

Radio Talk, May 4, 1941

Good Morning, Friends:

The moving finger writes; and, having writ,

Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,

Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

The past is history. Yesterday is gone. The future, our future, is in the making. Events are pressing toward dramatic and fateful decisions.

A few weeks ago, Lord Halifax said that there were three decisive phases of the war: First, the Mediterranean Area and the Suez; second, the bombing of English cities; and, third, the battle in the Atlantic Ocean to preserve the British lifeline to America. Let us examine those three decisive phases.

Since Lord Halifax made that statement Yugoslavia has been crushed; Greece has been subjugated, and the British have been driven from the Balkans, and The German units have wiped out all the British gains in North Africa and are now pounding toward the Suez. There is little real hope in Washington that the British will be able to hold Suez, or to stop the German march to the rich oil fields of Asia Minor. If Germany is able to establish control over and communicate with the oil of Iraq and the bread basket of the Ukraine, then the blockade upon which England has for so long depended as her greatest weapon for victory may be rendered futile. If Germany gains control of the Mediterranean area, she will have severed Britain from Australia, India, New Zealand, and the East Indies except around the Southern tip of Africa and through the South Atlantic. Once in control of the Mediterranean, does any one doubt her plans to push to the West Coast of Africa, and if she reaches Dakar, is there any one who <sup>questions</sup> doubts her ability

to menace and jeopardize the South Atlantic and the trade routes to South America; and is there any one so blind as to fail to understand the graveness of this threat to the Western Hemisphere and to us? Yes, the Mediterranean area is vital and Lord Halifax had ample reasons to name this as one of the three decisive points of the war.

As to his second decisive phase - the bombing of the British cities - ~~so much is involved in this - morals, spirit, inherent strength - and so much is unknown that perhaps it would be wise to withhold any opinion on this.~~ We ~~do~~ know that the great city of Plymouth is said to have been rendered uninhabitable. With waterlines contaminated, with sewer systems destroyed, with sickness and death abounding, how can a city so bombed as Plymouth be other than an inviting field for plague and pestilence? How much actual discontent there has been, we do not know. There have been rumors. This we do know - that before the war started, people were saying that London and the other great British cities would be destroyed and wiped off the map in a few weeks time, but nightly we tune in the courageous voice of London speaking to us through the ether, and as we listen, we are impressed by the courage and the fortitude of the people who for these long months have withstood the reign of terror and death and still stand up and fight. It's courage like this which brought the Pilgrims from Plymouth to Plymouth Rock. It's courage like this which has made the English people the greatest civilizing force the world has ever known, save christianity itself.



The battle of the Atlantic, characterized by Lord Halifax as the third decisive phase, has been the subject of much action and much debate in Washington during the last week. Unless Great Britain can get from the United States food, amunition, planes, ships, guns, and encouragement, she can not hope to survive. Remember that England must import the huge quantities of oil for her air force, raw materials for her factories, and food for her people. If she loses the battle of the Atlantic, she loses all.

If you read Prime Minister Churchill's last speech carefully and analytically, you will find that America's aid was the principal hope which he held out for the people of the British Empire. The British are suffering tremendous shipping losses in the Atlantic. According to most reliable information, ships are being sunk much faster than both Britain and the United States are building them. Much of the aid which our money and our factories are providing is not reaching Britain. We have heard a great deal about keeping a bridge of ships from America to Great Britain, but, mark this, the only bridge which will deliver aid is the bridge of ships which float.

The President <sup>has</sup> made two dramatic moves ~~during the week~~ to help Great Britain win this grim battle of the Atlantic. He ordered the Maritime Commission to prepare two million tons of merchant ships to fly the British flag. This amount is approximately one-third of our present merchant tonnage. This move should help a great deal if <sup>the ships</sup> ~~they~~ are not sunk. If they go down, we lose both the ships and their precious cargo. To make more ships and more cargo, machine shops have been called upon for a 24-hour day and a seven-day week.

