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February 25, 1938.

Cum
Dear Rodney:

With further reference to your note about the debate on the question, "Resolved that the Naval policy adopted by the United States is the best means of securing peace", I am taking my first opportunity to send you just a few thoughts but unfortunately I will have to be very brief as I am so much pressed these days.

I take it that you know what the naval program is. It provides for considerable expansion in our fleet in various categories of ships. The cost involved in the new program is considerable. I believe that the program is essential for two reasons, first, as a measure to preserve the peace and, second, as a measure of defense.]

Whether we like to recognize it or not, the peace of the world is definitely threatened and that means our own peace as well as that of Europe and the Far East. We are living in a very different kind of a world from that in which our fathers were brought into. The developments in communications and in so many lines have done away with distance and the oceans which used to be a natural protector of ours, and other countries, no longer serve this purpose. The nations have been brought together so much more closely through trade and inescapable relationships that whether they like it or not the fate of one is inextricably bound up with that of others. It is increasingly difficult to localize wars. Our country is a member of the family of nations and because we are a great nation we have an interest in what passes in practically every part of the world. Under such circumstances a policy of isolation is impossible even though we wish to definitely enter upon such a policy. Isolation of a country involves not only its own will to that end but also that other countries will let it alone. We are too rich and too powerful to be let

alone

Mr. Rodney M. Layton,
Lawrenceville School,
Lawrenceville, New Jersey.

alone and so whether we like it or not, we must recognize that if there is a disturbed world and war, we are in some ways just as much in danger as others more nearly affected.

The peace of the world is definitely threatened because a new element has been brought into international relationships again. We thought that with the state of civilization at which we had arrived in Europe and in this country force was very largely eliminated as a political instrument. We have been getting away from that definitely since the Middle Ages. Now, however, since the rise of dictatorships, principally in Europe, force has again become their principal instrument of policy. They believe very definitely that might makes right. They have no regard for treaty obligations and believe only that such obligations should be kept as long as it is to their advantage. They have cast aside the entire structure of international law which had been so painfully built up in the last century. They believe that war to be effective must be ruthless and brutal and they have shown that they do not intend to obey any of the rules which had been devised in international conferences for lessening the brutalities of war. These dictatorships have shown that they are in no way interested in maintaining the rights nor the integrity of the sovereignty of smaller states. In other words, they are prepared to use the huge war machines which they have built up for the accomplishment of their purposes even if these purposes mean the absorption of other states and the violation of all rules of international law and comity.

Under these circumstances, wars are inevitable. As for interference by one country in the rights of others, we have seen this in the way Italy has proceeded against Ethiopia and in the way Japan is proceeding against China. In both cases there was no provocation and no ground for conquest other than the desire on the part of the stronger country for the territory of the other. We have seen more than one country violating the sovereignty of Spain by sending foreign troops to fight there in a civil struggle. We have recently seen Germany taking definite steps in violation of Austrian sovereignty. These are only the beginnings of a series of events which may well in the end bring about a war which will disrupt Europe and which may have very serious repercussions for us.

And what we must remember is that these aggressor countries once they have fattened on their prey have very

definite

definite designs on the hemisphere in which we live. We have much which they envy and if we wish to maintain our own peace at home and if we wish to maintain our democratic institutions we shall have to be prepared to defend them. The only way in which we can maintain the peace for ourselves is by the maintenance of a defense which will make it too serious an adventure for anyone to attack us. We believe in this country that we can do that most effectively by the maintenance of a strong fleet which can protect us while we would be preparing our Army. In other words, by maintaining a strong fleet we to a considerable degree avoid the necessity of also tremendously increasing our Army and further increasing the cost of our defensive measures.

An unfortunate thing we have to remember, but which is very true, is that it takes two to keep the peace but only one to make war. No matter what our will for peace may be in this country, it depends not on us alone as to whether we will be able to remain at peace. Never in modern history have the relations between States been on so disordered a basis and in such a world as this we must be prepared to defend ourselves. The nations which are the aggressor nations recognize only one deterrent, and that deterrent is superior or equal force. They are prepared to use force as long as they see their potential opponents weaker than they. They have respect only for force and power. For us to remain defenseless, and weak in those instruments of force which the aggressor nations are building up, would be to invite attack. The only safe method, therefore, which we can pursue to keep our peace is to be prepared adequately for defense. This is a situation which is forced upon us but which we must accept. A strong Navy, in view of our coastline on the two oceans and to the South, is, therefore, a primary essential to our defense and therefore to peace.

These are just a few thoughts which I hope will be helpful to you. Aunt Marnie and I are being kept occupied these days with visitors and with all sorts of things. We hope that when you have your holidays you will be able to come to make us a visit here. Jinny's boy-friend is coming here from Amsterdam next month and she seems to have made up her mind to marry him. We will all have to look him over when he comes and I think she ought to wait for our approval but I don't believe she is planning to do

that.

that. Give my love to Bob and I hope both of you are getting on splendidly.

Faithfully yours,

Dear Harry: I hope you understand
if this material is used, it will not be
attributed to me in any way.