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MESSAGE  
OF THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES

1211

76th Congress

1st Session

January 4, 1939

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TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

In reporting on the state of the nation, I have felt it necessary on previous occasions to advise the Congress of disturbance abroad and of the need of putting our own house in order in the face of storm signals from across the seas. As this Seventy-Sixth Congress opens there is need for further warning.

A war which threatened to envelop the world in flames has been averted: but it has become increasingly clear that peace is not assured.

All about us rage undeclared wars -- military and economic. All about us grow more deadly armaments -- military and economic. All about us are threats of new aggression -- military and economic.

Storms from abroad directly challenge three institutions indispensable to Americans, now as always. The first is religion. It is the source of the other two -- democracy and international good faith.

Religion, by teaching man his relationship to God, gives the individual a sense of his own dignity and teaches him to respect himself by respecting his neighbors.

Democracy, the practice of self-government, is a covenant among free men to respect the rights and liberties of their fellows.

International good faith, a sister of democracy, springs from the will of civilized nations of men to respect the rights and liberties of other nations of men.

In a modern civilization, all three -- religion, democracy and international good faith -- complement each other.

Where freedom of religion has been attacked, the attack has come from sources opposed to democracy. Where democracy has been overthrown, the spirit of free worship has disappeared. And where religion and democracy have vanished, good faith and reason in international affairs have given way to strident ambition and brute force.

An ordering of society which relegates religion, democracy and good faith among nations to the background can find no place within it for the ideals of the Prince of Peace. The United States rejects such an ordering, and retains its ancient faith.

There comes a time in the affairs of men when they must prepare to defend not their homes alone but the tenets of faith and humanity on which their churches, their governments and their

very civilization are founded. The defense of religion, of democracy and of good faith among nations is all the same fight. To save one we must now make up our minds to save all.

We know what might happen to us of the United States if the new philosophies of force were to encompass the other continents and invade our own. We, no more than other nations, can afford to be surrounded by the enemies of our faith and our humanity. Fortunate it is, therefore, that in this Western Hemisphere we have, under a common ideal of democratic government, a rich diversity of resources and of peoples functioning together in mutual respect and peace.

That Hemisphere, that peace, and that ideal we propose to do our share in protecting against storms from any quarter. Our people and our resources are pledged to secure that protection. From that determination no American flinches.

This by no means implies that the American Republics disassociate themselves from the nations of other continents -- it does not mean the Americas against the rest of the world. We as one of the Republics reiterate our willingness to help the cause of world peace. We stand on our historic offer to take counsel with all other nations of the world to the end that aggression among them be terminated, that the race of armaments cease and that commerce be renewed.

But the world has grown so small and weapons of attack so swift that no nation can be safe in its will to peace so long as any other single powerful nation refuses to settle its grievances at the council table.

For if any government bristling with implements of war insists on policies of force, weapons of defense give the only safety.

In our foreign relations we have learned from the past what not to do. From new wars we have learned what we must do.

We have learned that effective timing of defense, and the distant points from which attacks may be launched are completely different from what they were twenty years ago.

We have learned that survival cannot be guaranteed by arming after the attack begins -- for there is new range and speed to offense.

We have learned that long before any overt military act, aggression begins with preliminaries of propaganda, subsidized penetration, the loosening of ties of good will, the stirring of prejudice and the incitement to disunion.

We have learned that God-fearing democracies of the world which observe the sanctity of treaties and good faith in their dealings with other nations cannot safely be indifferent to international lawlessness anywhere. They cannot forever let pass, without effective protest, acts of aggression against sister nations -- acts which automatically undermine all of us.

Obviously they must proceed along practical, peaceful lines. But the mere fact that we rightly decline to intervene with arms to prevent acts of aggression does not mean that we must act as if there were no aggression at all. Words may be futile, but war is not the only means of commanding a decent respect for the opinions of mankind. There are many methods short of war, but stronger and more effective than mere words, of bringing home to aggressor governments the aggregate sentiments of our own people.

At the very least, we can and should avoid any action, or any lack of action, which will encourage, assist or build up an aggressor. We have learned that when we deliberately try to legislate neutrality, our neutrality laws may operate unevenly and unfairly -- may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to the victim. The instinct of self-preservation should warn us that we ought not to let that happen any more.

And we have learned something else -- the old, old lesson that probability of attack is mightily decreased by the assurance of an ever ready defense. Since 1931 world events of thunderous import have moved with lightning speed. During these eight years many of our people clung to the hope that the innate decency of mankind would protect the unprepared who showed their innate trust in mankind. Today we are all wiser -- and sadder.

Under modern conditions what we mean by "adequate defense" -- a policy subscribed to by all -- must be divided into three elements. First we must have armed forces and defenses strong enough to ward off sudden attack against strategic positions and key facilities essential to ensure sustained resistance and ultimate victory. Secondly we must have the organization and location of those key facilities so that they may be immediately utilized and rapidly expanded to meet all needs without danger of serious interruption by enemy attack.

In the course of a few days I shall send you a special message making recommendations for those two essentials of defense against danger which we cannot safely assume will not come.

If these first two essentials are reasonably provided for, we must be able confidently to invoke the third element, the underlying strength of citizenship -- the self-confidence, the ability, the imagination and the devotion that give the staying power to see things through.

A strong and united nation may be destroyed if it is unprepared against sudden attack. But even a nation well armed and well organized from a strictly military standpoint, may, after a period of time, meet defeat if it is unnerved by self-distrust, endangered by class prejudice, by dissension between capital and labor, by false economy and by other unsolved social problems at home.

