

When the war lords have trampled down the harvests and gutted the mines and demolished the factories of Europe and Asia, where else can they turn for new materials of war and peace? Our land as well as our liberty must be defended; our food as well as our freedom.

Having gathered into their hands such almost indescribable power, the enemies of civilization now confront us with defiant confidence, while they predict the destruction of our liberties and our way of life. It is in the face of such dire contingencies that our people watch and wait, speeding with all their energies further preparations for defense, while they wait.

For defense, let us repeat, because our Nation never has been, and is not now, the aggressor. There is no land or possession of another country of which we are envious.

There is no prized possession of any world power which would cause the Commander-in-Chief of our Army and Navy to send American boys to risk their lives to seize. We have desired to remain at peace, which desire can only be extinguished by unfriendly tactics of hostile nations.

Having roused ourselves to the need, the preparation for defense is now proceeding on a scale consistent with our position, our genius and our capacity. In an unusually valuable connection in that defense, you gentlemen will be a part. Under the shadow of such a world peril, you are being called to one of the highest services of our defense.

Each of the services necessarily is of vital importance. The circumstances of today, however, indicate that the sea service will, at this time, be of the first importance.

It will be the function of that service, of which members of this class will be a part, to patrol the oceans, as well as to cover with the utmost care all the water approaches to our soil.

Responding to the urge of self-preservation, our governmental leaders have sensibly chosen the course of supplying munitions and means of defense to the heroic people of Britain, who are resisting valiantly in our defense, as well as in their own, in withstanding the progress of the dictators. And in giving such help, our President and other national leaders are backed by the overwhelming majority of American people.

But when we say that, for purposes of self-preservation, if for none other, Britain must be supplied with the tools, it is obvious that she must be supplied with them and not merely offered them. To be effective, those tools must be in hand where the invaders' fury is now centered—that is, in the British Isles.

It will serve no useful purpose, and least of all the outnumbered defenders of democracy in England, to have American industries produce the implements of defense only to have them sent to the bottom of the ocean while en route to the place where their use is essential.

America, as I said, has ever been proud of her navy. During the past twelve months, however, this feeling of pride has given way to an even more satisfying feeling of confidence—supreme confidence on the part of all of us that the American navy is ready to face, and turn back, any onslaught that might be directed against our shores by sea or through the air.