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. 1541

1944 October 12

Columbus Day Address - to Chiefs of Missions of Latin America

The President began his address with the following:

"Ambassadors and Representatives of the American Republics"

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

OCTOBER 12, 1944

Today -- the birthday of the new world -- the peoples of the American Republics join in paying tribute to the courage and vision of Christopher Columbus, whose name we honor and whose adventurous spirit we perpetuate.

The survival of that spirit is more important than ever, at this time when we are fighting a world war, and when we are building the solid, durable foundations for future world peace.

The little fleet with which Columbus first crossed the ocean took ten weeks for the voyage. The crews of the three ships totalled approximately ninety men.

Today -- every day -- many times that number of men and many tons of cargo are carried across the ocean by air in a few hours. And by sea transport, an entire division of some fifteen thousand men can be sent across the Atlantic in one ship in one week.

When we remember the rapid development of aviation since the last war we can look ahead to the coming years, and know that all the airways across all the seas will be constant lines of communication and commerce.

Thus the margin between the Old World and the New -- as we have been used to calling the hemispheres -- becomes constantly narrower. This means that if we do not now take effective measures to prevent another World War and if there were to be a Third World War, the lands of the Western Hemisphere would be as vulnerable to attack from Europe and Asia as were the Island of Crete and the Philippine Islands five years ago.

It is a significant fact that today in Italy -- the homeland of Columbus -- forces from many parts of this hemisphere and from many distant parts of the civilized world are fighting for freedom against the German threat or mediaeval tyranny.

Serving in the Allied Armies in Italy are men from the forty-eight United States, from the United Kingdom or Great Britain, and the Republic of France. There are also strong, well trained, well equipped forces from Brazil; there are units from Puerto Rico; there are Greeks and there are Poles who have distinguished themselves in bitter fighting at Cassino and Ancona and Rimini; there are gallant men from Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, and India; there are combat teams composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry who came from Hawaii -- all providing an effective answer to the false Nazi claims of "Nordic superiority".

And there are also Italians bravely fighting for the liberation of their country. They are fighting in the Allied Armies, and they are fighting in the underground forces behind the German lines.

If the spirit of Columbus hovers over his native land today, we can be sure that he rejoices in the varied nature of the Allied forces. For he was one of the truly great internationalists of all time.

During the past century, many millions of Italians have come to the Western Hemisphere seeking freedom and opportunity. In Italy there is hardly a town or village that does not contain families who have blood ties with the New World. This is one of the many reasons why the forces of liberation have been welcomed so cordially by the Italian people after twenty-two years of Fascism.

The Fascists and the Nazis sought to deceive and to divide the American Republics. They tried not only through propaganda from across the seas, but also through agents, spies and Fifth Columnists, operating all over the Western Hemisphere. But they failed. The American Republics were not deceived by their protestations of peace and friendship; they were not intimidated by their threats.

The people of the United States will never forget how the other American Republics, acting in accord with their pledges of solidarity, rallied to our common defense when the continent was violated by Axis treachery in an attack on this country. At that time Axis armies were still unchecked, and even the stark threat of an invasion from Dakar hung over our heads.

We have maintained the solidarity of the governments of all the American Republics -- except one. And the people of all of the Republics will have the opportunity to share in the achievement of the common victory.

The bonds that unite the American Republics into a community of good neighbors must remain strong. We have not labored long and faithfully to build in this New World a system of international security and cooperation -- merely to let it be dissipated in any period of post-war indifference. Within the framework of the world organization of the United Nations, which the governments and people of the American Republics are helping to establish, the inter-American system can and must play a strong and vital role.

Secretary Hull has told me of the conversations he has had with representatives of our sister Republics concerning the formation of a world security organization. We have received important and valuable expressions of views from several of these governments. I know that Secretary Hull, and Under Secretary Stettinius who led the United States delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, are looking forward to further exchanges of

views with our Good Neighbors before the meeting of the general conference to establish the world organization. We must press forward to bring into existence this world organization to maintain peace and security. There is no time to lose.

It is our objective to establish the solid foundations of the peace organization without further delay, and without waiting for the end of hostilities. There must, of course, be time for discussion by all the peace-loving nations -- large and small. Substantial progress has already been made, and it must be continued as rapidly as possible.

Like the Constitution of the United States itself, the Charter of the United Nations must not be static and inflexible, but must be adaptable to the changing conditions of progress -- social, economic, and political -- all over the world.