In meeting the troubles of the world we must meet them as one people -- with a unity born of the fact that for generations those who have come to our shores, representing many kindreds and tongues, have been welded by common opportunity into a united patriotism. If another form of government can present a united front in its attack on a democracy, the attack must be met by a united democracy. Such a democracy can and must exist in the United States.

A dictatorship may command the full strength of a regimented nation. But the united strength of a democratic nation can be mustered only when its people, educated by modern standards to know what is going on and where they are going, have conviction that they are receiving as large a share of opportunity for development, as large a share of material success and of human dignity, as they have a right to receive.

Our nation's program of social and economic reform is therefore a part of defense as basic as armaments themselves.

Against the background of events in Europe, in Africa and in Asia during these recent years, the pattern of what we have accomplished since 1933 appears in even clearer focus.

For the first time we have moved upon deep-seated problems affecting our national strength and have forged national instruments adequate to meet them.

Consider what the seemingly piecemeal struggles of these six years add up to in terms of realistic national preparedness.

We are conserving and developing natural resources -- land, water, power, forests.

We are trying to provide necessary food, shelter and medical care for the health of our population.

We are putting agriculture -- our system of food and fibre supply -- on a sounder basis.

We are strengthening the weakest spot in our system of industrial supply -- its long smouldering labor difficulties.

We have cleaned up our credit system so that depositor and investor alike may more readily and willingly make their capital available for peace or war.

We are giving to our youth new opportunities for work and education.

We have sustained the morale of all the population by the dignified recognition of our obligations to the aged, the helpless and the needy.

Above all, we have made the American people conscious of their interrelationship and their interdependence. They sense a common destiny -- and a common need of each other. Differences of occupation, geography, race and religion no longer obscure the nation's fundamental unity in thought and in action.

We have our difficulties, true -- but we are a wiser and a tougher nation than we were in 1929, or 1932.

Never have there been six years of such far-flung internal preparedness in our history. And all this has been done without any dictator's power to command, without conscription of labor or confiscation of capital, without concentration camps, and without a scratch on freedom of speech, freedom of the press or the rest of the Bill of Rights.

We see things now that we could not see along the way. The tools of government which we had in 1933 are outmoded. We have had to forge new tools for a new role of government in democracy -- a role of new responsibility for new needs and increased responsibility for old needs, long neglected.

Some of these tools had to be roughly shaped and still need some machining down. Many of those who fought bitterly against the forging of these new tools welcome their use today. The American people, as a whole, have accepted them. The Nation looks to the Congress to improve the new machinery which we have permanently installed, provided that in the process the social usefulness of the machinery is not destroyed or impaired.

All of us agree that we should simplify and improve laws if experience and operation clearly demonstrate the need. For instance, all of us want better provision for our older people under our social security legislation. For the medically needy we must provide better care.

Most of us agree that for the sake of employer and employee alike we must find ways to end factional labor strife and employer-employee disputes.

Most of us recognize that none of these tools can be put to maximum effectiveness unless the executive processes of government are revamped -- reorganized, if you will -- into more effective combination. And even after such reorganization it will take time to develop administrative personnel and experience in order to use our new tools with a minimum of mistakes. The Congress, of course, needs no further information on this.

With this exception of legislation to provide greater government efficiency, and with the exception of legislation to ameliorate our railroad and other transportation problems, the past three Congresses have met in part or in whole the pressing needs of the new order of things.

We have now passed the period of internal conflict in the launching of our program of social reform. Our full energies may now be released to invigorate the processes of recovery in order to preserve our reforms, and to give every man and woman who wants to work a real job at a living wage.

But time is of paramount importance. The deadline of danger from within and from without is not within our control. The hour-glass may be in the hands of other nations. Our own hour-glass tells us that we are off on a race to make democracy work, so that we may be efficient in peace and therefore secure in self defense.

This time element forces us to still greater efforts to attain the full employment of our labor and our capital.

The first duty of our statesmanship today is to bring capital and man-power together.

Dictatorships do this by main force. By using main force they apparently succeed at it -- for the moment. However we abhor their methods, we are compelled to admit that they have obtained substantial utilization of all their material and human resources. Like it or not they have solved, for a time at least, the problem of idle men and idle capital. Can we compete with them by boldly seeking methods of putting idle men and idle capital together and, at the same time, remain within our American way of life, within the Bill of Rights, and within the bounds of what is, from our point of view, civilization itself?

We suffer from a great unemployment of capital. Many people have the idea that as a nation we are overburdened with debt and are spending more than we can afford. That is not so. Despite our Federal Government expenditures the entire debt of our national economic system, public and private together, is no larger today than it was in 1929, and the interest thereon is far less than it was in 1929.

The object is to put capital -- private as well as public -- to work.

We want to get enough capital and labor at work to give us a total turnover of business, a total national income, of at least eighty billion dollars a year. At that figure we shall have a substantial reduction of unemployment; and the Federal revenues will be sufficient to balance the current level of cash expenditures on the basis of the existing tax structure. That figure can be attained, working within the framework of our traditional profit system.

The factors in attaining and maintaining that amount of national income are many and complicated.

They include more widespread understanding among business men of many changes which world conditions and technological improvements have brought to our economy over the last twenty years -- changes in the interrelationship of price and volume and employment, for instance -- changes of the kind in which business men are now educating themselves through opportunities like the so-called "monopoly investigation".

