

Appendix

WASHINGTON BIRTHDAY REMARKS AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY FEBRUARY 22, 1947

I had an engagement with your distinguished President to attend this ceremony exactly one year ago. Instead I celebrated Washington's birthday in China. Now, a year later, I am glad that it is at last possible for me to keep my engagement.

I do not wish at this time to engage in a discussion of specific international questions. But I would like to talk to you about the homefront as it relates to international affairs, and about your personal interests as American citizens.

As you all must recognize, we are living today in a most difficult period. The war years were critical, at times alarmingly so. But I think that the present period is in many respects even more critical. The problems are different but no less vital to the national security than those during the days of active fighting. But the more serious aspect is the fact that we no longer display that intensity, that unity of purpose with which we concentrated upon the war task and achieved the victory.

Now that an immediate peril is not plainly visible, there is a natural tendency to relax, and to return to business as usual, politics as usual, pleasure as usual. Many of our people have become indifferent to what I might term the long-time dangers to the nation's security. It is natural and necessary, that there should be a relaxation of wartime tensions. But I feel that we are seriously failing in our attitude toward the international problems whose solution will largely determine our future. The public appears generally in the attitude of a spectator—interested, yes, but, whose serious thinking is directed to local, immediate matters. Spectators of life are not those who will retain their liberties nor are they likely to contribute to their country's security.

There are many who deplore, but few who are willing to act, to act directly or to influence political action. Action depends upon conviction, and conviction in turn depends upon understanding—a general understanding both of the past history of man on this globe and an understanding that action is a basic necessity of man's nature. Justice Holmes said, "Man is born to act. To act is to affirm the worth of an end, and to affirm the worth of an end is to create an ideal." So I say to you as earnestly as I can that the attitude of the spectator is the culminating frustration of man's nature.

We have had a cessation of hostilities, but we have no genuine peace. Here

at home we are in a state of transition between a war and peace economy. In Europe and Asia fear and famine still prevail. Power relationships are in a state of flux. Order has yet to be brought out of confusion. Peace has yet to be secured. And how this is accomplished will depend very much upon the American people.

Most of the other countries of the world find themselves exhausted economically, financially and physically. If the world is to get on its feet, if the productive facilities of the world are to be restored, if democratic processes in many countries are to resume their functioning, a strong lead and definite assistance from the United States will be necessary.

What are we going to do about it? That is the critical problem with regard to which I have a heavy responsibility.

We do not lack for knowledge of what to do for our future security. The lessons of history provide plain guidance. But, can we tear our thoughts sufficiently away from the personal and local problems of the moment to see the world picture and our relation to it in proper perspective? We should think now in long terms of years rather than in terms of months and their immediate political issues.

Twenty-five years ago the people of this country, and of the world for that matter, had the opportunity to make vital decisions regarding their future welfare. I think we must agree that the negative course of action followed by the United States after the First World War did not achieve order or security, and that it had a direct bearing upon the recent war and its endless tragedies.

There were people in those days who understood the lessons of history, who knew well what should be done in order to minimize the danger of another world disaster, but their combined voice was a feeble one and their proposals were ignored. Now this, in my opinion, is where you come into the picture.

In order to take a full part in the life which is before you, I think you must in effect relive the past so that you may turn to the present with deep convictions and an understanding of what manner of country this is for which men for many generations have laid down their lives. Therefore, a deep understanding of history is necessary—not merely recent history which concerns itself with the trivia surrounding conspicuous men and events, but an understanding of that history which records the main currents of the past activities of men and which leads to an understanding of what has created and what has destroyed great civilizations. You should have an understanding of what course of action has created power and security and of the mistakes which have undermined the power and security of many nations, and above all, a clear understanding of the institutions upon which human liberty and individual freedom have depended, and the struggles to gain and maintain them.

It has been said that one should be interested in the past only as a guide to the future. I do not fully concur with this. One usually emerges from an intimate understanding of the past with its lessons and its wisdom, with convictions which put fire in the soul. I doubt seriously whether a man can think with full wisdom and with deep convictions regarding certain of the basic international issues today who has not at least reviewed in his mind the period of the Peloponnesian War and the Fall of Athens.

I am therefore greatly concerned that the young men and women of this

country, men like yourselves and the students in every university, college and high school in the United States, shall acquire a genuine understanding of lessons of history as they relate to governments and the characteristics of nations and peoples, and as to the causes of the wars which have destroyed so much of human life and progress You should fully understand the special position that the United States now occupies in the world, geographically, financially, militarily, and scientifically, and the implications involved The development of a sense of responsibility for world order and security, the development of a sense of overwhelming importance of this country's acts, and failures to act, in relation to world order and security—these, in my opinion, are great musts for your generation

It is rather bromidic to say that there is little new in the world or that the world is a very small place But I think we seldom realize our own ignorance of what has happened in the past except by way of a chronological sequence of events with the related dates There have been wars and revolutions, there have been republics, kingdoms and empires, there has been tribal rule and various experiments in government, till it would seem that there is small possibility of any new departure But the important thing is to understand the true significance, the lessons of these historic events and periods

There is another consideration in connection with the course to be followed by the young people of this country today to which I attach great importance And that is that young men and women should take an active part as workers in one of the political parties so that they will get the feel of government, so that they will become intimately aware of the influence of political organization upon the government of the hometown, of the state, and the nation We have had two wonderful examples of this course in the lives of Theodore and Franklin D Roosevelt—members of opposing political parties, great Americans who rendered magnificent services to their country You can do no better in starting your active life as citizens than by emulating their example

