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. 1566

1944 December 24

Radio Address - Christmas Eve

DRAFT OF CHRISTMAS TALK

It is not easy to say "Merry Christmas" to you, my fellow Americans, in this time of destructive war. Nor can one lightly say "Merry Christmas" tonight to our armed forces at their battle stations all over the world -- or to our Allies who fight by their side.

Here, at home, we will celebrate this Christmas day in our traditional American way -- because of its deep spiritual meaning to us; because the teachings of Christ are fundamental in our lives; and because we want our youngest generation to grow up knowing the significance of this tradition and the story of the coming of the immortal Prince of Peace and Good-Will. But, in [almost, and] perhaps every home in the United States, sad and anxious thoughts will be continually with the millions of our loved ones who are suffering hardships and misery, and who are risking their very lives to preserve for us and for all mankind, the fruits of His teachings and the foundations of civilization itself.

The Christmas spirit lives tonight in the bitter cold of the front lines in Europe and in the heat of the jungles and swamps of Burma and the Pacific islands. Even the roar of our bombers and fighters in the air and the guns of our ships at sea will not drown out the messages of Christmas which come to the hearts of our fighting men. The thoughts of these men tonight will turn to us

here at home around our Christmas trees, surrounded by our children and grandchildren and their Christmas stockings and gifts -- just as our own thoughts go out to them tonight and every night in their distant places.

We all know how anxious they are to be home with us, and they know how anxious we are to have them -- and how determined

every one of us is to make their day of home-coming as early as possible. And -- above all -- they know the determination of all right thinking people and nations, that Christmases such as those that we have known in these years of world tragedy shall not come again to beset the souls of the children of God.

This generation has passed through many recent years of deep darkness, watching the spread of the poison of Hitlerism and fascism in Europe -- the growth of imperialism and militarism in Japan -- the final clash of war all over the world. Then came the dark days of the fall of France, and the ruthless bombing of England, and the desperate battle of the Atlantic, and of Pearl Harbor and Corregidor and Singapore.

Since then the prayers of good men and women and children the world over, have been answered. The tide of battle has turned, slowly but inexorably, against those who sought to destroy civilization.

On this Christmas day, we cannot yet say when our victory will come. Our enemies still fight fanatically. They still have reserves of men and military power. But, they themselves know that they and their evil works are doomed. We may hasten the day of that doom if we here at home continue to do our full share.

We pray that that day may come soon. We pray that until

then, God will protect our gallant men and women in the uniforms of the United Nations -- that He will receive into His infinite grace those who make their supreme sacrifice in the cause of righteousness and love of Him and His teachings.

We pray that with victory will come a new day of peace on earth in which all the nations of the earth will join together for all time. That is the spirit of Christmas, the holy day. May that spirit live and grow throughout the world in all the years to come.

P.P.F. 1F

Draft of Xmas talk. 5M file 1944

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December 23, 1944

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Secretary to the President

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1566

ADDRESS Of The President
On Christmas Eve
From Hyde Park, New York
December 24, 1944, 5.15 p.m., e.w.t.
A World-Wide Broadcast

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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.

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RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

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STATEMENTS FILE

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in the cause of

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 16, 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. AUGUSTUS GIEGENGACK

Would you be good enough to have a box made for this and have it marked as follows:

F.D.R. Radio Address - Christmas Eve - December 24, 1944.

Audrey Turner

Audrey Turner