They include a perfecting of our farm program to protect farmers' income and consumers' purchasing power from alternate risks of crop gluts and crop shortages.

They include wholehearted acceptance of new standards of honesty in our financial markets.

They include reconciliation of enormous, antagonistic interests -- some of them long in litigation -- in the railroad and general transportation field.

They include the working out of new techniques -- private, state and federal -- to protect the public interest in and to develop wider markets for electric power.

They include a revamping of the tax relationships between federal, state and local units of government, and consideration of relatively small tax increases to adjust inequalities without interfering with the aggregate income of the American people.

They include the perfecting of labor organization and a universal ungrudging attitude by employers toward the labor movement, until there is a minimum of interruption of production and employment because of disputes, and acceptance by labor of the truth that the welfare of labor itself depends on increased balanced out-put of goods.

To be immediately practical, while proceeding with a steady evolution in the solving of these and like problems, we must wisely use instrumentalities, like Federal investment, which are immediately available to us.

Here, as elsewhere, time is the deciding factor in our choice of remedies.

Therefore, it does not seem logical to me, at the moment we seek to increase production and consumption, for the Federal Government to consider a drastic curtailment of its own investments.

The whole subject of government investing and government income is one which may be approached in two different ways.

The first calls for the elimination of enough activities of government to bring the expenses of government immediately into balance with income of government. This school of thought maintains that because our national income this year is only sixty billion dollars, ours is only a sixty billion dollar country; that government must treat it as such; and that without the help of government, it may some day, somehow, happen to become an eighty billion dollar country.

If the Congress decides to accept this point of view, it will logically have to reduce the present functions or activities of government by one-third. The Congress will have to accept the responsibility for such reduction; and the Congress will have to determine which activities are to be reduced.

Certain expenditures we cannot possibly reduce, such as the interest on the public debt. A few million dollars saved here or there in the normal or in curtailed work of the old departments and commissions will make no great saving in the Federal budget. Therefore, the Congress would have to reduce drastically some of certain large items, such as aids to agriculture and soil conservation, veterans' pensions, flood control, highways, waterways and other public works, grants for social and health security, Civilian Conservation Corps activities, relief for the unemployed, or national defense.

The Congress alone has the power to do all this, as it is the appropriating branch of the government.

The other approach to the question of government spending takes the position that this Nation ought not to be and need not be only a sixty billion dollar nation; that at this moment it has the men and the resources sufficient to make it at least an eighty billion dollar nation. This school of thought does not believe that it can become an eighty billion dollar nation in the near future if government cuts its operations by one-third. It is convinced that if we were to try it, we would invite disaster -- that we would not long remain even a sixty billion dollar nation. There are many complicated factors with which we have to deal, but we have learned that it is unsafe to make abrupt reductions at any time in our net expenditure program.

By our common sense action of resuming government activities last Spring, we have reversed a recession and started the new rising tide of prosperity and national income which we are now just beginning to enjoy.

If government activities are fully maintained, there is a good prospect of our becoming an eighty billion dollar country in a very short time. With such a national income, present tax laws will yield enough each year to balance each year's expenses.

It is my conviction that down in their hearts the American public -- industry, agriculture, finance -- wants this Congress to do whatever needs to be done to raise our national income to eighty billion dollars a year.

Investing soundly must preclude spending wastefully. To guard against opportunist appropriations, I have on several occasions addressed the Congress on the importance of permanent long-range planning. I hope, therefore, that following my recommendation of last year, a permanent agency will be set up and authorized to report on the urgency and desirability of the various types of government investment.

Investment for prosperity can be made in a democracy.

I hear some people say "This is all so complicated. There are certain advantages in a dictatorship. It gets rid of labor trouble, of unemployment, of wasted motion and of having to do your own thinking".

My answer is "yes, but it also gets rid of some other things which we Americans intend very definitely to keep -- and we still intend to do our own thinking".

It will cost us taxes and the voluntary risk of capital to attain some of the practical advantages which other forms of government have acquired.

Dictatorship, however, involves costs which the American people will never pay: The cost of our spiritual values. The cost of the blessed right of being able to say what we please. The cost of freedom of religion. The cost of seeing our capital confiscated. The cost of being cast into a concentration camp. The cost of being afraid to walk down the street with the wrong neighbor. The cost of having our children brought up not as free and dignified human beings, but as pawns molded and enslaved by a machine.

If the avoidance of these costs means taxes on my income; if avoiding these costs means taxes on my estate at death, I would bear those taxes willingly as the price of my breathing and my children breathing the free air of a free country, as the price of a living and not a dead world.

Events abroad have made it increasingly clear to the American people that dangers within are less to be feared than dangers from without. If therefore a solution of this problem of idle men and idle capital is the price of preserving our liberty, no formless selfish fears can stand in our way.

Once I prophesied that this generation of Americans had a rendezvous with destiny. That prophecy comes true. To us much is given; more is expected.

This generation will "nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth . . . . The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just -- a way which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless".

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
January 4, 1939.

September 21, 1939

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STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

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TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I have asked the Congress to reassemble in extraordinary session in order that it may consider and act on the amendment of certain legislation, which, in my best judgment, so alters the historic foreign policy of the United States that it impairs the peaceful relations of the United States with foreign nations.

At the outset I proceed on the assumption that every member of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, and every member of the Executive Branch of the Government, including the President and his associates, personally and officially, are equally and without reservation in favor of such measures as will protect the neutrality, the safety and the integrity of our country and at the same time keep us out of war.

