

1389

Habana, Cuba,
July 4, 1940.

Speech - July 4, 1940.

Today we have been celebrating in my country the 164th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and of the (separate) existence of the United States as an independent nation. That the Cultural Corps of the Constitutional Army of Cuba associates itself with this celebration through this ceremony this evening is a source of very real satisfaction to me and I am sure will be to all of my compatriots.

That the next to the youngest of the American Republics associates itself with the oldest in celebrating its Day of Independence has, in these days, more than ordinary significance. The democratic ideals on which the Governments of Cuba and of the United States are based and the fundamental principles in which we believe, and which we wish to conserve, and which are necessary to the maintenance of territorial

integrity, sovereignty, and of all those institutions which contribute to our personal freedom and happiness, are being threatened just as definitely as democratic nations and institutions and sovereign rights of peoples in other parts of the world are threatened, or have already been destroyed.

Régimes of force have been set up which have no regard for the private rights of individuals and which openly proclaim that smaller and weaker States have no right to exist. These régimes, through the exercise of military force, have openly proclaimed their intention of endeavoring to destroy democratic institutions everywhere and to set up totalitarian régimes which have no regard for public or private right.

The people and Governments of all of the American Republics desire peace, but more than they desire peace they desire to maintain their institutions and their sovereignty, the fruits of which we are enjoying.

The struggle for independence in your country and in mine was a severe one, and the institutions which we have been able to set up in this Western Hemisphere have been established through more than a century of effort of gallant men. The worthwhile things in life must be won by effort and perseverance and at times must be defended with indomitable courage. Unless we are willing to make the sacrifices to maintain the institutions which others established for us through centuries of struggle we are not worthy of continuing the enjoyment of the fruits of their effort.

I am confident that the peoples of all of the Americas will indicate in a most definite way their common and unalterable will to maintain the independence and sovereignty of the States of this continent and of the institutions which we all cherish. I am confident, to that end all of the peoples of the Americas are willing to devote all of their energies and all of

1389

their resources and I for one have the conviction
that in that struggle we shall be successful and
that this Western world will carry forward the
torch of civilization and serve as the bulwark of
human rights.

George S. Messersmith