
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. 1488

1943 October 14

**Exchange of Toasts between the President and the
President of Haiti**

This copy used by the
President to read from
at Press Conference 922 of 10/15/43

Roosevelt
10/15/1943

STATEMENTS FILE

TOAST OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE DINNER GIVEN FOR THE PRESIDENT OF HAITI, ELI LESCOT
IN THE STATE DINING ROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE
OCTOBER 14, 1943 -- ABOUT 9.05 P.M., E.W.T.

~~THE PRESIDENT~~ This is a particularly happy evening for me, because it carries me back to more than a quarter of a century. The President of Haiti is a very old personal friend of mine, and a good friend of most of the people who are here at the table tonight.

I said it carries me back a quarter of a century, because I had something to do with what I hope eventually will be recognized as having been of help to the Republic of Haiti. It goes back to when I myself sent Marines to Haiti through a period of great unrest in that Republic. We made a promise then, that some day Haiti would be independent, with its own government, its own Republic.

It was a curious circumstance that many years later, in 1934, I came back to make a decision -- I felt that the time had come for the complete independence of the Republic of Haiti, I felt that they could go their own way, with their own independent government, and their own sovereignty.

I am very proud of what has happened during the last ten years. There were some "doubting Thomases," as President Lescot knows. There were some people who said No, it was too early. But I promised his ^{Frederick} ~~successor~~ in July of 1934 that the Marines would be out by the end of August, and they were. And since that time, one of the experiments of my life has been permanently successful, because in the last ten years of the

Republic of Haiti not a single American has been there with a gun. Haiti has made good in every way. I regard ^{The Nations} ~~the Nations~~ advance in prosperity and in friendship during those ten years as something that ought to be written up in the history books.

I keep talking, not just when the President comes here to visit me, but on many other occasions, about the development of Haiti. Those of you who have been there know it is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. It has everything. It has everything above the ground, and everything under the ground. I was talking to the President about one section of Haiti that I never personally visited, although I saw it from the top of some mountains, a section in about the middle of the Republic that is so high that you find there the most beautiful groves and forests of pine trees, a country where in January or February you find ice in the streams, and not very far away you get down to a place where you can grow everything that grows. It is an amazing place. I strongly recommend that whenever you get a chance, if you haven't been there, that you go to Haiti.

that after her death "would be found written on her heart,"
~~when she died, Calais is written in my heart.~~
 I think it was a certain Queen of England who said [^] "When I die, I think that 'Haiti' is going to be written on my heart, because for all these years I have had the most intense interest in the Republic of Haiti, and the development of its people in a way that will never mean exploitation by any other nation. They ought to develop for themselves, and they have every opportunity in the world to do so. Under President Lescot and his

predecessor, very great strides have been made. It is becoming a self-contained country, with divergent resources of all sorts of things. We have been talking about economics already, and the fact that Haiti has insufficient industries. And yet there are dozens of articles down there which they can grow and produce the raw materials for, and manufacture themselves. It is not against our interest, because there are a great many things that we can make that they can't make, and there are lots of things that they can make that we can't make. That forms the basis of trade.

At the present time, Haiti is engaged in the cultivation of a new plant, cryptostegia, which turns out rubber. This year they will be getting ten thousand tons of rubber in Haiti. I hope that when I am out of the White House -- ^{get better} I might ~~get better~~ ^{get better} on it otherwise -- that the Congress won't put the kind of tariff on rubber for American automobile tires just to keep some synthetic plants going. That would mean that every man in the United States who owned a car would have to pay fifty percent more for his rubber. I believe in cheap tires, and more of them; and the only way to get that is to use the tires that are made by nature, whether it be rubber, or guayule, or cryptostegia.

In that way, and through the diversification of their crops, and the diversification of their industries, the future of Haiti is very, very bright.

We have to remember, as we sometimes forget it in this country, that Haiti is a great deal more than just another

Dear Mr. President, Dear Sirs:

It is truly a pleasant privilege for me to be this evening beside your President, the great protector of the American continent. His kind words about my country have touched me deeply, as have the words of all my other American friends.

