectives. And the objectives of the American Revolution were so large -- so unlimited -- that today they are among the primary objectives of the entire civilized world.

It was Washington's faith -- and, with it, his hope and his charity -- which was responsible for the stamina of Valley Forge -- and the prayer at Valley Forge.

The Americans of Washington's day were at war. We Americans of today are at war.

The Americans of Washington's day faced defeat on many occasions. We faced, and still face, reverses and misfortunes.

In 1777, the victory over General Burgoyne's Army at Saratoga led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air, proclaiming that the war was practically won and that they could go back to their peacetime occupations -- and "normalcies".

Today, the great successes on the Russian front have led thousands of Americans to throw their hats in the air and proclaim that victory is just around the corner.

Others among us still believe in the age of miracles. They forget that there is no Joshua in our midst. We cannot count on great walls crumbling and falling when the trumpets blow and the peoples shout.

It is not enough that we have faith and that we have hope. Washington himself was the exemplification of the other great need.

Would that all of us could live our lives and direct our thoughts and control our tongues as did the Father of our Country in seeking day by day to follow those great verses:

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil:

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth".

Most of us Americans seek to live up to those precepts. But there are some among us who have forgotten them. There are Americans whose words and writings are trumpeted by our enemies to persuade the disintegrating people of Germany and Italy and their captives that America is disunited -- that America will be guilty of faithlessness in this war and will thus enable the Axis Powers to control the earth.

It is perhaps fitting that on this day I should read a few more words spoken many years ago -- words which helped to shape the character and the career of George Washington.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

It is perhaps fitting that on this day I should read a few more words spoken many years ago — words which helped to shape the character and the career of George Washington — helped to form the prayer at Valley Forge

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

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4.

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"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you".

Those are the truths which are the eternal heritage of our civilization. I repeat them to give heart and comfort to all men and women everywhere who fight for freedom.

Those truths inspired Washington and the men and women of the thirteen colonies.

Today, through the darkness that has descended upon our nation and our world, those truths are a guiding light to all.

We shall follow that light, as our forefathers did, to the fulfillment of our hopes for victory, for freedom and for peace.

ASSISTANT SOLICITOR GENERAL
WASHINGTON

February 17, 1943

Dear Judge Rosenman:

Attached hereto are two suggestions that you may want to keep in mind with respect to the President's George Washington Day speech. They were gotten up by Hadley Cantril, who, as you know, is quite an expert in polling.

Personally, I would think it better for the President to say that we have progressed as far as we have on the prosecution of the war because all of us have worked together as patriotic Americans. I shouldn't think it would be wise to specify the Republicans and the Democrats. That might better be done by implication, as the rough statement I have indicated might well do.

On the statement about the German Army, I think it ought to be highlighted by references to the leadership of the German Army. That would make it possible to drive a wedge between the Nazi Party and German Army leadership on the one hand and the large mass of German people on the other.

Sincerely yours,

Oscar Cox

Judge Samuel I. Rosenman,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Attachments

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Recommendation.

That the President in his speech on February 22nd state early in the speech that one of the main reasons we have done as well as we have in the war is because we have all worked together - farmers, business men, laborers, Republicans, Democrats, etc., etc.

(This suggestion is a plausible way of indicating that the President is not going to use this political occasion to discuss politics.)

Supporting evidence.

The attached spot survey concerning the President's proposed speech to the Democratic campaign dinners on February 22nd indicates that:

1. Very few people (21 per cent) disapprove of a speech by the President on this occasion.

   Only about a fourth of the public believes the President would be playing politics in making a speech at this time.

2. If the President takes advantage of this occasion to make clear that he is not going to use this opportunity to review the work of the Democratic party because he believes politics should be forgotten during wartime, his speech will have overwhelming approval.

   On the other hand, less than half the population would approve of the President using this occasion to talk about the Democratic party.

H. C.

February 16, 1943

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Recommendation.

That in one of his talks in the near future, the President explain briefly that the tradition and leadership of the German Army is as much of a menace to permanent peace as Nazism and that "unconditional surrender" therefore means that we shall not be fooled by any peace terms the German Army might propose if it should oust the Nazi leadership.

Supporting evidence.

Over one-fourth of the population still does not understand the full meaning of "unconditional surrender" and would approve of discussing peace terms now with the German Army if it overthrew Hitler.

About half of these people simply do not realize how the German Army has supported and used the Nazi Party - they think an Army coup would be equivalent to a popular revolt.

H. C. February 16, 1943

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NATIONAL SAMPLE

1. If Hitler offered peace now to all countries on this basis of not going further, but of leaving matters as they are now, would you favor or oppose such a peace?

Favor	5%
Oppose	91
Don't know	4

2. If the German army overthrew Hitler and then offered to stop the war and discuss peace terms with the Allies, do you think we should discuss peace terms with the German Army?

Yes	28%
No	62
Don't know	10

3. If the German army DID overthrow Hitler, do you think this would mean that the German people would, or would not control the government?

Would	21%
Would not	60
no opinion	19

4. Of those who favor discussing peace terms with the German army if it overthrew Hitler, 43% believe that the German people would be in control of the government if the army did overthrow Hitler.

H. C.

February 16, 1943.