Because I am wholly willing to ascribe an honorable desire for peace to those who hold different views from my own as to what those measures should be, I trust that these gentlemen will be sufficiently generous to ascribe equally lofty purposes to those with whom they disagree. Let no man or group in any walk of life assume exclusive protectorate over the future well-being of America -- because I conceive that regardless of party or section the mantle of peace and of patriotism is wide enough to cover us all. Let no group assume the exclusive label of the peace "bloc". We all belong to it.

I have at all times kept the Congress and the American people informed of events and trends in foreign affairs. I now review them in a spirit of understatement.

Since 1931 the use of force instead of the council table has constantly increased in the settlement of disputes between nations -- except in the Western Hemisphere where there has been only one war, now happily terminated.

During these years also the building up of vast armies, navies and storehouses of war has proceeded abroad with growing speed and intensity. But, during these years, and extending back even to the days of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the United States has constantly, consistently and conscientiously done all in its power to encourage peaceful settlements, to bring about reduction of armaments and to avert threatened wars. We have done this not only because any war anywhere necessarily hurts American security and American prosperity, but because of the more important fact that any war anywhere retards the progress of morality and religion and impairs the security of civilization itself.

For many years the primary purpose of our foreign policy has been that this nation and this government should strive to the utmost to aid in avoiding war among other nations. But if and when war unhappily comes, the government and the nation must exert every possible effort to avoid being drawn into the war.

The Executive Branch of the government did its utmost, within our traditional policy of non-involvement, to aid in averting the present appalling war. Having thus striven and failed, this government must lose no time or effort to keep the nation from being drawn into the war.

In my candid judgment we shall succeed in these efforts.

We are proud of the historical record of the United States and of all the Americans during all these years because we have thrown every ounce of our influence for peace into the scale of peace.

I note in passing what you will all remember -- the long debates on the subject of what constitutes aggression, on the methods of determining who the aggressor might be, and, on who the aggressor in past wars had been. Academically this may have been instructive as it may have been of interest to historians to discuss the pros and cons and the rights and wrongs of the World War during the decade that followed it.

But in the light of problems of today and tomorrow responsibility for acts of aggression is not concealed, and the writing of the record can safely be left to future historians.

There has been sufficient realism in the United States to see how close to our own shores came dangerous paths which were being followed on other continents.

Last January I told the Congress that "a war which threatened to envelop the world in flames has been averted, but it has become increasingly clear that peace is not assured". By April new tensions had developed; a new crisis was in the making. Several nations with whom we had friendly, diplomatic and commercial relations had lost, or were in the process of losing, their independent identity and sovereignty.

During the Spring and Summer the trend was definitely toward further acts of military conquest and away from peace. As late as the end of July I spoke to members of the Congress about the definite possibility of war. I should have called it the probability of war.

Last January, also, I spoke to this Congress of the need for further warning of new threats of conquest, military and economic; of challenge to religion, to democracy and to international good faith. I said: "An ordering of society which relegates religion, democracy and good faith among nations to the background can find no place within it for the ideals of the Prince of Peace. The United States rejects such an ordering and retains its ancient faith." .....

"We know what might happen to us of the United States if the new philosophies of force were to encompass the other continents and invade our own. We, no more than other nations, can afford to be surrounded by the enemies of our faith and our humanity. Fortunate it is, therefore, that in this Western Hemisphere we have, under a common ideal of democratic government, a rich diversity of resources and of peoples functioning together in mutual respect and peace."

Last January, in the same message, I also said: "We have learned that when we deliberately try to legislate neutrality, our neutrality laws may operate unevenly and unfairly -- may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to the victim. The instinct of self-preservation should warn us that we ought not to let that happen any more."

It was because of what I foresaw last January from watching the trend of foreign affairs and their probable effect upon us that I recommended to the Congress in July of this year that changes be enacted in our neutrality law.

The essentials for American peace in the world have not changed since January. That is why I ask you again to re-examine our own legislation.

Beginning with the foundation of our constitutional government in the year 1789, the American policy in respect to belligerent nations, with one notable exception, has been based on international law. Be it remembered that what we call international law has had as its primary objectives the avoidance of causes of war and the prevention of the extension of war.

The single exception was the policy adopted by this nation during the Napoleonic Wars, when, seeking to avoid involvement, we acted for some years under the so-called Embargo and Non-Intercourse Acts. That policy turned out to be a disastrous failure -- first, because it brought our own nation close to ruin, and, second, because it was the major cause of bringing us into active participation in European wars in our own War of 1812. It is merely reciting history to recall to you that one of the results of the policy of embargo and non-intercourse was the burning in 1814 of part of this Capitol in which we are assembled.

Our next deviation by statute from the sound principles of neutrality and peace through international law did not come for one hundred and thirty years. It was the so-called Neutrality Act of 1935 -- only four years ago -- an Act continued in force by the Joint Resolution of May 1, 1937, despite grave doubts expressed as to its wisdom by many Senators and Representatives and by officials charged with the conduct of our foreign relations, including myself. I regret that the Congress passed that Act. I regret equally that I signed that Act.

On July fourteenth of this year, I asked the Congress in the cause of peace and in the interest of real American neutrality and security to take action to change that Act.

I now ask again that such action be taken in respect to that part of the Act which is wholly inconsistent with ancient precepts of the law of nations -- the embargo provisions. I ask it because they are, in my opinion, most vitally dangerous to American neutrality, American security and American peace.

