ADDRESS delivered by The Honorable George S. Messersmith, American Ambassador to Mexico, at the "Feria de la Victoria" in Tampico on December 26, 1942.

It is a very real privilege and pleasure for me to be able to attend the Feria de la Victoria in Tampico and to have this opportunity to learn to know this part of Mexico and its people. I have not seen in your hospitable country since February of this year, and it has long been my desire to visit not only Tampico but also other parts of Mexico. It has been my privilege to serve my Government in many countries during a period of almost thirty years, and during that time I have found that in order to know a country it is necessary not only to know the capital, but to have intimate contact with all parts of the country. Just as so many of our friends who visit the United States know Washington and New York and feel that they know something concerning the United States, so too many of us who visit other countries believe that if we know the capital we know the country. No error can be more serious than this.

My many occupations ever since I arrived in Mexico some ten months ago have made it impossible for me to realize this very keen desire which I have had to know more intimately the beauties and resources of your great country, and to form contacts also with the Mexican people outside of the capital. I am more than happy that I now have the opportunity to make this trip to a point distant from the capital, which plays so important a part in the economy of Mexico. For your cordial invitation and for your generous welcome, I am most deeply appreciative.

We are in the midst of a great war - the greatest war in history. It is a war which, it is almost safe to say, none of the peoples of the world now engaged in this gigantic struggle desired. It is a war which has been forced on the world by a small group of individuals in Germany, Japan, and Italy, who had conceived the idea of making themselves, through their countries, the masters of the world, and who, in order to achieve their purposes, misled their peoples by dreams of power, domination, and the enslavement of other peoples. I had the opportunity of serving in Germany during the melancholy years 1933-1934, and saw there the development and consummation of the ambitions of a group who secured control of the Government and of the people of Germany with the sole objective of using that Government and people, and the resources of that highly industrialized country, for the enslavement of the rest of the world; for the establishment of political and economic domination through the destruction of the sovereignty and freedom of democratic peoples in large and smaller countries. I knew intimately these men who are responsible for this great war, and at no time did they conceal from me what others their objects. From 1933 until 1939 they created this huge military machine which had for its sole purpose the destruction of our freedoms and our way of life.

In Europe these preparations for war were not unknown. But larger and smaller countries in Europe felt that
that it was not they who were to be attacked, but others; and through this complacency Germany and Italy were permitted to arm without hindrance, when it was so clear that all this preparation for war was directed so definitely against other States. In the meantime, Japan was feverishly carrying on a similar program, in collaboration with Germany and Italy, which had for its purpose the domination and enslavement of the Far East.

If so many of the countries of Europe felt themselves immune from attack, we in the Americas, including so large a part of the people in the United States, felt that we were equally immune from attack by this huge war machine being created in Germany, Japan, and Italy. We felt that the seas were an insurmountable barrier which would protect us. We did not adequately realize that an enormous change had come about in the methods of warfare and that no country could be immune, as in Europe, therefore, we in the Americas during these years from 1933 to 1939 complacently watched this rearmament of the totalitarian powers and then the attack came first by Germany we were utterly unprepared to meet it.

Modern warfare is a question, not principally of men, as in the past, but of machines, and in order to produce machines the productive capacity of a country has to be turned to that to the exclusion of civilian needs. This was done in the totalitarian States feverishly during the years 1933 to 1939. It should therefore be no surprise for us that the first years of the war provoked by the totalitarian States should have seen a succession of military victories and temporary conquests for them.

We all now realize that this is a total war and that everything which all of us in the democracies and freedom-loving States wish to conserve is at stake. Our homes, our religion, our opportunity to live and work and maintain our way of life— all are at stake. These are the things for which we are fighting, and it is because of this that we are prepared to take every sacrifice which is involved, both of treasure and of blood.

In the British Empire, in China, in Russia, and in the Americas, our tremendous resources are being marshalled for the victory. In the more highly industrialized countries such as the United States and England, this has meant a complete transformation of industrial and economic life to a degree which it is difficult for the peoples of less industrialized countries to realize. The needs of ordinary civilian consumption are restricted to a bare minimum, and all resources, natural and human, are directed to the production, transport, and use of the implements of war necessary to the victory. In less highly industrialized countries, such as Mexico, the enormous natural resources are being used to their maximum capacity to supply the needs of war to the industry of the more highly industrialized powers.

We in the Americas, as the peoples of the democracies everywhere, are peace-loving. We have no desire for
for conquest or territory or domination. Such thoughts are alien to us. For this reason it is all the more difficult for us to turn our whole national and economic life to the war effort. But our realization of the danger and of the implications of the war has become so acute and so widespread that the transformation from a peace to a war basis has been carried through in an incredibly short period of time. In view of this, I think the fact that the turn of the war has been reached and that the Axis powers have been stopped in their course of conquest is almost miraculous. What has been accomplished in the United Nations in the course of our few years of preparation shows what free peoples can and will do when their liberties are threatened.

