

1507

REMARKS OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR
ON MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 30, 1942, AT
THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL CEMETERY.

My friends:

We are gathered today on this hallowed spot to pay reverence to the memory of those who have served in the armed forces of our country and whose mortal remains have found here their resting place. Our national holidays are few and among them Memorial Day is one of the most significant. In every city, town and village of our country and in far away places throughout the world, our people are making reverent pilgrimages to the cemeteries where our dead lie to place on their graves a green wreath and fresh flowers as indicative that their memory with us cannot and will not die and in our hearts there is a prayer of thanksgiving for the service which they rendered their country and people.

On this first Memorial Day to take place during the great war in which our people are engaged, together with the other democracies of this hemisphere and of the rest of the world, to conserve for ourselves and for all peoples every single thing for which humanity has struggled since the beginning of time, we resolve solemnly once again that the sacrifices and struggles of the past shall not have been in vain. I recall
vividly

vividly the first Memorial Day following the last World War. On that occasion I spoke before our fellow citizens and before our Belgian friends gathered at our National Cemetery at Waereghem, in Belgium, where lay our dead who had fallen when our troops pursued the German forces fighting in and fleeing from Belgium, which they had occupied during a large part of that war. I recall how all of us felt at that time that the war of war had been fought, that war as an instrument of policy in the relationship between states had been abandoned and never again would Germany threaten the peace of the world. We felt, on that occasion, as Americans gathered for Memorial Day that day all over our country and in other parts of the world felt, that the wise measures which governments and peoples would take would banish war from the world.

But the victors in that great war who had fought for decency and order and the preservation of political and personal rights for all men, and for freedom of trade, and for the recognition of the sovereignty of small as well as large states, in the days following that great struggle tempered justice too much with mercy. Our faith in human understanding and in human nature was too great. In the heart of Europe there was Germany which had caused this last war and which did not understand the humane and generous treatment of the victor.

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To that people a victor who did not oppress and enslave other peoples when it was in his power to do so, was a weak victor. There developed in the years almost immediately following that great struggle a deep determination on the part of the German people, or at least a considerable group of them, to wipe out not only the stigma of defeat, but to prepare themselves for a war of world conquest. They determined that if they should be the victors in such a war there would be no justice but German justice, which means the complete enslavement of conquered peoples and the destruction of all political and personal liberty.

At the same time there developed in Japan a military group which in the beginning, contrary to the will of the great majority of the Japanese people, determined to make itself the master of the Far East and to enslave all the peoples of that vast area to their will.

These two countries, Germany and Japan, with Italy as a willing satellite, in order to satisfy this purpose of world domination, began to train their peoples for the conflict and to turn their industrial and social machine into a complete instrument for what they called total war. They applied themselves to this great task with a singleness of purpose and with a ruthlessness that made this program of rearmament develop at a great pace. We in the democracies, clinging to our ideals, and with this assurance that war as an instrument of
policy

policy had disappeared among states, pursued the development of the peaceful arts and endeavored to promote the personal and social wellbeing of our peoples through the elevation of their standard of living. In spite of all the warnings written so largely in the sky in letters that all men could read them, we pursued this course. We did not adequately realize that no nation, in times of peace, so thoroughly devotes every ounce of its energy and of its people to the fabrication of instruments of war unless it desires to use them against its peaceful strong and weak neighbors.

When Germany, Japan and Italy each were ready, they started to use these deadly instruments which they had forged. We who had pursued the arts of peace and had neglected our instruments of defense found ourselves in the face of this aggression not only lacking the means for attack, but even deficient in instruments of defense. There were some states which did not feel themselves so definitely threatened and which were not able to perceive that these aggressor nations were bound on total war and that their aspirations were for world domination. As a result the threatened countries were not able in time to forget all differences which may have existed between them and to make a common cause against the aggressor.

The result we have seen. Nation after nation has fallen before this great instrument of war which had been forged during all these years. The enslavement,
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the famine, the ruthless disregard of every human right of person and property, and the open declaration of these powers of their aims of world domination brought about that unity among the democracies and the threatened peoples still in a position to resist. Today the British Empire, China, Russia, the exiled governments and peoples of the occupied countries, and the Americas are united in a determined effort that no sacrifice shall be too great in blood and in treasure to preserve the liberties so definitely threatened and which we are determined to conserve.

Let us not forget that there are two great forces struggling in the world. On the one side Germany, Italy and Japan are engaged in a struggle for world domination and to enslave other peoples. On the other side we of the democracies are struggling not only to maintain our liberties and the sovereignty of large and small states, but to conserve these liberties for all peoples, even among the enemy which is endeavoring to destroy us. In such a struggle right must conquer and we will conquer.

Belatedly but effectively, we in the democracies are turning the vast potentialities of our people and our resources into instruments of war. Our sons and our daughters, our young and our old, are each finding their place in this struggle. We are dedicating everything

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that we have to this struggle in order that there may be peace and order and decency in this world, not only for ourselves, but for our children and our children's children. No one can tell how long we shall have to fight before we win the victory. No one can foretell what sacrifices we shall have to make. One thing we do know and that is that these sacrifices will be real and they will come home to us and to every one of us. We make them gladly, we make them willingly. We know that if the things we wish to conserve are worth keeping, and we know they are worth keeping, they are worth fighting for and that no sacrifice is too great. We know that in this spirit the victory is ours and will be ours. We hope and we pray that in the hour of victory and in the years which follow God may give us ^{of the United Nations} the wisdom to so order ourselves in all parts of the world in complete justice and equality among peoples that war as an instrument of policy between states will be forever barred.

In that spirit we dedicate ourselves today to the great cause of the conservation of human freedom, of decency, order and justice. We pledge you, the honored dead resting here, that your sacrifices shall not have been in vain.

It is fitting that these ceremonies at this National Cemetery on this Memorial Day should have been arranged

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1504
by the Post of the American Legion, as in previous years.
I am grateful for the privilege you have given me today
in sharing with you this tribute to our honored dead
lying here.