

March 24, 1944

[Statements to the People of the Philippines]
[and on War Crimes - Read at Press Conference]

FDR Speech File

On this, the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, I take the opportunity of conveying ^{to you} a message of ^{friendship} ~~sympathy~~ and good will to the people of the Philippines. American-Filipino friendship has had a long history. The bill for Philippine Independence which I signed just ten years ago was a manifestation of that friendship. It is a source of deep gratification to me to be able to say to the brave people, ^{who are} now bearing the yoke of Japanese domination, that the return of freedom to ^{the} ~~our~~ Islands draws closer with each Allied victory. The Philippine government temporarily residing here possesses all the attributes of an independent nation. America will fulfill its pledge ~~to give you your~~ ^{to} independence.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 24, 1944

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

On this, the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, I take the opportunity of conveying again a message of friendship and good will to the people of the Philippines. American-Filipino friendship has had a long history. The bill for Philippine Independence which I signed just ten years ago was a manifestation of that friendship. It is a source of deep gratification to me to be able to say to the brave people, who are now bearing the yoke of Japanese domination, that the return of freedom to their Islands draws closer with each Allied victory. The Philippine government temporarily residing here possesses all the attributes of an independent nation. America will fulfill its pledge.

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

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The United Nations are fighting to make a world in which tyranny and aggression can not exist; a world based upon freedom, equality and justice; a world in which all persons regardless of race, color or creed may live in peace, honor and dignity.

In the meantime in most of Europe and in parts of Asia the systematic torture and murder of civilians -- men, women and children -- by the Nazis and the Japanese continue unabated. In areas subjugated by the aggressors innocent Poles, Czechs, Norwegians, Dutch, Danes, French, Greeks, Russians, Chinese, Filipinos -- and many others -- are being starved or frozen to death or murdered in cold blood in a campaign of savagery.

The slaughters of Warsaw, Lidice, Kharkov and Nanking -- the brutal torture and murder by the Japanese, not only of civilians but of our own gallant American soldiers and fliers -- these are startling examples of what goes on day by day, year in and year out, wherever the Nazis and the Japs are in military control -- free to follow their barbaric purpose.

In one of the blackest crimes of all history -- begun by the Nazis in the day of peace and multiplied by them a hundred times in time of war -- the wholesale systematic murder of the Jews of Europe goes on unabated every hour. As a result of the events of the last few days hundreds of thousands of Jews, who while living under persecution have at least found a haven from death in Hungary and the Balkans, are now threatened with annihilation as Hitler's forces descend more heavily upon these lands. That these innocent people, who have already survived a decade of Hitler's fury, should perish on the very eve of triumph over the barbarism which their persecution symbolizes, would be a major tragedy.

It is therefore fitting that we should again proclaim our determination that none who participate in these acts of savagery shall go unpunished. The United Nations have made it clear that they will pursue the guilty and deliver them up in order that Justice be done. That warning applies not only to the leaders but also to their functionaries and subordinates in Germany and in the satellite countries. All who knowingly take part in the deportation of Jews to their death in Poland or Norwegians and French to their death in Germany are equally guilty with the executioner. All who share the guilt shall share the punishment.

Hitler is committing these crimes against humanity in the name of the German people. I ask every German and every man everywhere under Nazi domination to show the world by his action that in his heart he does not share these insane criminal desires. Let him hide these pursued victims, help them to get over their borders, and do what he can to save them from the Nazi hangman. I ask him also to keep watch, and to record the evidence that will one day be used to convict the guilty.

In the meantime, and until the victory that is now assured is won, the United States will persevere in its efforts to rescue the victims of brutality of the Nazis and the Japs. In so far as the necessity of military operations permit this Government will use all means at its command to aid the escape of all intended victims of the Nazi and Jap executioner -- regardless of race or religion or color. We call upon the free peoples of Europe and Asia temporarily to open their frontiers to all victims of oppression. We shall find havens of refuge for them, and we shall find the means for their maintenance and support until the tyrant is driven from their homelands and they may return.

In the name of justice and humanity let all freedom loving people rally to this righteous undertaking.

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