In approaching the great problems of the future -- the future which we shall share in common with all the free peoples of this earth -- we shall do well to remember that we are the inheritors of the tradition of Christopher Columbus, the Navigator who ventured across uncharted seas.

When Columbus was about to set forth in the summer of 1492 he wrote: "Above all it is very important that I forget sleep, and labor much at navigation, because it is necessary".

We shall require the same determination, the same devotion, as we steer our course through the great age of exploration and discovery which lies before us.

Hrg. Trading copy

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- Franklin D. Roosevelt

ADDRESS of the President
Before The Chiefs Of The Diplomatic Missions From The
Other American Republics, On The Occasion Of
Columbus Day, October 12, 1944
Broadcast Nationally From The Oval Room
In The White House
At 4.00 p.m., e.w.t.

Ambassadors and Representatives of the American Republics:

Today is (--) the birthday of the new world. The peoples of the American Republics are joining in paying tribute to the courage and vision of Christopher Columbis, whose name we honor and whose adventurous spirit we perpetuate.

The survival of that spirit is more important than ever, at this time when we are fighting a world war, (and) when we are building the solid, durable foundations for future world peace.

The little fleet with which Columbus first crossed the ocean took ten weeks for the voyage. And the crews of those (the) three ships totaled approximately ninety men.

Today -- every day -- many times that number of men and many tons of cargo are carried across the ocean by air -- they go across in a few hours. And by sea transport, an entire division of some fifteen thousand men can be sent across the Atlantic in one ship in one week.

When we remember the rapid development of aviation since the last war, we can look ahead to the coming years and know that all the airways across all the seas are going to

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.

(will) be constant lines of communication and commerce.

Thus the margin between the Old World and the New World -- as we have been used to calling the hemispheres -- becomes constantly narrower. This means that if we do not now take effective measures to prevent another World War and if there were to be a Third World War, the lands of the Western Hemisphere would be as vulnerable to attack from Europe and Asia as were the Island of Crete and the Philippine Islands five years ago.

It is a significant fact (that) today that in Italy -- the homeland of Columbus -- forces from many parts of the (this) hemisphere and from many distant parts of the civilized world are fighting for freedom against the German and the Japanese threat of mediaeval tyranny.

Serving in the Allied Armies in Italy are men from (the) forty-eight United States, from the (United) Kingdom of Great Britain, and the Republic of France. But, we must remember -- this is the first anniversary in which we can say it -- there are also strong, well trained, well equipped forces from Brazil; there are units from Puerto Rico; there are Greeks, (and) there are Poles who have distinguished themselves in bitter fighting at Cassino and Ancona and Rimini; there are gallant men from Canada, and Ireland, and New Zealand, and South Africa, and India; there are combat teams composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry who came from Hawaii -- all providing an effective answer to the false Nazi claims of "Nordic superiority."

And there are also Italians themselves (bravely) fighting bravely for the liberation of their country. They are fighting in the Allied Armies, and they are fighting in the underground forces behind the German lines.

If the spirit of Columbus hovers over his native land today, we can be sure that he rejoices in the varied nature of the Allied forces. For he was one of the truly great internationalists of his day (all time).

During the past century, millions of Italians have come to the Western Hemisphere seeking freedom and opportunity. In Italy there is hardly a town or a village that does not contain families who have blood ties with the New World. This is one of the many reasons why the forces of liberation have been welcomed so cordially by the Italian people after twenty-two years of Fascism.

The Fascists and the Nazis sought to deceive and to divide the American Republics. They tried not only through propaganda from across the seas, but also through agents and spies and Fifth Columnists, operating all over the Western Hemisphere. But we know that they failed. The American Republics were not deceived by their protestations of peace and friendship; and they were not intimidated by their threats.

The people of the United States will never forget how the other American Republics, acting in accord with their pledges of solidarity, rallied to our common defense when the continent was violated by Axis treachery in an attack on this country. At that time Axis armies were still unchecked,

and even the stark threat of an invasion from Dakar hung over their (our) heads.

We have maintained the solidarity of the governments of all the American Republics -- except one. And the people of all (of) the Republics, I think without exception, will have the opportunity to share in the achievement of the common victory.

The bonds that unite the American Republics into a community of good neighbors must remain strong. We have not labored long and faithfully to build in this New World a system of international security and cooperation -- merely to let it be dissipated in any period of postwar indifference. Within the framework of the (world) organization -- this new world organization that we have heard so much of lately -- this world organization of the United Nations, which the governments and people of the American Republics are helping to establish, the inter-American system can and must play a strong and vital role.

