

Sunday Broad Cast

Oct 12, 1941

THE NEUTRALITY ACT

The United States has an undeniable right to consider the problem of so-called neutrality legislation, or any other National problem, from the standpoint of self-interest. ~~It is from this standpoint of self-interest that I desire to approach a discussion of the Neutrality Act.~~ In considering our own self-interest, we must not make the mistake of assuming that an act which would be helpful to another nation will not, at the same time, be helpful to us.

The United States has become the most powerful and indeed the leading Nation of the world. The earth's people, hundreds of millions of them, look to the United States to guide and light their way. The nations of the entire Western Hemisphere and, indeed, the nations of the world pattern their policies and orders in relationship to the United States.

Our economic life, great industrial and agricultural nation that we are, is so interwoven with and inter-dependent upon world commerce that we can not hope to have domestic prosperity and economic well-being if we suffer economic isolation. To our North is only a small nation of six million people, which would provide a small outlet indeed for our production; and by land communication, we could only reach to the South of us Mexico and the small Central American Republics, all of which have comparatively small purchasing power. Thus, it can be seen that our ability to trade with the world depends upon our right and our ability to transport our produce upon the high seas.

We are deficient in a number of materials which are essential to our economic life - manganese, rubber, quinine, tungsten, and many others. These we can not

obtain over land routes. Canada is deficient, just as we are, and the Central American Republics have not the capacity to produce. Thus, again, it is vital to our economic life that we be able to obtain these necessary materials over the water trade routes of the world.

From a military standpoint, we would be exposed to encirclement, to pincers movements, blockade, and attack from all directions, if our enemies gained control of the seas. Thus, to make sure that the control of the seas does not fall into the hands of the aggressor nations is our primary and foremost matter of self-interest. That being the matter of first importance to us, the survival of Great Britain as a potent and powerful force is necessary for our protection and defense. Laying aside, for the sake of this discussion, our sympathy for and ideological kinship with Great Britain, we must recognize the undisputed fact that she controls the gateways to the Atlantic through which the aggressor nations must pass in order to gain control of the Atlantic. ~~Indeed~~, Great Britain and the United States are partners in naval control of the Pacific, Hawaii, Singapore, the Philippines. Should Great Britain be subjugated, the aggressor nations would then have shipbuilding capacity greater ^{ly} in excess of that possessed by us and by all the nations allied with us, if, indeed, there should be any nations allied with us after a British subjugation. It's plain to see that we would then be threatened from all sides, economically, politically, and militarily. For years, yes, for generations, this nation would then spend one-half or two-thirds or more of its national income for military preparation.

Out of the resultant lowering of our standard of living, out of the economic dislocation and chaos would come stark threats and dangers to our free way of life. Can it not be said then that it is of paramount importance to the United States that Great Britain survive as a force for law and order, as a potent force in partnership with the United States to bring about law and order and organize the world for a permanent peace. *the war is the*

The Neutrality Act forbids our ships from going to the ports of Great Britain. Someone says that Great Britain is able herself to transport the supplies necessary for her survival. But let us suppose that suddenly the test came and she could not keep open a sufficient lifeline to the United States. Let us suppose that before the icicles hang from the trees Germany destroys Russia as a fighting force - and this may be - and that then Germany is undisputed master of the entire continent of Europe. *and that* With oil, with iron, with steel, with factories, with wheat, with men, and with the awful mechanized and diabolically led forces with which Hitler, the reincarnation of Satan *himself*, has struck the heart of freedom and enslaved the European continent, *Hitler levels his assault* ~~is leveled at Great~~ *upon* Britain. Suppose that during the fog and the storm of winter, his submarines are able to bring Great Britain to the point of capitulation, and the warning call comes to us that unless our ships can bring them food, bring them ammunition, planes, tanks, and weapons, the fight is lost. What *would* ~~will~~ then be the situation? We *would* ~~will~~ be forbidden to do it by the Neutrality Act. Our hands would be tied behind us. *We should untie our hands now. Not even a finger should be shackled.*

My worthy colleague in this discussion tonight says that the Neutrality Act has kept us out of war. Indeed, we can be said to be out of the war only by definition. And I'm not sure that had it not been for the nefarious embargo, for the well-known pacifists' and short-sighted isolationists' philosophy entertained by certain of our people embodied in this ill-starred Neutrality Act that this terrible wave of aggression might have been averted. My colleague says that the Neutrality Act will keep us out of the war in the future. That is beyond his wisdom and beyond mine. He is entitled to his opinion, as you and I are entitled to ours. In my humble opinion, the Neutrality Act is a threat to the security, the welfare, and the permanent peace of the United States. I would not leave tied the hands of my nation. Yea, not even a finger. This whole Neutrality Act was a pitiful mistake. It is part and parcel of that short-sighted, circumvented isolationist philosophy which has failed the peace of the world, which has brought the United States face to face with the most dangerous threat of its existence. Repeal it! Yes, repeal it quickly!

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The opponents of repeal
say that it means war.
They said the same thing
about repealing the embargo,
the lend-lease bill and about
every other step we have taken.
By repealing the neutrality act
we would be simply reasserting
our rights to the freedom of the
seas which we temporarily
waived.

To repeal the neutrality act
would not in itself be an
unneutral act. It is the business
of no other nation how we
repeal, enact or amend our own
domestic laws. By repealing the
law, however, it would authorize
our ships to carry supplies to

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the ports of Hitler's enemies.
This involves the risk that
they would be sunk. It is,
therefore, only candid to
acknowledge these risks.

There is danger in every
direction no matter what
we do or do not do. The
only sensible thing to do
is to untie our hands in
order that we can act
swiftly and effectively in
the interest of our own
defense where ever and
whenever necessary