Both our countries are today on the friendliest terms, for the bonds which link our two nations are mighty bonds indeed. One of our Republics, represented both by white and black races, easily complements the other, populated by dark peoples alone. ,

Our past has shown that the entire history of the Americas is widely linked to the history of our two nations. It is true that in the past there have been misunderstandings between our countries, but these errors have been completely forgotten. Let us forget the past. Let us live in the present, and prepare for the future, for the United States is paving the way to the future.

I have no fears in this regard, and I have placed my trust in the United States and in our inter-American agreements. I know that when the United States is threatened, we, too, are threatened. In the present crisis we have put our cards on the table on the side of the great North American Republic. Those cards, I may now say, have been well played, we have done well to put our trust in the American people, and in the American President. Our game is a good one, though we are paying dearly for it. America is paying dearly in sweat and in blood.

But, if my own Republic is not contributing with its blood, it is contributing in another way, for we are cultivating (rubber) plants which play a large part in securing victory, and we are ready to put our entire agricultural area into the production of these plants to the last acre, in order to help the war effort.

We have won our freedom, and we intend to keep it, and we know that America's respect and generosity to Haiti have been proved in the relations of the past fifty years. Every time foreign powers have threatened us during that time, we have turned towards the United States for help, and have received it.

Haiti must be an example to American nations by standing staunchly on the side of the United States. The American nations should unanimously place themselves at the side of the American people.

I am proud to lift my glass to the American people.

I am proud to lift my glass to my great friend, the President of the United States.

I am proud to lift my glass to the valiant united peoples at war.

(the Toast was drunk)

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
AND THE
PRESIDENT OF HAITI
AT DINNER AT THE WHITE HOUSE
OCTOBER 14, 1941

The President, in proposing a Toast to the Guest of Honor, said:

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I said it carries me back a quarter of a century, because I had something to do with what I hope eventually will be recognized as having been of help to the Republic of Haiti. It goes back to when I myself sent Marines to Haiti through a period of great unrest in that Republic. We made a promise then, that some day Haiti would be independent, with its own government, its own Republic.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

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

said that after her death "Calais" would be found written on her heart. When I die, I think that "Haiti" is going to be written on my heart, because for all these years I have had the most intense interest in the Republic of Haiti, and the development of its people in a way that will never mean exploitation by any other nation. They ought to develop for themselves, and they have every opportunity in the world to do so. Under President Lescot and his predecessor, very great strides have been made. It is becoming a self-contained country, with divergent resources of all sorts of things. We have been talking about economics already, and the fact that Haiti has insufficient industries. And yet there are dozens of articles down there which they can grow and produce the raw materials for, and manufacture themselves. It is not against our interest, because there are a great many things that we can make that they can't make, and there are lots of things that they can make that we can't make. That forms the basis of trade.

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believe in cheap tires, and more of them; and the only way to get that is to use the tires that are made by nature, whether it be rubber, or guayule, or cryptostegia.

In that way, and through the diversification of their crops, and the diversification of their industries, the future of Haiti is very, very bright.

We have to remember, as we sometimes forget it in this country, that Haiti is a great deal more than just another island in the West Indies. Most of the islands in the West Indies have relatively small populations. The Haitian part of the Island of San Domingo contains nearly three million people -- over two hundred people per square mile. Because of this density of population they don't even raise enough food to sustain the entire population.

One of the things that we want to help them on, in order to be self-sustaining, is the growing of more of their own food supplies. It will help them. And it will help us, for it may teach us some day to make Puerto Rico self-sustaining. We have two million people in Puerto Rico, and almost everything they eat is bought on the outside. The money to buy their own food doesn't go into their pockets, it goes into the pockets of China, and Mexico, and the United States.

And so, in this new civilization that we are coming to, of mutual aid and in a cooperative management between all the nations of the world, I think that not only can Haiti learn a lot from us, but we can learn a lot from Haiti.

It is a wonderful thing that during all these

years we have had such good friends down there in the government of Haiti. None more than my old friend, President Lescot, who used to be with us in Washington, and who has come back, and who we hope will come back many, many times again.

President Lescot!

