

the Battle of Bladensburg during the war of 1812. It was said then, as it is said now, that the enemy was too far away to be taken too seriously. There was then, as there is now a rightful but slightly over-emphasized confidence in the ability of our navy to keep the enemy away from our shores. As a result of this, a bold British admiral sailed into the Chesapeake, landed and caught the Maryland militia off guard.

The Marylanders under Commodore Barney and General Winder fought bravely, but they lost the first skirmish, and with it the National Capitol. To be sure, this state of affairs was quickly reversed when the enemy attacked a thoroughly infuriated Baltimore. Our forebears won the Battle of North Point and saved Fort McHenry, but there was a price to pay.

I cite this example only to point a moral. The time for all-out preparation is now—not later. We must come to realize that Home Defense is not merely a matter of protecting our homes, our families and communities. It is just as much a matter of carrying on battles against the enemy. It must be abundantly clear by this time that the Battle of Britain has not been won exclusively on the playing fields of Eton. Nor has it been won exclusively by those valiant youngsters of the RAF at Dunkirk. No, the turning point came when the shopkeepers, the homeowners, the factory workers, the farmers—in a word, the British civilians—proved to Hitler's great dissatisfaction that they could hold the fort.

Hold it they did—and hold it we must. And we need not wait for the battle to come to us, either. On the contrary, we must so buttress and arm our fortress that it will withstand the most savage and unexpected assaults. We must be ready now! Not out of fear—but out of common sense. The better we keep our posts, the harder we will fling back the enemy. The more thoroughly we organize, the smoother we will function in time of stress. The firmer our ramparts at home, the more punishing will be the attacks which our fighting forces can press upon the foe.

So here we stand on trial, before the world, and before our own consciences. If these gifts have made us soft, then we shall suffer. If we are not willing and able to harness our strength and our skills to the giant task ahead, why then, all our happy yesterdays shall become the dreadful nightmare of tomorrow. If we have not learned that liberty deserves sacrifices, then there is a bitter lesson in store.

But I do not—and I cannot—entertain pessimism. If our people have been slow to anger, so we shall be strong to strike. Out of this testing, we shall discover our finest hour. Let us then glory in the strife that shall bring us the greater appreciation of our many blessings. Let us bend our united wills to the high purpose of restoring God's peace upon the earth. And when we have conquered the bloody-handed, godless demons, let each of us be able to look back and to say in his heart "In those dark days, I stood and battled for the Right. I did the good work. I have deserved the rest that cometh after Victory."