Address of Secretary of State George C Marshall at Harvard University, June 5, 1947

President Dr Conant, Members of the Board of Overseers, Ladies and Gentlemen I am profoundly grateful and touched by the great distinction and honor, a great compliment, accorded me by the authorities of Harvard this morning I am overwhelmed as a matter of fact and I am rather fearful of my inability to maintain such a high rating as you have been generous enough to accord to me In these historic and lovely surroundings, this perfect day and this very wonderful assembly, it is a tremendously impressive thing to an individual in my position But to speak more seriously

I need not tell you that the world situation is very serious That must be apparent to all intelligent people I think one difficulty is that the problem is one of such enormous complexity that the very mass of facts presented to the public by press and radio make it exceedingly difficult for the man in the street to reach a clear appraisement of the situation Furthermore, the people of this country are distant from the troubled areas of the earth and it is hard for them

to comprehend the plight and consequent reactions of the long-suffering peoples of Europe and the effect of those reactions on their governments in connections with our efforts to promote peace in the world

In considering the requirements for the rehabilitation of Europe, the physical loss of life, the visible destructions of cities, factories, mines and railroads was correctly estimated, but it has become obvious during recent months that this visible destruction was probably less serious than the dislocation of the entire fabric of European economy. For the past ten years conditions have been highly abnormal. The feverish preparation for war and the more feverish maintenance of the war effort engulfed all aspects of national economies. Machinery has fallen into disrepair or is entirely obsolete. Under the arbitrary and destructive Nazi rule, virtually every possible enterprise was geared into the German war machine. Long-standing commercial ties, private institutions, banks, insurance companies and shipping companies disappeared, through loss of capital, absorption through nationalization or by simple destruction. In many countries, confidence in the local currency has been severely shaken. The breakdown of the business structure of Europe during the war was complete. Recovery has been seriously retarded by the fact that two years after the close of hostilities a peace settlement with Germany and Austria has not been agreed upon. But even given a more prompt solution of these difficult problems, the rehabilitation of the economic structure of Europe quite evidently will require a much longer time and greater effort than had been foreseen.

There is a phase of this matter which is both interesting and serious. The farmer has always produced the foodstuffs to exchange with the city dweller for the other necessities of life. This division of labor is the basis of modern civilization. At the present time it is threatened with breakdown. The town and city industries are not producing adequate goods to exchange with the food-producing farmer. Raw materials and fuel are in short supply. Machinery, as I have said, is lacking or worn out. The farmer or the peasant cannot find the goods for sale which he desires to purchase. So the sale of his farm produce for money which he cannot use seems to him an unprofitable transaction. He, therefore, has withdrawn many fields from crop cultivation and is using them for grazing. He feeds more grain to stock and finds for himself and his family an ample supply of food, however short he may be on clothing and the other ordinary gadgets of civilization. Meanwhile people in the cities are short of food and fuel and in some places approaching starvation limits. So the governments are forced to use their foreign money and credits to procure these necessities abroad. This process exhausts funds which are urgently needed for reconstruction. Thus a very serious situation is rapidly developing which bodes no good for the world. The modern system of the division of labor upon which the exchange of products is based is in danger of breaking down.

The truth of the matter is that Europe's requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products—principally from America—are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help, or face economic, social and political deterioration of a very grave character.

The remedy seems to lie in breaking the vicious circle and restoring the confidence of the people of Europe and the economic future of their own

countries and of Europe as a whole. The manufacturer and the farmer throughout wide areas must be able and willing to exchange their products for currencies the continuing value of which is not open to question.

Aside from the demoralizing effect on the world at large and the possibilities of disturbances arising as a result of the desperation of the people concerned, the consequences to the economy of the United States should be apparent to all. It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. Such assistance, I am convinced, must not be on a piecemeal basis as various crises develop. Any assistance that this Government may render in the future should provide a cure rather than a mere palliative. Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full cooperation, I am sure, on the part of the United States Government. Any government which maneuvers to block the recovery of other countries cannot expect help from us (*Applause*). Furthermore, governments, political parties or groups which seek to perpetuate human misery in order to profit therefrom politically or otherwise will encounter the opposition of the United States. (*Applause*)

It is already evident that, before the United States Government can proceed much further in its efforts to alleviate the situation and help start the European world on its way to recovery, there must be some agreement among the countries of Europe as to the requirements of the situation and the part those countries themselves will take in order to give proper effect to whatever action might be undertaken by this Government. It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for our Government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe. The role of this country should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of later support of such a program so far as it may be practical for us to do so. The program should be a joint one, agreed to by a number, if not all European nations.

An essential part of any successful action on the part of the United States is an understanding on the part of the people of America of the character of the problem and the remedies to be applied. Political passion and prejudice should have no part. With foresight, and a willingness on the part of our people to face up to the vast responsibilities which history has clearly placed upon our country, the difficulties I have outlined can and will be overcome. I am sorry that on each occasion I have said something publicly in regard to our international situation, I have been forced by the necessities of the case to enter into rather technical discussions. But to my mind it is of vast importance that our people reach some general understanding of what the complications really are rather than react from a passion or a prejudice or an emotion of the moment. As I said more formally a moment ago, we are remote from the scene of these troubles. It is virtually impossible at this distance merely by

reading or listening or even seeing photographs and motion pictures to grasp at all the real significance of the situation Yet the whole world's future hangs on a proper judgment, it hangs, I think, to a large extent on the realization of the American people of just what are the very dominant factors, what are the reactions of the people, what are the justifications of those reactions, what are the sufferings, what is needed, what can best be done, what must be done
Thank you very much