(the Toast was drunk, and President Lescot replied in French, a close translation of which follows):

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I keep talking, not just when the President comes here to visit me, but on many other occasions, about the development of Haiti. Those of you who have been there know it is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. It has everything. It has everything above the ground, and everything under the ground. I was talking to the President about one section of Haiti that I never personally visited, although I saw it from the top of some mountains, a section in about the middle of the Republic that is so high that you find there the most beautiful groves and forests of pine trees, a country where in January or February you find ice in the streams, and not very far away you get down to a place where you can grow

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there that you grow?

VOICE: ~~What's~~ Cryptostegia.

P. What?

VOICE: Cryptostegia.

P. Cryptostegia -- that's all right. (laughter) I can remember that.

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STATEMENTS FILE

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I am very proud of what has happened during the last ten years. There were some "doubting Thomases," as President Lescot knows. There were some people who said No, it was too early. But I promised his ^{predecessor} ~~successor~~ in July of 1934 that the Marines would be out by the end of August, and they were. And since that time, one of the experiments of my life has been permanently successful, because in the last ten years of the

Republic of Haiti not a single American has been there with a gun. Haiti has made good in every way. I regard their advance in prosperity and in friendship during those ten years as something that ought to be written up in the history books.

I keep talking, not just when the President comes here to visit me, but on many other occasions, about the development of Haiti. Those of you who have been there know it is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. It has everything. It has everything above the ground, and everything under the ground. I was talking to the President about one section of Haiti that I never personally visited, although I saw it from the top of some mountains, a section in about the middle of the Republic that is so high that you find there the most beautiful groves and forests of pine trees, a country which in January or February you find ice in the streams, and not very far away you get down to a place where you can grow everything that grows. It is an amazing place. I strongly recommend that whenever you get a chance, if you haven't been there, that you go to Haiti.

I think it was a certain Queen of England who said when she died, "Calais is written in my heart." When I die, I think that Haiti is going to be written on my heart, because for all these years I have had the most intense interest in the Republic of Haiti, and the development of its people in a way that will never mean exploitation by any other nation. They ought to develop for themselves, and they have every opportunity in the world to do so. Under President Lesoot and his

predecessor, very great strides have been made. It is becoming a self-contained country, with divergent resources of all sorts of things. We have been talking about economics already, and the fact that Haiti has insufficient industries. And yet there are dozens of articles down there which they can grow and produce the raw materials for, and manufacture themselves. It is not against our interest, because there are a great many things that we can make that they can't make, and there are lots of things that they can make that we can't make. That forms the basis of trade.

At the present time, Haiti is engaged in the cultivation of a new plant, cryptostegia, which turns out rubber. This year they will be getting ten thousand tons of rubber in Haiti. I hope that when I am out of the White House -- I might get beaten on it otherwise -- that the Congress won't put the kind of tariff on rubber for American automobile tires just to keep some synthetic plants going. That would mean that every man in the United States who owned a car would have to pay fifty percent more for his rubber. I believe in cheap tires, and more of them; and the only way to get that is to use the tires that are made by nature, whether it be rubber, or guayule, or cryptostegia.

In that way, and through the diversification of their crops, and the diversification of their industries, the future of Haiti is very, very bright.

We have to remember, as we sometimes forget it in this country, that Haiti is a great deal more than just another

island in the West Indies. Most of the islands in the West Indies have relatively small populations. The Haitian part of the Island of San Domingo contains nearly three million people -- over two hundred people per square mile. Because of this density of population they don't even raise enough food to sustain the entire population.

One of the things we want to help them on, in order to be self-sustaining, is the growing of more of their own food supplies. It will help them. And it will help us, for it may teach us, some day, to make Puerto Rico self-sustaining. We have two million people in Puerto Rico, and almost everything they eat is bought on the outside. The money to buy their own food doesn't go into their pockets, it goes into the pockets of China, and Mexico, and the United States.

And so, in this new civilization that we are coming to, of mutual aid and in a cooperative management between all the nations of the world, I think that not only can Haiti learn a lot from us, but we can learn a lot from Haiti.

It is a wonderful thing that during all these years we have had such good friends down there in the government of Haiti. None more than my old friend, President Lescot, who used to be with us in Washington, and who has come back, and who we hope will come back many, many times again.

President Lescot:

(the Toast was drunk, and President Lescot replied in French, a close translation of which follows):

Dear Mr. President, Dear Sirs:

It is truly a pleasant privilege for me to be this evening beside your President, the great protector of the American continent. His kind words about my country have touched me deeply, as have the words of all my other American friends.