These embargo provisions, as they exist today, prevent the sale to a belligerent by an American factory of any completed implements of war but they allow the sale of many types of uncompleted implements of war, as well as all kinds of general material and supplies. They, furthermore, allow such products of industry and agriculture to be taken in American Flag ships to belligerent nations. There in itself -- under the present law -- lies definite danger to our neutrality and our peace.

From a purely material point of view what is the advantage to us in sending all manner of articles across the ocean for final processing there when we could give employment to thousands by doing it here? Incidentally, and again from the material point of view, by such employment we automatically aid our own national defense. And if abnormal profits appear in our midst even in time of peace, as a result of this increase of industry, I feel certain that the subject will be adequately dealt with at the coming regular session of the Congress.

Let me set forth the present paradox of the existing legislation in its simplest terms: If, prior to 1935, a general war had broken out in Europe, the United States would have sold to and bought from belligerent nations such goods and products of all kinds as the belligerent nations, with their existing facilities and geographical situations, were able to buy from us or sell to us. This would have been the normal practice under the age-old doctrine of international law. Our prior position accepted the facts

of geography and of conditions of land power and sea power alike as they existed in all parts of the world. If a war in Europe had broken out prior to 1935, there would have been no difference, for example, between our exports of sheets of aluminum and airplane wings; today there is an artificial legal difference. Before 1935 there would have been no difference between the export of cotton and the export of gun cotton. Today there is. Before 1935 there would have been no difference between the shipment of brass tubing in pipe form and brass tubing in shell form. Today there is. Before 1935 there would have been no difference between the export of a motor truck and an armored motor truck. Today there is.

Let us be factual and recognize that a belligerent nation often needs wheat and lard and cotton for the survival of its population just as much as it needs anti-aircraft guns and anti-submarine depth-charges. Let those who seek to retain the present embargo position be wholly consistent and seek new legislation to cut off cloth and copper and meat and wheat and a thousand other articles from all of the nations at war.

I seek a greater consistency through the repeal of the embargo provisions, and a return to international law. I seek reenactment of the historic and traditional American policy which, except for the disastrous interlude of the Embargo and Non-Intercourse Acts, has served us well for nearly a century and a half.

It has been erroneously said that return to that policy might bring us nearer to war. I give to you my deep and unalterable conviction, based on years of experience as a worker in the field of international peace, that by the repeal of the embargo the United States will more probably remain at peace than if the law remains as it stands today. I say this because with the repeal of the embargo this Government clearly and definitely will insist that American citizens and American ships keep away from the immediate perils of the actual zones of conflict.

Repeal of the embargo and a return to international law are the crux of this issue.

The enactment of the embargo provisions did more than merely reverse our traditional policy. It had the effect of putting land powers on the same footing as naval powers, so far as sea-borne commerce was concerned. A land power which threatened war could thus feel assured in advance that any prospective sea-power antagonist would be weakened through denial of its ancient right to buy anything anywhere. This, four years ago, gave a definite advantage to one belligerent as against another, not through his own strength or geographic position, but through an affirmative act of ours. Removal of the embargo is merely reverting to the sounder international practice, and pursuing in time of war as in time of peace our ordinary trade policies. This will be liked by some and disliked by others, depending on the view they take of the present war, but that is not the issue. The step I recommend is to put this country back on the solid footing of real and traditional neutrality.

When and if repeal of the embargo is accomplished, certain other phases of policy reinforcing American safety should be considered. While nearly all of us are in agreement on their objectives, the only question relates to method.

I believe that American merchant vessels should, so far as possible, be restricted from entering danger zones. War zones may change so swiftly and so frequently in the days to come, that it is impossible to fix them permanently by act of Congress; specific legislation may prevent adjustment to constant and quick change. It seems, therefore, more practical to delimit them through action of the State Department and administrative agencies. The objective of restricting American ships from entering such zones may be attained by prohibiting such entry by the Congress; or the result can be substantially achieved by executive proclamation that all such voyages are solely at the risk of the American owners themselves.

The second objective is to prevent American citizens from traveling on belligerent vessels, or in danger areas. This can also be accomplished either by legislation, through continuance in force of certain provisions of existing law, or by proclamation making it clear to all Americans that any such travel is at their own risk.

The third objective, requiring the foreign buyer to take transfer of title in this country to commodities purchased by belligerents, is also a result which can be attained by legislation or substantially achieved through due notice by proclamation.

The fourth objective is the preventing of war credits to belligerents. This can be accomplished by maintaining in force existing provisions of law, or by proclamation making it clear that if credits are granted by American citizens to belligerents our Government will take no steps in the future to relieve them of risk or loss. The result of these last two will be to require all purchases to be made in cash and cargoes to be carried in the purchasers' own ships, at the purchasers' own risk.

Two other objectives have been amply attained by existing law, namely, regulating collection of funds in this country for belligerents, and the maintenance of a license system covering import and export of arms, ammunition and implements of war. Under present enactments, such arms cannot be carried to belligerent countries on American vessels, and this provision should not be disturbed.

The Congress, of course, should make its own choice of the method by which these safeguards are to be attained, so long as the method chosen will meet the needs of new and changing day to day situations and dangers.

To those who say that this program would involve a step toward war on our part, I reply that it offers far greater safeguards than we now possess or have ever possessed to protect American lives and property from danger. It is a positive program for giving safety. This means less likelihood of incidents and controversies which tend to draw us into conflict, as they did in the last World War. There lies the road to peace!

The position of the Executive Branch of the Government is that the age-old and time-honored doctrine of international law, coupled with these positive safeguards, is better calculated than any other means to keep us out of this war.

