

I say that we received a rude awakening. I can only hope and pray that it was and is rude enough to shock us—to shake us—to galvanize us into action. For without natural love of people, with our belief in the good and homely things of life, we have a tendency to become complacent. We are apt to put such faith in Democracy as to think it a defense unto itself. Oh, yes, Americans always rise to an emergency. Americans hearken to the voice of our chosen leaders.

Having made some efforts, our people are prone to relax a little. And therein lies our greatest danger, because this National emergency is not a thing that waxes and wanes from day to day. It is a constant menace. It is an ever-growing peril. It creeps in from the horizon and comes like a poisonous fog between us and the sunlight of our liberty. It was there yesterday—it will not be gone tomorrow.

Today is the time—every day is the time for Americans to cry out to one another “Awake and Arouse,” for that creeping darkness on the horizon is the shadow of a vulture’s wings. You can hear them beating, if you listen. You can also hear the moans and groans and anguished cries of victims already torn and mangled by its bloody talons, and, as if the terrible holocaust in Europe were not enough, the last few days have brought another threat through renewed movements in the Far East.

Who are these victims? They were the weak, they were the unprepared, they were the gullible peoples, also once secure in their chosen ways of life who believed that the vulture meant no harm to them. Hadn’t the vulture said so? Hadn’t it cooed like a dove? Hadn’t it twisted its hideous face into smiles of innocence and grimaces of friendship? We cannot name one single victim from the shores of France to the steppes of Russia who had not been lulled with promises and caught napping.

Who then is really safe from this dragon of the sky? Only a nation with weapons already in hand. Only peoples who reject in derision and disgust the promises of any kind from that monster of so many deceits. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. That old maxim was never more true than it is today. It is the mocking tragedy of humanity that the modern Lucifer can assume many pleasing shapes and speak in such alluring tones. Let us beware of these. Let us have no doings with anyone who seeks to disguise the patent fact of danger.

Today, as we contemplate what has happened, and what is happening abroad, we can truly appreciate what it means to be a citizen of the United States—and to know that while, unfortunately, millions of human beings abroad are burrowing in the earth like moles to safeguard themselves against attack, here in this Country, as always in the years past, we are free to act, to gather, to speak, to live exactly as we wish.

Today, there is more reason than ever why America should be a living thing in the hearts and minds of every citizen. No other country on the face of the earth has so much that is definitely worth being proud of and definitely worth protecting. Our priceless liberty, our prestige among the nations of the earth, our spiritual leadership, all combine to make the United States the foremost in the entire world.