In another move, the President ordered the American navy to patrol farther out into the Atlantic and said the American naval patrol would go wherever necessary to protect the Western Hemisphere. It is thought that these patrol ships will serve as eyes and ears for the British, watching for the enemy and signaling his presence. Many people are urging the President to go farther. They call this half-way aid. "Too little and too late," they say. They are urging and demanding that he use the American navy to convoy British and American ships to the Isle of Great Britain, to make safe the delivery of supplies - to fight if necessary to save Britain and many of them think it will be necessary. President Roosevelt repeatedly made pledges to the American people during his re-election campaign last fall that we would not participate in a foreign war unless attacked. He undoubtedly is trying to keep these promises. He is trying to keep the nation out of war. *The nation is not prepared for war.* Those desiring direct involvement criticize him as failing to show forceful leadership during the crisis while others accuse him of leading us into war. Uneasy indeed is his pillow.

The isolationists decry every move as a step toward war. Have we stepped toward war or has war spread nearer to us? Our policy has been one of aid to every nation fighting against the spread of this conflagration. The guarantee of our protection over Greenland was surely not for the purpose of using that as a base from which to launch aggressive warfare. Quite to the contrary, it was occupied to make sure that it would not be occupied by a foreign power in contravention of the Monroe Doctrine and possibly used as a base of operation against this Hemisphere. Our aid to democracies has not been for the purpose



of starting war but for the purpose of checking its spread. <sup>W</sup>But whether we have stepped toward the war or the war toward us, the grim monster appears nearer and nearer at hand. Let us all pray that it may be averted, that we may be spared this awful abyss of hate, destruction, and madness.

Someone writes, "Does Congress wantwar?" Congress doesn't like any part of the <sup>what</sup>awful mess. Who could want war? America wants peace. But is it a choice between war or peace? There are different kinds of peace. Most Americans would prefer the pestilential peace in Plymouth today to that in Athens under the heel of tyranny. Is America at fault? Has America had any part in causing this world-wide bath of blood? If it were a choice between war and peace, America would, with one voice, choose peace. But is it our choice? Belgium chose peace; Poland chose peace; and Greece made not one threatening move. Yet all have been conquered. Every <sup>✓</sup>thinking man can contemplate our danger by simply calling the roll of the wretched victims of world aggression who are now in a condition of semi-slavery and whose every hope of again enjoying freedom and the blessings of a free man's civilization depends ~~only~~ on the defeat or failure of this move of conquest. Some people, perhaps with good intentions, regard this as an ordinary regional war. But this is no regular war. The issues are not boundary lines. The losing nations in this war have not been given treaties of peace. They have become part and parcel of the so-called new order by which the conquered people become serfs to contribute to the progress of the so-called superior race. Each conquest is used as a stepping stone from

which other peoples ~~will be~~<sup>are</sup> attacked. We have no basis upon which to presume that this spreading fire of aggression will not reach the Western Hemisphere. We are vitally concerned with the outcome of the battle of Britain. Upon its outcome depends whether we will retain our position in an orderly world or stand with our backs to the wall defending the last free territories on earth against economic and military threats of enemies in control of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Upon its outcome depends whether the Atlantic ocean shall serve as protection for us or as an enemy-controlled highway to isolate us economically and militarily. When we are thus encircled, could we safely do other than spend the major portion of our might, and our main, and ~~our income~~<sup>for</sup> in military preparedness? Even if open warfare in a fight-to-the-finish could be avoided, how could we maintain our standard of living while spending so great a portion of our income on ~~warfare~~<sup>military preparation</sup> and competing with slave labor in world commerce? History does not reveal any instance where a free people's standard of living has been ~~lowered~~<sup>drastically</sup> within the framework of free institutions. ~~England's~~<sup>existing</sup> subjugation ~~would truly be a calamity for the world and for us, and from every source of information in Washington, England's situation is precarious. What will we do? Whether we like it or not - and we don't - a crisis is approaching. We must reach a decision and to fail to decide is to decide.~~<sup>yes,</sup>

Perhaps this broadcast will be criticized. Perhaps some will say that it is a dis-service to present so dark a picture. But should one not be frank? The American people are not soft. They can stand the truth and in truth there is strength. These problems are not the personal and private affairs of officials



in Washington. The ultimate decision <sup>rests</sup> ~~lies~~ with the American people. The facts should be stated to them. The truth should be spoken plainly, and plainly we are in grave danger.