In respect to our own defense, you are aware that I have issued a proclamation setting forth "A National Emergency in Connection with the Observance, Safeguarding, and Enforcement of Neutrality and the Strengthening of the National Defense within the Limits of Peace-Time Authorizations". This was done solely to make wholly constitutional and legal certain obviously necessary measures. I have authorized increases in the personnel of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, which will bring all four to a total still below peace-time strength as authorized by the Congress.

I have authorized the State Department to use, for the repatriation of Americans caught in the war zone, \$500,000 already authorized by the Congress.

I have authorized the addition of one hundred and fifty persons to the Department of Justice to be used in the protection of the United States against subversive foreign activities within our borders.

At this time I ask for no other authority from the Congress. At this time I see no need for further executive action under the proclamation of limited national emergency.

Therefore, I see no valid reason for the consideration of other legislation at this extraordinary session of the Congress.

It is, of course, possible that in the months to come unforeseen needs for further legislation may develop but they are not imperative today.

These perilous days demand cooperation between us without trace of partisanship. Our acts must be guided by one single hard-headed thought -- keeping America out of this war. In that spirit, I am asking the leaders of the two major parties in the Senate and in the House of Representatives to remain in Washington between the close of this extraordinary session and the beginning of the regular session on January third. They have assured me that they will do so, and I expect to consult with them at frequent intervals on the course of events in foreign affairs and on the need for future action in this field, whether it be executive or legislative action.

Further, in the event of any future danger to the security of the United States or in the event of need for any new legislation of importance, I will immediately reconvene the Congress in another extraordinary session.

I should like to be able to offer the hope that the shadow over the world might swiftly pass. I cannot. The facts compel my stating, with candor, that darker periods may lie ahead. The disaster is not of our making; no act of ours engendered the forces which assault the foundations of civilization. Yet we find ourselves affected to the core; our currents of commerce are changing, our minds are filled with new problems, our position in world affairs has already been altered.

In such circumstances our policy must be to appreciate in the deepest sense the true American interest. Rightly considered, this interest is not selfish. Destiny first made us, with our sister nations on this Hemisphere, joint heirs of European culture. Fate seems now to compel us to assume the task of helping to maintain in the Western world a citadel wherein that civilization may be kept alive. The peace, the integrity and the safety of the Americas -- these must be kept firm and serene. In a period when it is sometimes said that free discussion is no longer compatible with national safety, may you by your deeds show the world that we of the United States are one people, of one mind, one spirit, one clear resolution, walking before God in the light of the living.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
September 21, 1939.

Address Delivered by the President  
At the Graduation Exercises of the University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, Virginia, June 10, 1940

PRESIDENT NEWCOMB, MY FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA:

I notice by the program that I am asked to address the classes of 1940. I avail myself of that privilege but I also take this very apt occasion to speak to many other classes, classes that have graduated through all the years, classes that are still in the period of study, classes not alone of the schools of learning of the Nation but classes that have come up through the great schools of experience; in other words a cross section, a cross section just as you who graduate today are a cross section of the Nation as a whole.

Every generation of young men and women in America has questions to ask the world. Most of the time they are the simple but nevertheless difficult questions, questions of work to do, opportunities to find, ambitions to satisfy.

But every now and again in the history of the Republic a different kind of question presents itself -- a question that asks, not about the future of an individual or even of a generation, but about the future of the country, the future of the American people.

There was such a time at the beginning of our history - at the beginning of our history as a nation. Young people asked themselves in those days what lay ahead, not for themselves, but for the new United States.

There was such a time again in the seemingly endless years of the War Between the States. Young men and young women on both sides of the line asked themselves, not what trades or professions they would enter, what lives they would make, but what was to become of the country they had known.

There is such a time again today. Again today the young men and the young women of America ask themselves with earnestness and with deep concern this same question: "What is to become of the country we know."

Now they ask it with even greater anxiety than before. They ask, not only what the future holds for this Republic, but what the future holds for all peoples and all nations that have been living under democratic forms of government, - under the free institutions of a free people.

It is understandable to all of us, I think, that they should ask this question. They read the words of those who are telling them that the ideal of individual liberty, the ideal of free franchise, the ideal of peace through justice is a decadent ideal. They read the word and hear the boast of those who say that a belief in force - force directed by self-chosen leaders - is the new and vigorous system which will overrun the earth. They have seen the ascendancy of this philosophy of force in nation after nation where free institutions and individual liberties were once maintained.

It is natural and understandable that the younger generation should first ask itself what the extension of the philosophy of force to all the world would lead to ultimately. We see today, for example, in stark reality some of the consequences of what we call the machine age.

Where control of machines has been retained in the hands of mankind as a whole, untold benefits have accrued to mankind. For mankind was then the master; and the machine was the servant.

But, in this new system of force the mastery of the machine is not in the hands of mankind. It is in the control of infinitely small groups of individuals who rule without a single one of the democratic sanctions that we have known. The machine in hands of irresponsible conquerors becomes the master; mankind is not only the servant; it is the victim too. Such mastery abandons with deliberate contempt all of the

moral values to which even this young country for more than three hundred years has been accustomed and dedicated.

Surely the new philosophy proves from month to month that it could have no possible conception of the way of life or the way of thought of a nation whose origins go back to Jamestown and Plymouth Rock.

And conversely, neither those who spring from that ancient stock nor those who have come hither in later years can be indifferent to the destruction of freedom in their ancestral lands across the sea.

