

Do we need proof? Well, proof is there to behold. France had a military tradition; she had her Napoleon. She had brave soldiers; she had her Maginot Line. But her soldiers died or fled, her leaders betrayed her, her defenses cracked. We know why now. She lacked that inner coordination—she was not strong at the core.

And conversely—there is England. She had no Panzer divisions—no Luftwaffe. She was outnumbered, out-maneuvered, out-produced. But in her she had the saving quality of oneness. She stood up against such an onslaught as the world had never known. She is free today because of strength at the core. *We* shall be free and forever unbeatable so long, and only so long, as we have that unbroken line of strength that gives unity and cohesion to the national effort.

It is no mere whim or arbitrary policy that has made the expression "Freedom of the Seas" an American watchword. If you seek the reason for it, take a look at our coastlines. We front the two great oceans. That long line of seacoast has meant commerce to us. It has meant the outlet for our booming industries, for our abounding farmlands, for our cattle ranges, our forests—for the skyscraper businesses, our banking houses—for the greatest and smallest of home enterprises. That seacoast with its teeming shipyards, its warehouses and grain elevators, has meant exactly the difference to America; between mere subsistence and the high standard of living enjoyed from coast to coast, from border to border. It is an economic fact that our foreign trade has supplied us with the wherewithal to be the best-housed, the best-educated, Nation with the highest standard of living on this earth.

That has been the privilege of being virtually a continent as well as being a Nation. But with privilege there always goes responsibility. It is to our interests to keep these harbors open to the sea. It behooves us to guard every beach and estuary along that coastline. Therefore, we have established a far-flung bulwark in the American Navy. We have built a bristling fence to ward off intruders in time of war. "Freedom of the Seas" means that our vessels and the vessels of friendly nations shall be able to go and come into and out of our harbors without interference.

It means more than that. In time of war, "Freedom of the Seas" means that no marauder shall molest the well-charted and historical paths across the oceans. It means that the American flag shall be a passport—a symbol of safe conduct wherever commerce demands that we go.

It would be a grotesque folly to show the world that we use this Navy only for ornamental purposes. It was created and built up for the express purpose that it is being employed today. When one travels thru the Bad Lands, one does not insure his safety by going unarmed. The bandits respect nothing except a readiness and an ability on the traveller's part to look after himself. So it is today, upon the high seas. Let the bandits keep a distance—or beware.

In our striving towards national unity, you and the other members of your great organizations throughout the Country can perform a patriotic achievement of the highest order. Certainly, never was a goal more worth the reaching; never a Country more worthy of the ultimate effort of every one of its citizens.