Secretary Hull has told me of the conversations he has had with representatives of our sister Republics concerning the formation of a world security organization. We have received important and valuable expressions of opinions and views from many (several) of these governments. And I know that Secretary Hull, and Under Secretary Stettinius who led the United States delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, are looking forward to further exchanges of views with our Good Neighbors before the meeting of the general conference to establish the world organization. We must press forward to bring into existence this (world)

organization to maintain peace and security. There is no time to lose. And this time I think it is going to work.

It is our objective to establish the solid foundations of the peace organization without further delay, and without even waiting for the end of hostilities. There must, of course, be time for discussion by all the peace-loving nations -- large and small. We know that substantial progress has already been made, and it must be continued as rapidly as possible.

Like the Constitution of the United States, and many other Republics (itself), the Charter of the United Nations must not be static and inflexible, but must be adaptable to the changing conditions of progress -- social and economic and political -- all over the world.

So, in approaching the great problems of the future -- the future which we shall share in common with all the free peoples of this earth -- we shall do well to remember that we are the inheritors of the tradition of Christopher Columbus, the Navigator who ventured across uncharted seas.

I remember that when Columbus was about to set forth in the summer of 1492, he put in the beginning of his log-book the following words (wrote): "Above all, it is very important that I forget sleep, and that I labor much at navigation, because it is necessary."

We shall require -- all of us -- the same determination, the same devotion, as we steer our course through the great age of exploration, the age of (and) discovery that (which) lies before us.

STATEMENTS FILE

HOLD FOR RELEASE HOLD FOR RELEASE HOLD FOR RELEASE

OCTOBER 12, 1944

CAUTION: The following address of the President, to be delivered at the White House before the Chiefs of the Diplomatic Missions from the other American Republics on the occasion of Columbus Day, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE until released.

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 4:00 o'clock, P.M., E.W.T., October 12, 1944. The same release also applies to radio announcers and news commentators.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

Ambassador & Representatives of the American Republics:

Today, is the birthday of the new world — the peoples of the American Republics join in paying tribute to the courage and vision of Christopher Columbus, whose name we honor and whose adventurous spirit we perpetuate.

The survival of that spirit is more important than ever, at this time when we are fighting a world war, and when we are building the solid, durable foundations for future world peace.

The little fleet with which Columbus first crossed the ocean took ten weeks for the voyage. The crews of the three ships totalled approximately ninety men.

Today — every day — many times that number of men and many tons of cargo are carried across the ocean by air in a few hours. And by sea transport, an entire division of some fifteen thousand men can be sent across the Atlantic in one ship in one week.

When we remember the rapid development of aviation since the last war, we can look ahead to the coming years and know that all the airways across all the seas will be constant lines of communication and commerce.

Thus the margin between the Old World and the New — as we have been used to calling the hemispheres — becomes constantly narrower. This means that if we do not now take effective measures to prevent another World War and if there were to be a Third World War, the lands of the Western Hemisphere would be as vulnerable to attack from Europe and Asia as were the Island of Crete and the Philippine Islands five years ago.

It is a significant fact that today in Italy — the homeland of Columbus — forces from many parts of this hemisphere and from many distant parts of the civilized world are fighting for freedom against the German threat of mediaeval tyranny.

Serving in the Allied Armies in Italy are men from the forty-eight United States, from the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and the Republic of France. There are also strong, well trained, well equipped forces from Brazil; there are units from Puerto Rico; there are Greeks, and there are Poles who have distinguished themselves in bitter fighting at Cassino and Ancona and Rimini; there are gallant men from Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, and India; there are combat teams composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry who came from Hawaii — all providing an effective answer to the false Nazi claims of "Nordic supericrity".

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And there are also Italians ~~bravely~~ fighting for the liberation of their country. They are fighting in the Allied Armies, and they are fighting in the underground forces behind the German lines.

If the spirit of Columbus hovers over his native land today, we can be sure that he rejoices in the varied nature of the Allied forces. For he was one of the truly great internationalists of ~~all time. his day~~.

During the past century, many millions of Italians have come to the Western Hemisphere seeking freedom and opportunity. In Italy there is hardly a town or village that does not contain families who have blood ties with the New World. This is one of the many reasons why the forces of liberation have been welcomed so cordially by the Italian people after twenty-two years of Fascism.