In connection with this long period of preparation by Axis powers for conquest and our short period of preparation in the democracies to defend ourselves and to defeat the enemy which is trying to destroy us, I cannot help but mention - because of its extraordinary significance and the hope which it holds for us - the expedition to North Africa. In spite of the menace of the submarines which were sinking your ships and ours and those of the other United Nations in the seven seas, and in spite of the heavy losses in vessels which we had suffered, it was possible to gather altogether the greatest armada in the world's history, of not much less than nine hundred ships, to carry all the complicated machinery or war and the men necessary for this occupation of North Africa. The task was almost superhuman, and it is an achievement of which all of us in the democracies can be proud, and it is a definite augury of the victory.

The struggle has already been long and bitter, and there is no one of us who can tell how much longer it may last. The enemy is entrenched in so many strong places in all parts of the world, except this hemisphere, To defeat the enemy, to dislodge him from these positions, to free the occupied countries, and to make the enemy feel, at home, the weight of the war, will be a hard and bitter and costly task which we must carry through. In spite of the present enormous production of instruments of war, which are necessary to the winning of the victory, production which has not yet reached its peak; in spite of the vast armies which are being trained in order to handle these machines - there are still grave obstacles to be surmounted and costly and bloody struggles in prospect. It would be indeed useless and dangerous for us not to face the grim realities of this struggle, But increasingly all of us, men, women and children, in the United Nations, are realizing that our own personal well being and future are at stake and therefore increasingly we are beholding our individual energies so that our full individual contribution can be made to the victory.

This is a war in which we cannot expect others to battle for us. This is a war in which each and every one of us must make our individual contribution. It has so often been said, and it is to be true, that anything which is worth conserving is worth fighting for. We in
the United States and we in Mexico and in the United Nations who wish to conserve our way of life and our freedoms cannot expect that others shall carry on the struggle for us. It is only in the degree that we show ourselves worthy of our freedoms and know how to use them and protect them, that we have any right to expect to retain them. The valiant men who in practically every part of the world today, on land, at sea, and in the air, are making daily the supreme sacrifice for us and who without any rest are engaged in this inconceivable struggle, must have our support at home, not all of us can carry a gun, fight a ship, or fly a plane; but all of us have our own place and our duty, and that duty we must carry through with the same spirit of sacrifice that the men in the actual fighting forces are so magnificently demonstrating every day. Whether it be in our shipyards or mines or factories of farms or offices - wherever it may be - we shall have to have as our first thought whether we are making our full contribution in our own work to aid the men who are actually at the front.

Mexico, in accord with her traditions to which she has remained so steadfast, is one of the United Nations, and her people have a full understanding of the war and its implications for them as for the other democracies. One has only to move about the cities and towns and countryside in Mexico to see the manner in which the population is voluntarily training for the defense of the country. If the appropriate opportunity and need should arise, and doubts that the military effort of Mexico will make itself fully and effectively felt. In the meantime, the great natural resources of your country and the labor of your people in the mines, forests, and fields, are making available increasing quantities of strategic materials, minerals and metals and other products, which are essential to the prosecution of the war and to the achievement of the victory. Mexico is increasingly playing her full part as a member of the family of the United Nations, and thus preparing herself to play an appropriate part in the post-war settlements and solutions. I have lived in your country only a short time, but I have learned to have great affection for your people and admiration for so many of your traditions. The peoples of the United Nations have a deep and genuine satisfaction in the role which Mexico is playing, which can only redound to her honor and to her future.

I am still a good deal of a stranger in this country. From the very day, however, on which I arrived here I have been received by all of your countrymen with generosity, understanding, and kindness. I consider it one of the many privileges which the service of my Government has given me, to be able to live and to work among the Mexican people in these difficult but eventual and in so many ways decisive times, when there are so many evidences that a new Mexico, maintaining its cultural traditions, is emerging into a position of constantly greater industrial and economic power. It seems to me that never before in the history of Mexico have her people been so united, have conditions been more stable, and understanding by the Mexican people of their internal problems and international relationships more...
more profound. This unity and order and understanding can only bring about a stronger Mexico in which, in the post-war period, with continued wisdom and understanding, a period of economic development of almost unparalleled magnitude is in prospect if the opportunities be wisely used. It is a source of deep satisfaction to the people of my country, as I am sure it is to all thoughtful people in this; that the relationships between our two countries are on a sounder, firmer, more understanding and more cordial basis than at any time in our history. This is as it should be and as it must be, for our futures are bound together by forces which are stronger than the will of any of us. I can assure you that it is the desire of my Government and my country, during the fateful and difficult times in which we are living and in the long years of peace to which we are so eagerly looking forward, that this collaboration, now happily on so broad and understanding a basis, shall be continued in an increasingly effective and far-reaching form, to the mutual benefit of the people of both countries. This is a task to which my Government and my people have dedicated themselves and I am confident that we shall both continue in it.