Both our countries are today on the friendliest terms, for the bonds which link our two nations are mighty bonds indeed. One of our Republics, represented both by white and black races, easily complements the other, populated by dark peoples alone.

Our past has shown that the entire history of the Americas is widely linked to the history of our two nations. It is true that in the past there have been misunderstandings between our countries, but these errors have been completely forgotten. Let us forget the past. Let us live in the present, and prepare for the future, for the United States is paving the way to the future.

I have no fears in this regard, and I have placed my trust in the United States and in our inter-American agreements. I know that when the United States is threatened, we, too, are threatened. In the present crisis we have put our cards on the table on the side of the great North American Republic. Those cards, I may now say, have been well played, we have done well to put our trust in the American people, and in the American President. Our game is a good one, though we are paying dearly for it. America is paying dearly in sweat and in blood.

But, if my own Republic is not contributing with its blood, it is contributing in another way, for we are cultivating (rubber) plants which play a large part in securing victory, and we are ready to put our entire agricultural area into the production of these plants to the last acre, in order to help the war effort.

We have won our freedom, and we intend to keep it, and we know that America's respect and generosity to Haiti have been proved in the relations of the past fifty years. Every time foreign powers have threatened us during that time, we have turned towards the United States for help, and have received it.

Haiti must be an example to American nations by standing staunchly on the side of the United States. The American nations should unanimously place themselves at the side of the American people.

I am proud to lift my glass to the American people.

I am proud to lift my glass to my great friend, the President of the United States.

I am proud to lift my glass to the valiant united peoples at war.

(the Toast was drunk)



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

October 15, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WATSON:

Dear Pa:

I am enclosing herewith a stenographic report in French, with English translation, of the remarks made by the President of Haiti at the White House dinner on the evening of October 14.

George T. Summerlin

Enclosures:
Stenographic report
in French:
English translation.

10/15/43 - Enclosure: 1. Stenographic report in French
2. English translation of the report
3. Stenographic report in French
4. English translation of the report
5. Stenographic report in French
6. English translation of the report
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FOR DEFENSE



BUY
UNITED
STATES
SAVINGS
BONDS
AND STAMPS

SUMMARY OF PRESIDENT LESCOT'S SPEECH AT THE WHITE HOUSE, OCTOBER 14, 19

Dear Mr. President, dear Sirs:

It is truly a pleasant privilege for me to find myself this evening beside your president...the great protector of the American continent. His kind words about my country have touched me deeply, as have the words of all my other American friends.

Both our countries are today on the friendliest terms, for the bonds which link our two nations are mighty bonds indeed. One of our republics, represented by both white and black races, easily complements the other, populated by dark people only. Our past relations have shown that the entire history of the Americas is widely linked to the history of our two nations.

If it is true that there have formerly been misunderstandings between our countries, these errors have been completely forgotten. So let us forget the past: let us live in the present, and prepare for the future, for the United States are paving the way to the future. I have no fears in this respect, and I have put my trust in the United States and in our inter-American agreements. I know that, when the United States are threatened, we too are threatened; and in the present crisis we have put our cards on the table on the side of the great North American Republic. These cards, I may now say, have been well played: we have been wise to put our trust in the American people and in the American President. Our game is a good one, though we are paying dearly for it, though America is paying dearly in sweat and in blood. But, if my own republic is not contributing with its blood, it contributes in another way, for we are cultivating (rubber) plants which play a large part in securing victory, and we are prepared to put our entire agricultural area, to the last acre, into the production of these plants, in order to help the war-effort.

We have won our freedom in the past, and we intend to keep it, and we know that America's respect and generosity to Haiti has proved itself worthy in our relations during the last fifty years. Every time that foreign powers have threatened us during those years, we have turned towards the United States for help, and we have received it.

Haiti must be an example to American nations by standing staunchly on the side of the United States. The American nations should unanimously place themselves at the sides of the American people. I am proud to raise my glass to the American people, I am proud to raise my glass to my great friend, the President of the United States, I am proud to raise my glass to the valiant united peoples at war.

NOTE: This is a close approximation, not a verbatim translation.

Andrew John Kauffman, 2nd.