

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES OF STATE,
HOTEL EMERSON, Radio Station WFBR
July 16, 1942
Baltimore

Maryland is happy to have within its borders, for this National meeting of Secretaries of State, representatives of many of our sister commonwealths. Just as each year thousands of tradition-minded Americans journey to Annapolis from all parts of the Country, to visit the one State House of pre-Revolutionary days which still serves as a seat of State Government, so it is fitting that the Secretaries of State come for their National gathering, in this year of critical emergency, to the State that rightly may claim to have given birth to outstanding principles of Democracy.

A century and a half before the great American Constitution was proclaimed to the world, Maryland's gallant founders had set the stage for it by establishing a sanctuary for the oppressed of all the world, a sanctuary where the individual might live his life unhampered, no matter what his private beliefs.

Because these early Maryland principles, which are the basic tenets of Democracy, are being attacked today by the forces of slavery, they stand out in bold relief against the Axis theories. Because they are menaced today as never before, every one of the 48 states, every one of our 130,000,000 American citizens, faces the necessity of fullest concerted effort if, as a Nation, and as a free people, we are to weather the storm successfully.

Having but lately returned from the annual Governor's Conference, the dominating theme of which was National Defense and the war effort, and having noted with great interest the thoughtful discussions in which your membership has participated during your meeting, it is possible to secure a clearer picture and understanding of the working of the States as integral, but distinct, parts of our Nation, than is had by our people generally.

In times of stress and change such as those through which we are passing, it is only natural to find some elements within our Nation who would tell us that the basic partitions upon which our Country was founded are no longer suited to the needs of present-day Government. They would tell us that the States, of themselves, are no longer important except as they fit into the National picture. They seek more and more to break down State limits and to promote the centralization of Federal power.

Through the discussions of the Governor's Conference, it was made clear, beyond question, that, even in times of crisis like this—indeed, it might be said, because of these times of crisis—the importance of the States as individual units, self-sufficient unto themselves, has been re-emphasized in unmistakable terms.

One of the reasons why our Axis foes felt that America wouldn't and