Perception of danger, danger to our institutions may come slowly or it may come with a rush and a shock as it has to the people of the United States in the past few months. This perception of danger, danger in a worldwide area - it has come to us clearly and overwhelmingly - we perceive the peril in a world-wide arena, an arena that may become so narrowed that only the Americas will retain the ancient faiths.

Some indeed still hold to the now somewhat obvious delusion that we of the United States can safely permit the United States to become a lone island, a lone island in a world dominated by the philosophy of force.

Such an island may be the dream of those who still talk and vote as isolationists. Such an island represents to me and to the overwhelming majority of Americans today a helpless nightmare, the helpless nightmare of a people without freedom; yes, the nightmare of a people lodged in prison, handcuffed, hungry, and fed through the bars from day to day by the contemptuous, unpitiful masters of other continents.

It is natural also that we should ask ourselves how now we can prevent the building of that prison and the placing of ourselves in the midst of it.

Let us not hesitate -- all of us -- to proclaim certain truths. Overwhelmingly we, as a nation - and this applies to all the other American nations - are convinced that military and naval victory for the gods of force and hate would endanger the institutions of democracy in the western world, and that equally, therefore, the whole of our sympathies lies with those nations that are giving their life blood in combat against these forces.

The people and the Government of the United States have seen with the utmost regret and with grave disquiet the decision of the Italian Government to engage in the hostilities now raging in Europe.

More than three months ago the Chief of the Italian Government sent me word that because of the determination of Italy to limit, so far as might be possible, the spread of the European conflict, more than two hundred millions of people in the region of the Mediterranean had been enabled to escape the suffering and the devastation of war.

I informed the Chief of the Italian Government that this desire on the part of Italy to prevent the war from spreading met with full sympathy and response on the part of the Government and the people of the United States, and I expressed the earnest hope of this Government and of this people that this policy on the part of Italy might be continued. I made it clear that in the opinion of the Government of the United States any extension of hostilities in the region of the Mediterranean might result in a still greater enlargement of the scene of the conflict, the conflict in the Near East and in Africa and that if this came to pass no one could foretell how much greater the theater of the war eventually might become.

Again on a subsequent occasion, not so long ago, recognizing that certain aspirations of Italy might form the basis of discussions between the powers most specifically concerned, I offered, in a message addressed to the Chief of the Italian Government, to send to the Governments of France and of

Great Britain such specific indications of the desires of Italy to obtain readjustments with regard to her position as the Chief of the Italian Government might desire to transmit through me. While making it clear that the Government of the United States in such an event could not and would not assume responsibility for the nature of the proposals submitted nor for agreements which might thereafter be reached, I proposed that if Italy would refrain from entering the war I would be willing to ask assurances from the other powers concerned that they would faithfully execute any agreement so reached and that Italy's voice in any future peace conference would have the same authority as if Italy had actually taken part in the war, as a belligerent.

Unfortunately, unfortunately to the regret of all of us and to the regret of humanity, the Chief of the Italian Government was unwilling to accept the procedure suggested and he has made no counter proposal.

This Government directed its efforts to doing what it could to work for the preservation of peace in the Mediterranean area, and it likewise expressed its willingness to endeavor to cooperate with the Government of Italy when the appropriate occasion arose for the creation of a more stable world order, through the reduction of armaments, and through the construction of a more liberal international economic system which would assure to all powers equality of opportunity in the world's markets and in the securing of raw materials on equal terms.

I have likewise, of course, felt it necessary in my communications to Signor Mussolini to express the concern of the Government of the United States because of the fact that any extension of the war in the region of the Mediterranean would inevitably result in great prejudice to the ways of life and government and to the trade and commerce of all of the American Republics.

The Government of Italy has now chosen to preserve what it terms its "freedom of action" and to fulfill what it states are its promises to Germany. In so doing it has manifested disregard for the rights and security of other nations, disregard for the lives of the peoples of these nations which are directly threatened by this spread of the war; and has evidenced its unwillingness to find the means through pacific negotiations for the satisfaction of what it believes are its legitimate aspirations.

On this tenth day of June, 1940, the hand that held the dagger has struck it into the back of its neighbor.

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Address Delivered by the President  
At the Graduation Exercises of the University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, Virginia, June 10, 1940

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HOLD FOR RELEASE

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September 11, 1940

CAUTION: The following address of the President, to be delivered at Constitution Hall to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters-Chauffeurs-Stablemen and Helpers MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE until released.

NOTE: Release is for editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 9:30 P.M., E.S.T., Wednesday, September 11, 1940. The same applies to radio announcers and news commentators.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

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MR. TOBIN, MEMBERS OF THE CONVENTION:

During the past weeks, in several sections of the East, I have been inspecting the progress of our national defense. I have gone through navy yards and private yards to watch the building of destroyers, submarines and aircraft carriers; I have visited aviation units to see our modern fighting planes; I have been in our great gun factories where I have seen the most modern guns of all types, swiftly being molded into shape; I have visited camps where young Americans are receiving training and instruction in the tactics of the warfare of today. Through it all there was the impressive conviction that America is rising to meet the ever-growing need for an adequate physical armed defense of the country.

Tonight in a very real sense, I feel as I stand here that I am visiting another type of national defense, equally important in its own way in meeting the needs of the times. Enduring strength to a nation and staying power in an emergency definitely call for an efficient and determined labor force carrying on the processes of industry and trade. And when I speak of a "labor force" I very definitely include those who toil in their fields as well as those who toil in industry. Teamsters will be the first to assert that farmers labor too.

