

Radio Talk, June 1, 1941

Good Morning, Friends:

Important though some actions of Congress during the past week have been, they fade in significance in the historical glare of President Roosevelt's momentous speech on Tuesday night. It would be needless to recount what the President said because nearly everybody heard him say it. The general Congressional reaction to his address might be of some interest. By and large, members of the House and the Senate were very pleased indeed with the speech. Some were disappointed that the President did not go further. Others complained that he went too far, but a large majority of the Congress felt that the President made a strong statement of our foreign policy and ^{yet} that his pronouncements were short of war.

During his campaign for reelection last year, the President promised that we would not fight in a foreign war unless attacked. A great deal now turns on the question of what is and what is not "attack." The President said ^{Tuesday night} that he would interpret "attack" realistically. President Monroe enunciated what has become known in world history as the Monroe Doctrine. This historic doctrine proclaims that we will not stand for European aggression on any part of the America's. President Roosevelt broadened this by saying that we would not stand for the seizure by enemies of outposts from which we might be ^{threatened or} attacked. Thus, he greatly broadened the scope and meaning of "attack." With the overwhelming support of the American people, this Nation, through its leader, the President, has taken its position. We have taken a stand at military points of vantage-- Greenland, Labrador, Bermuda, Trinidad. ~~xxx~~ Our patrol ~~ed~~ ships and planes are

far out in the Atlantic, not only to watch out for any threatening move toward us, but for the purpose of signaling to the British the presence and location of any enemy craft. Suppose Hitler attacked one of our battleships. That would certainly be an attack. If he bombed our fortification on one of the Atlantic bases, that would certainly be an attack. > The President used strong language indeed. Many people said it meant that we were 'in the war'. The President is bold and is leading us brilliantly in this international contest in which there is at stake the lives of ~~teeming~~ thousands and the freedom of mankind.

In this speech, the President tread very, very closely to that fine and shifting line between war and short of war. Yet, he clearly left the responsibility upon Hitler to start hostilities. The President knows that we are not ready to go to war, even if we wanted to go to war. He also knows that our most precious need is ^{for} time in which to get prepared to defend ourselves and all the Americas. He knows that we can only gain that time if England withstands Hitler's attack. Great Britain has been twice driven from the European continent and is slowly but surely being driven from the entire Mediterranean area. The President knows that Great Britain must have assistance and encouragement. He has determined, with the backing of Congress and the overwhelming majority of the American people, to take the chance of giving her that assistance. He has determined to make our navy, which is ready for any eventuality, the outpost. He definitely let Hitler know that we were not going to let him get behind our back and that we would fight with all of our might if attacked. So, it is Hitler's choice

whether he fires upon our ships or whether he doesn't. And, mind you, ~~that~~ if Hitler thinks it is to his interest to bring us into the war, it would make no difference to him whether we had given him an excuse or not. What had Greece done to Hitler or the German nation? Had Norway, or Belgium, or Holland made any threat toward Hitler? Indeed, before Hitler started this awful conflict who was bothering him? Nobody! Nobody wanted war with Hitler. Everybody wanted peace, and he has deliberately and shrewdly used the love for peace and the hate of war as a means of conquest. He has depended, and so far successfully, upon that reluctance to go to war to keep one nation from going to war to help its neighbor. Hitler certainly does not yet want the United States in the war. They felt our fury in the last war. You will remember that in making the decision to start unrestricted warfare against our vessels, that the German leaders said that they would win the war before the United States could have any effect. ~~in the war~~. They calculated wrong. When our fury was unleashed upon them it was awful. It had a great deal to do with ~~the~~ breaking ~~of~~ the moral of the German people. If we went into the war now, it would ^{again} have a tremendous effect upon the morale of the German people. The President and Secretary Hull understand this situation, and they understand it better than anyone else in America. They are leading us boldly and courageously. The President used strong language, very strong language, but remember that he used very strong language in his speech to the White House Press Correspondents Banquet and to the Nation on March 15, ^{last} ~~1941~~. Many people said then "we are in the war", but there has been no shooting yet. Many people now

Say that his Tuesday speech means we are in it. But nobody can definitely say that we are entirely in the war, nor can it be said that we are entirely out of the war. We are in it with our sympathy. We are in it economically. We are in it by many, many acts of aid to Great Britain. Nevertheless, we are not in it to the extent of having an expeditionary force in Europe. We are not in it by a declaration of war with its irretrievable consequences. We are not shooting at Germany, nor is Germany shooting at us. This nation is taking a grave risk of war. There is no doubt about that. We are taking the chance of aiding Great Britain at the risk of war in order to get prepared to defend ourselves and to maintain our position in this world of nations and peoples on the basis of equality, freedom, and dignity.

