

Radio Talk -
June 9, 1941

The Administration's property seizure bill hit the Capitol like a bomb.

It provides that the President shall have the authority to take ^{temporary or permanent} possession of any property, real or personal, tangible or intangible, or any interest therein, if in the President's opinion it is needed for National defense directly or indirectly. Under a law like that the President could take the song books out of the First Baptist Church in Nashville, or for that matter, he could take the church. He could take the shoes right off everybody's feet. He could take all property away from everybody and turn it over to somebody else in such manner as he chose. Now, of course, the President would do none of these things. Even those who drafted the bill had no idea that the President wanted to do such things. But the "price of liberty is eternal vigilance" and Congress is just not going to pass any such law. The Congress is ready and willing to confer upon the President whatever power and authority is necessary for the promotion of our defense, If he needs any more power to take over a striking plant, then let the bill be drawn to give him that specific power and Congress will undoubtedly pass it forthwith. If he needs more power to take over ships, then let the law read that way. For whatever power he needs, Congress should specify it. There is no need to put a law upon the books which is so all-inclusive as the one proposed just in order to do some specific things. As has been said, President Roosevelt has no intention of using the power arbitrarily, but he will not be President always. And it is awfully hard to get these laws off the books once they are on.

> Really, this bill was presented to Congress from the War Department without the President having ever seen it. ~~The~~ Mr. Sam Rayburn, the Speaker of the House,

went down to see the President about it and told him just what the bill provided, and the President asked Mr. Rayburn if they said he approved such a bill. Mr. Rayburn told him "yes." Then the President told Mr. Rayburn that he had not even seen it; that he had indicated his desire that there be a broadening of his power to take over plants. So it is not a thing to be greatly worried about.

The respective committees to which the bill has been referred will work out a ^{reasonable} bill to confer the powers necessary, and Congress will very likely pass it without a great deal of fight. > The President and the Congress ^{are} ~~is~~ working together better now than at any time since the early days of his administration. There is a fine feeling of confidence and mutuality. ✓

The deplorable strike situation continues. There are indications that the government is about ready to act. It should. It must.

~~wins an additional victory.~~

| *One of* The chief topics of conversation in Washington this week, ~~aside from the deplorable strike situation,~~ has been the visit and the report of Mr. John G. Winant, our ambassador to Great Britain. There has been much talk that his return to the United States for a conference with Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt had to do with some sort of a peace movement in Europe. On Friday, the President branded these reports as German-inspired propaganda. Perhaps, it would not be amiss to discuss briefly the question of whether or not the United States should take the leadership in bringing about a negotiated peace.

QUESTION: "Should the United States, While Continuing Its Preparedness Program, Take the Leadership in an Effort to Bring About Peace?"

Real, lasting peace and justice is the hope of America, the purpose of our aid-to-Britain policy, and the aim of our whole defense program.

In determining whether we should now undertake to mediate or negotiate a peace between the European belligerents, we must carefully consider what the effect of making such an effort would be upon the United States and upon the world. If we take the lead in trying to bring about a negotiated peace, we would be morally and politically obligated to use every means at our command to bring about an acceptance of our proposal.

By what methods could we implement our persuasion upon the belligerents?

We could certainly put almost unbearable pressure upon England by refusing further aid if she did not accept our proposal. The use of this method of coercion would be a violation of our stated policy of extending aid to Great Britain and to other democracies as long as they resist aggression.

The only effective pressure which we could bring upon Germany would be to threaten to enter the war against her if she did not accept our particular plans for redrawing the map of Europe. Obviously, this would be a grave and dangerous step.

In thinking of the chances of successfully bringing about a negotiated peace, it might be well to consider the efforts which we made to prevent the catastrophe. At the time of Munich, President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull

both urged negotiation upon all parties. [They negotiated a peace at Munich, and I remember now a picture appearing in all of our papers of Neville Chamberlain as he alighted from the plane which brought him back to Britain from Munich, after sacrificing Czechoslovakia on the altar of appeasement. His hand was lifted aloft, his face all aglow. "Peace in our time," he said. Was that peace? That was hell on earth.]

Our government made a second attempt to bring about negotiation in April, 1939, before the invasion of Poland. At that time, we submitted a proposal as follows:

1. That all boundary questions be frozen for the present.
2. That immediately a political conference be held in which all parties would attempt negotiation, the United States not to be a party to the negotiations but, of course, to make available her good offices.
3. That all parties, including the United States, simultaneously enter into an economic conference in an effort to assure the workability of any solution reached.

The only answer to this proposal was in the form of a speech to the Reichstag by Adolph Hitler in which he ridiculed and insulted President Roosevelt and the United States.

A third exploration of the ground occurred when in January of 1940, before the invasion of Belgium and France, Mr. Sumner Welles was sent to Europe. Soon

thereafter Belgium and France were invaded, and the war has continued in full fury.

Certain well-meaning but misguided Americans propose that the United States now take the leadership in bringing about a "negotiated peace." They propose this as a course of action for the American people and, therefore, we have a right to know what a "negotiated peace" really means. Suppose, then, instead of talking nice sounding but meaningless words, we come out flat-footed and say what they propose to do. In actual fact, they propose:

1. To accept a Hitler victory;
2. To ask for a British capitulation;
3. To put the American stamp of approval on Hitler's European order, with its Gestapo, concentration camps, slavery, and all the rest of it;
4. To betray into the hands of their oppressors peoples who have been our life-long friends, - the French, the Norwegians, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Greeks, the Yugoslavs, and all the other wretched victims of Nazi aggression and enslavement;
5. To force a change in the British Government so that appeasers and Nazi collaborationists like those at Vichy will come into power.

Incidentally, what would they do to us?
6. To end all organized resistance to Hitlerism and his pagan philosophy - apparently even in the United States;

7. To leave us without a friend among the major nations, and without even the respect of the small nations whom we had not betrayed into slavery;
8. To postpone for generations to come the day of real peace in the world, so earnestly sought by all men of good will.

This is the reality. This is what they propose to do. To chocolate-coat it with the nice words "negotiated peace" simply conceals from us what it actually means.

But this is not the worst of it. They are trying to hold out to us the hope of "peace." But the actual effect of what they are proposing to do would almost of necessity bring us squarely into the war. When you propose to negotiate a peace while war is going on, you have to go through with it. We remember President Wilson's attempt to negotiate peace in 1916, which inevitably forced us almost at once into the war when fair peace terms were refused.

By, honestly, ^{We must} ~~I~~ presume, but misguidedly, proposing what they call a "negotiated peace," which really means a British capitulation, the proponents are undermining the morale of the British, and, at the same time, are strengthening the morale and confidence of Germany. It goes without saying that this would simply embolden the eccentric and irresponsible Nazi leadership. And this, God forgive us, is done in the name of "America First." It more nearly means "America Next." What they call "keeping hands off Europe"

is in fact intervening in Europe in the worst possible way at a time and in a manner best calculated to endanger the United States.

And, if it were successful, of what value would a negotiated peace with Hitler be? Another Munich? Hitler has consistently used his intended victims' desire for peace as a strategem of war. A "negotiated peace" would depend for its value, if any, upon Hitler's promises; which the record has proven worthless. A truce with Hitler is merely giving him a period to prepare for further war, aggression, and enslavement.

Fellow citizens, America is the land of the free! It must not taint its soul by instituting a betrayal of helpless, friendly people into slavery. It must not betray the cause of liberty by becoming the instrument of its defeat.