It is one of the characteristics of a free and democratic modern nation that it have free and independent labor unions. In country after country in other lands, labor unions have disappeared as the iron hand of the dictator has taken command. Only in free lands have free labor unions survived. When union workers can assemble with freedom and independence in conventions like this, it is proof that American democracy has remained unimpaired -- and it is symbolic of our determination to keep it free.

Yours is now one of the great international labor unions of America. You can remember, however, other days -- days when labor unions were considered almost unAmerican by some individuals in our land. You can remember when it was rare indeed for an employer even to consider collective bargaining with his workers; when it was the common practice to discharge any worker who joined a union. You can remember when employers sought to meet threatened strikes by demanding that their government -- federal or state -- call out armed troops. You can remember when many large employers resorted to the unAmerican practice -- still unfortunately followed in some sections of the country -- of hiring labor spies and setting up private arsenals to ferret out members of a union.

The cause of labor has traveled forward since those days, over a road beset with difficulties, both from within its membership and from without. Your own organization is an outstanding example of the progress which has been made. By 1933 your membership had dropped to 70,000. Within the last seven years you have grown to a membership of 500,000.

In those same seven years organized labor as a whole has become stronger in membership, in influence, and in its capacity to serve the interests of the laboring man and woman and of society in general, than at any other time in our history. Much of this progress has been due to the one thing which this Administration, from the very beginning, has insisted upon -- the assurance to labor of the untrammelled right to organize and to bargain collectively with their employers. That principle has now become firmly imbedded in the law of the land; it must remain as the foundation of industrial relations for all times.

The principle has the support today not only of organized labor as a whole, but also of hundreds of thousands of decent, practical, forward-looking employers. A decade ago a minority of employers were willing to accept the principle of collective bargaining; today the majority of employers gladly adopt it.

And with that foundation, the last seven years have seen a series of laws enacted to give to labor a fair share of the good life to which free men and women in a free nation are entitled as a matter of right. Fair minimum wages are being established for workers in industry; decent maximum hours and days of labor have been set, to bring about an American standard of living and recreation; child labor has been outlawed in practically all factories; a system of employment exchanges has been created; machinery has been set up and strengthened and successfully used for the mediation of labor disputes. Over them all has been created a shelter of social security -- a foundation upon which is being built protection from the hazards of old age and unemployment.

This progress of the last seven years has been difficult. It has been beset by obstruction and by bitter propaganda from certain minority groups in the community who had been accustomed for too many years to the exploitation of the great mass of people who worked for them. It was the same type of opposition to which I had become accustomed during my entire public career, dating back to my first election to the Senate of the State of New York thirty years ago this Autumn, continuing through my service for nearly eight years as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and my service during four years as Governor of the largest labor employing State in the Union.

You will remember that kind of opposition in the campaign of four years ago when certain employers, politicians and newspapers -- all of whom are now active in this campaign -- in an effort to mislead and intimidate labor, went to the extent of putting untrue electioneering notices in pay envelopes in order to smash the new social security act and force its repeal by electing its enemies.

That kind of opposition comes only too often from those who regularly for three years and eight months block Labor's welfare, and then for four months loudly proclaim that they are Labor's true friends -- from those who love the laboring man in November but forget him in January.

In spite of that opposition the vast majority of our small business men have now become convinced that the gains of labor are the gains of the entire interdependent community, and that the welfare of labor is indispensable to the welfare of all. They know now that their best customer is a satisfied, adequately paid worker with a feeling of security against unemployment and poverty in his old age.

We are still, however, quite distant from the objective which we seek -- the security and the high standard of living for every man, woman and child which the resources and man-power of America make possible.

Our advance has been accomplished with patience and deliberation. That is the democratic way; that is the road which leads to lasting results. Here in America we have kept our feet on the ground; our progress has been steady and sure; we have not been misled by illusory promises.

Events abroad have shown too late the result of the other kind of methods -- promises of swift, revolutionary relief; seductive pictures of panaceas; short cuts to prosperity and plenty, pictured as simple and easy -- all of these have led to the same cruel disappointment. For these promises people yielded up their liberties and all that made life dear. In exchange they have received only the rationing of their news, the rationing of their religion, the rationing of the clothes upon their backs, and the rationing of the bread upon their tables.

Our progress must continue to be a steady and deliberate one -- we cannot stand still, we cannot slip back. We must look forward to certain definite things in the near future. For example, the benefits of social security should be broadened and extended; unemployment insurance should cover a larger number of workers. Our old age pension system must be improved and extended; the amount of the pension should be increased, and, above all, these pensions must be given in a manner which will respect the dignity of the life of service and labor which our aged citizens have given to the nation.

It is my hope that soon the United States will have a national system under which no needy man or woman within our borders will lack a minimum old age pension which will provide adequate food, clothing and lodging to the end of the road -- without having to go to the poorhouse to get it. And I look forward to a system which, in addition to this bare minimum, will enable those who have faithfully toiled in any occupation to build up additional security for their old age which will allow them to live in comfort and happiness.

The people must decide whether to continue the type of government which has fostered the progress to date, or whether to turn it over to those who by their action, if not always by their word, have shown their fundamental opposition to the main objectives toward which we have worked in the past and to which we are definitely committed for the future.

There are some who would not only stop now the progress we are making in social and labor legislation, but would even repeal what has been enacted during the past seven years -- all on the plea that an adequate national defense requires it. They would seek unlimited hours of labor. They would seek lower wages. They would seek the cancellation of those safeguards for which we have all struggled so long.