

RADIO TRANSCRIPTION FOR
CONGRESSMAN PAUL J. KILDAY
OF TEXAS, October 17, 1941

*DeBald Safe & Lock Co
Akron*

Good Morning, San Antonians:

This is Albert Gore, member of Congress from Tennessee, ^{substituting} speaking for
your Congressman and my good friend, the Honorable Paul J. Kilday.

Congressman Kilday has been sent to Newfoundland as a member of a sub-
committee of the Military Affairs Committee for the purpose of inspecting our
new defense base there. This is a very important work. The Committee, of
which Congressman Kilday is a member, left during the week and will remain
in the far North long enough to give thorough inspection to our defense ^{installations} ~~bases~~
in that area. Upon its return, the Committee will give a report to the Military
Affairs Committee, to Congress, and to the public to the end that the people
and their representatives may be informed of the progress and the condition of
these defense outposts which are so vital to the security of this country.

It is indeed a pleasure for me on this day to substitute for Congressman
Kilday in making a commentary upon the events of the week in Washington.

<sup>soon after receiving news of the torpedoing of an
American destroyer off Iceland,</sup>
On Friday evening, the House passed the bill authorizing President
Roosevelt to arm our merchant vessels, and the bill now goes to the Senate
where it faces, according to Senator Wheeler, a determined fight from the
isolationists.

The law of self-defense is common to mankind from the primitive tribe
to the complexities of the present international conflict. It is beyond my
understanding how anyone could have any objection to arming our ships when they
are being sunk upon the high seas. Certainly we owe it to the seamen aboard
to give them at least a chance to defend their lives. If I am going into an

^{which is}
area without police protection and I know that within this area are desperadoes who kill unprotected people, you may be sure that, before entering that area, I will arm myself in order that I can defend myself. That is the way I feel about arming our vessels. The isolationists are trying to justify their stand by saying that an armed merchant vessel can not put up an effective fight against a submarine. Perhaps it is no match in fighting power, but you may be sure that no submarine is going to emerge from the briny deep immediately along side an armed merchant vessel and sink it with one pot-shot from a deck gun. If the merchant vessel is armed, the submarine will either keep its distance or fire its torpedo from beneath the surface from where, in either event, the aim is much less accurate.

The isolationists further attempt to justify their opposition to the arming of vessels by saying that this is the entering wedge for the repeal of the neutrality law. Whether or not that is true, this question should be decided upon its merit. So far as I am concerned, I hope the Neutrality Act is repealed.

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. 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. 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 greatly in excess of that possessed by us and by all the nations allied with us, ~~after a British~~ 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 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 upon Great 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 then be the situation? We would 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.

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 un-neutral 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 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 wherever and whenever necessary.