The Fascists and the Nazis sought to deceive and to divide the American Republics. They tried not only through propaganda from across the seas, but also through agents, and spies and Fifth Columnists, operating all over the Western Hemisphere. But they failed. The American Republics were not deceived by their protestations of peace and friendship; they were not intimidated by their threats.

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The bonds that unite the American Republics into a community of good neighbors must remain strong. We have not labored long and faithfully to build in this New World a system of international security and cooperation -- merely to let it be dissipated in any period of post-war indifference. Within the framework of the ~~world~~ organization of the United Nations, which the governments and people of the American Republics are helping to establish, the inter-American system can and must play a strong and vital role.

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It is a significant fact that today in Italy -- the homeland of Columbus -- forces from many parts of this hemisphere and from many distant parts of the civilized world are fighting for freedom against the German threat of mediaeval tyranny.

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And there are also Italians bravely fighting for the liberation of their country. They are fighting in the Allied Armies, and they are fighting in the underground forces behind the German lines.

If the spirit of Columbus hovers over his native land today, we can be sure that he rejoices in the varied nature of the Allied forces. For he was one of the truly great internationalists of all time.

During the past century, many millions of Italians have come to the Western Hemisphere seeking freedom and opportunity. In Italy there is hardly a town or village that does not contain families who have blood ties with the New World. This is one of the many reasons why the forces of liberation have been welcomed so cordially by the Italian people after twenty-two years of Fascism.

The Fascists and the Nazis sought to deceive and to divide the American Republics. They tried not only through propaganda from across the seas, but also through agents, spies and Fifth Columnists, operating all over the Western Hemisphere. But they failed. The American Republics were not deceived by their protestations of peace and friendship; they were not intimidated by their threats.

The people of the United States will never forget how the other American Republics, acting in accord with their pledges of solidarity, rallied to our common defense when the continent was violated by Axis treachery in an attack on this country. At that time Axis armies were still unchecked, and even the stark threat of an invasion from Dakar hung over our heads.

We have maintained the solidarity of the governments of all the American Republics -- except one. And the people of all of the Republics will have the opportunity to share in the achievement of the common victory.

The bonds that unite the American Republics into a community of good neighbors must remain strong. We have not labored long and faithfully to build in this New World a system of international security and cooperation -- merely to let it be dissipated in any period of post-war indifference. Within the framework of the world organization of the United Nations, which the governments and people of the American Republics are helping to establish, the inter-American system can and must play a strong and vital role.

Secretary Hull has told me of the conversations he has had with representatives of our sister Republics concerning the formation of a world security organization. We have received important and valuable expressions of views from several of these governments. I know that Secretary Hull, and Under Secretary Stettinius who led the United States delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, are looking forward to further exchanges of views with our Good Neighbors before the meeting of the general conference to establish the world organization. We must press forward to bring into existance this world organization to maintain peace and security. There is no time to lose.

It is our objective to establish the solid foundations of the peace organization without further delay, and without waiting for the end of hostilities. There must, of course, be time for discussion by all the peace-loving nations -- large and small. Substantial progress has already been made, and it must be continued as rapidly as possible.

Like the Constitution of the United States itself, the Charter of the United Nations must not be static and inflexible,

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When Columbus was about to set forth in the summer of 1492 he wrote: "Above all it is very important that I forget sleep, and labor much at navigation, because it is necessary."

We shall require the same determination, the same devotion, as we steer our course through the great age of exploration and discovery which lies before us.

SECOND DRAFT

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
October 12, 1944

My Friends & Good Neighbors.

Today -- the birthday of the new world -- the peoples of the American Republics join in paying tribute to the courage and vision of Christopher Columbus, whose name we honor and whose adventurous spirit we perpetuate.

The survival of that spirit is more important than ever, at this time when we are fighting a world war, and when we are building the solid, durable foundations for future world peace.

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It is a significant fact that today in Italy -- the homeland of Columbus -- forces from many parts of this hemisphere and from many distant parts of the civilized world are fighting for freedom against the German threat of mediaeval tyranny.

Serving in the ~~5th and 8th~~ Allied Armies in Italy are men from the forty-eight United States, from the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and the Republic of France. There are also strong, well trained, well equipped forces from Brazil; there are units from Puerto Rico; there are Greeks and there are Poles who have distinguished themselves in bitter fighting at Cassino and Ancona and Rimini; there are gallant men from Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, and India; there are combat teams composed of Americans of Japanese

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The people of the United States will never forget how the other American republics, acting in accord with their pledges of solidarity, rallied to our common defense when the continent was violated by Axis treachery in an attack on this country. At that time Axis armies were still unchecked, and even the stark threat of an invasion from Dakar hung over our heads.