On Wednesday following his speech Tuesday night, the President called a special press conference in which he answered questions regarding his speech. His replies to questions at this press conference serve to lessen the belligerency of his address. For instance, in his speech he said that we "must" deliver the goods to Britain and that we "will" deliver the goods to Britain. Many people thought that this statement meant that we would take our ships, under our flag, convoyed by our battleships and carry the goods to British harbors. The President said in his press conference that he was not contemplating any change in the Neutrality Act. Well, the Neutrality Act forbids American merchant ships from going into belligerent waters, as proclaimed by the President. So evidently he did not mean by "delivering the goods" that ^{we} ~~they~~ ^{carry them} would ~~be carried~~ in American ships, flying the American flag. In his speech, he proclaimed our insistence upon the

traditional policy of "freedom of the seas." And yet, if our ships are not to be allowed to go into danger zones, upon what are we to insist? These things are pointed out to show that, in spite of a lot of interpretations that the speech constituted entrance into the war, it really did not. We are still in the twilight between war and peace - between darkness and light. We can not do other than rush forward with our preparations for darkness, all the while praying for light.

To bring a full consciousness of our grave National danger to the American people and to take advantage of certain statutes granting broad powers to the President in case of an emergency, President Roosevelt proclaimed the Nation to be in an unlimited emergency. Since the early days of the Republic, Congress, representing the people, has enacted laws which conveyed to the President special powers and authority in time of emergency. In some cases the power has been conferred only in case of war, while in others it can be used "when war is eminent" or when the Nation is in an emergency. This accumulation of powers which, over a period of years, have been conferred upon the President in time of grave emergency are now available to the President, and they are enormous. It may be that he proclaimed the unlimited emergency largely for psychological effect. Many ardent Administration supporters have been disappointed at the reaction to the proclamation of an unlimited emergency. Some thought that this would bring an end to the unfortunate division and bitter debate going on in the country over our foreign policy. The proclamation and the speech, for that matter,

has had very little visible effect upon the leading opponents of ~~the President's~~^{our} foreign policy. This is unfortunate for the country. All Americans should ^{now} seek unity. > The frequent use of an emergency proclamation during recent years undoubtedly is one explanation why this unlimited emergency proclamation did not make the dramatic appeal which many expected. Even though its psychological effect may be disappointing, it definitely places at the President's command vast powers which he can use. It lays the foundation upon which we can and must win our own domestic battle of production. And, mind you, that battle comes first. Unless we can control our ^{own} internal situation, unless we can and do use the sovereignty of government to guarantee the production of defense materials, then we are in poor shape to get into a scrap with anybody. If we fail to gear our industry, if we fail to use our resources and our energy to guarantee the defense of our nation, then we will have failed our country, we will have failed all democracies and ^{we will have failed} the cause of freedom.

The President spoke out forcefully against delays in defense. He said, "The overwhelming majority of our citizens expect their government to see that the tools of defense are built." He was certainly right there. He went on to say, "This Government is determined to use all of its power to express the will of its people and to prevent interference with the production of materials essential

to their nation's security." Now that's the kind of language we have been wanting ^{that's what we've been impatient for.} from the President. He has said it and now let's hope that he ~~does not~~^{does not further hesitate to use that power.} He made

this incomparable appeal to the Nation last Tuesday, and yet nearly a week later, strikes continue in vital defense industries. If our National danger does not stir a patriotic chord in the strikers' hearts, if the President's eloquent appeal goes unheeded, then it is time to act.

Mr. President, we, the overwhelming majority of the American people, loving our country and ^{believing in the principles of} ~~our~~ freedom, applauded your speech. You are our leader. We trust you. We glory in your leadership. You inspired us by your words and we implore you to use the sovereign power of government, which we have entrusted to you as our leader, to guarantee the production of materials essential to this nation's security. " When we win our own domestic battle of production, we will then be in a position to effectively aid Great Britain, to effectively resist Hitlerism, to effectively defend our country ~~and our Hemisphere~~, and to take our proper and rightful place beneath the sun as the greatest nation on earth.