

WICOMICO COUNTY DEFENSE MEETING

ARMORY

February 6, 1942

Salisbury

SIXTY days of bitter warfare, on many fronts, have shown us all too clearly what lies ahead for America in this unwanted conflict for the preservation of our priceless freedoms. We know now that all previous concepts of warfare, even those built up over the past two years out of England's tragic experience in home defense, must be completely revised. Unless we accept these developments and face them courageously, it will be difficult, indeed, for us to cope successfully with the mighty military machines aligned against us.

Unquestionably, we have learned many lessons during these sixty days. It is to be hoped that we will profit fully by them. At Pearl Harbor the danger of relaxing vigilance, even for a few hours, was impressed upon us in never-to-be-forgotten fashion. We have come to accept, likewise, that all-out preparations for State and Local Defense, modeled after England's heroic defense activities, do not fit exactly into the American defense pattern because conditions differ so vitally. England has been defending her citizens at home against attack. On the other hand, our problem, as these sixty days have projected it, is not primarily defensive. It is offensive, and it must be an offensive on the greatest scale the world has ever known.

As we progress, perhaps slowly, but surely, towards the all-out offensive which we must ultimately undertake, bases of operation will be absolutely essentials. Far away as is the present field of war activity in the Far East from our home ports, or our Hawaiian bases; and deprived as we have been, and may further be, of some key ports from which we expected to operate, it is vitally important that we throw everything into the fight to save those now remaining in our possession, as well as those held by our English, Dutch and Chinese Allies. Admittedly, it will be far less expensive to hold on to them now, whatever the cost, than to go through the costly process of recapturing them from enemy hands.

Well may we hope to profit from the lessons offered us. We must learn them eventually, if ever we are to bring the fight to the hoped-for conclusion. We might as well learn them right at the outset. We might as well accept the fact, too, that the great United States Navy, on whose performance we have relied so thoroughly, will require superiority, in the air to be effective. Likewise, our land forces not only must have air superiority, but must have the advantage of numbers in tanks and all type of armaments to attain the goal of victory.

Realization of these changed war conditions, will necessitate a new ap-