United States delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, are looking forward to further exchanges of views with our Good Neighbors before the meeting of the general conference to establish the world organization. We must press forward to bring into existence this world organization to maintain peace and security. ~~[for all freedom-loving nations, large and small.]~~ There is no time to lose. ~~We must not again miss the tide.~~

It is our objective to establish the solid foundations of the peace organization without further delay, and without waiting for the end of hostilities. There must of course be ~~ample~~ time for discussion by all ~~of the United Nations~~ the peace-loving nations — large and small. Substantial progress has already been made, and it must be continued as rapidly as possible.

Like the Constitution of the United States itself, the Charter of the United Nations must not be ~~a~~ static and inflexible ~~charter~~, but must be adaptable to the changing conditions of progress — social, economic, and political — all over the world.

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October 12, 1944

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It is a significant fact that today in Italy — the homeland of Columbus — forces from many parts of this hemisphere and from many distant parts of the civilized world are fighting for freedom against the German threat of mediaeval tyranny.

Serving in the 5th and 8th Armies ~~under General Alexander, General Clark and General Leese~~ in Italy are men from the forty-eight United States, from the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and the Republic of France. There are also strong, well trained, well equipped forces from Brazil; there are units from Puerto Rico; there are Greeks and there are Poles who have distinguished themselves in bitter fighting at Cassino and Ancona and Rimini; there are gallant men from Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, and India; there are combat teams composed of Americans of Japanese

ancestry who came from Hawaii -- all providing an effective answer to the false Nazi claims of "Nordic superiority".

And there are also Italians bravely fighting for the liberation of their country. They are fighting in the Allied armies, and they are fighting in the underground forces behind the German lines.

If the spirit of Columbus today hovers over his native land, we can be sure that he rejoices in the varied nature of the Allied forces. For he was one of the truly great internationalists of all time.

During the past century, many millions of Italians have come to the Western Hemisphere seeking freedom and opportunity. In Italy there is hardly a town or village that does not contain families who have blood ties with the New World -- which is one of the many reasons why the forces of liberation have been welcomed so cordially by the Italian people after twenty-two years of Fascism.

The Fascists and the Nazis sought to deceive and to divide the American republics; they tried not only through propaganda from across the seas but also through agents, spies and Fifth Columnists, operating all over the Western Hemisphere. But they failed. The American

Republics were not deceived by their protestations of peace and friendship; they were not intimidated by their threats.

We have maintained the solidarity of all the American republics — except one. And all of the republics ~~— with that one exception —~~ the people of will share in the achievement of the common victory. have the opportunity to

The bonds that unite the American republics into a community of good neighbors must remain strong. We have not labored long and faithfully to build in this New World a system of international security and cooperation — merely to let it be dissipated in any period of post-war indifference. Within the framework of the world organization of United Nations, which the governments and people of the American Republics are helping to establish, the inter-American system can and must play a strong and vital role.

Secretary Hull has told me of the conversations he has had with representatives of our sister Republics concerning the formation of a world security organization. We have received important and valuable expressions of views from several of these governments. I know that Secretary Hull, and Under Secretary Stettinius who led the

United States delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, are looking forward to further exchanges of views with our Good Neighbors before the meeting of the general conference to establish the world organization. We must press forward to bring into existence this world organization to maintain peace and security for all freedom-loving nations, large and small. There is no time to lose. We must not again miss the tide.

In approaching the great problems of the future -- the future which we shall share in common with all the free peoples of this earth -- we shall do well to remember that we are the inheritors of the tradition of Christopher Columbus, the navigator who ventured across uncharted seas.

When Columbus was about to set forth in the summer of 1492 he wrote: "Above all it is very important that I forget sleep, and labor much at navigation, because it is necessary."

We shall require the same determination, the same devotion, as we steer our course through the great age of exploration and discovery which lies before us.

Insert (A)

It is our objective to lay the solid foundations of the peace organization without further delay, and without waiting for the end of hostilities. There must of course be ample time for discussion by all of the United Nations -- large and small. Substantial progress has already been made, and it must be continued as rapidly as possible.

Like the Constitution of the United States itself, the Charter of the United Nations must not be a static inflexible charter, but must be adaptable to the changing conditions of progress -- social, economic, and political -- all over the world.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Mr. Armour telephoned and said he thought the best beginning for the speech would be:

"Ambassadors and Representatives of the American Republics".