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PROPAGANDA AND DEMOCRACY

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PROPAGANDA AND DEMOCRACY: A STUDY OF FRANKLIN  
DELANO ROOSEVELT'S FIRESIDE CHATS

A Master's Thesis

by

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İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

Ankara

June 2020



*To my family*

PROPAGANDA AND DEMOCRACY: A STUDY OF FRANKLIN  
DELANO ROOSEVELT'S FIRESIDE CHATS

The Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences

of

İhsan Dođramacı Bilkent University

by

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İHSAN DOĐRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY

ANKARA

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.



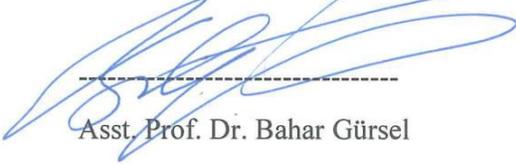
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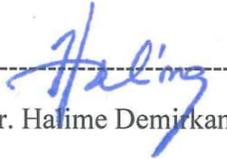
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **PROPAGANDA AND DEMOCRACY: A STUDY OF FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT'S FIRESIDE CHATS**

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M.A., Department of History

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Owen Miller

June 2020

Franklin Delano Roosevelt served as the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States of America during one of the most tumultuous periods of the country's history between March 4, 1933 and April 12, 1945. Throughout this time he was a very popular president and was noted for his skillful use of the radio to circumvent his critics, most of whom were writing in the newspapers, by reaching out directly to the public. One of the most famous examples of his mastery of the radio was his Fireside Chats through which he addressed his constituents in an informal manner to rally support for his policies. This thesis argues that President Roosevelt's radio propaganda, when examined alongside the arguments of some of his critics, indicates that Roosevelt aimed to use his policies and propaganda to preserve the public's faith in democracy in times of crisis even though he did not always uphold democratic principles.

Keywords: Democracy, Fireside Chats, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Propaganda, United States

## ÖZET

### PROPAGANDA VE DEMOKRASİ: FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT'İN RADYO KONUŞMALARI ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Fakıoğlu, Yağmur

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

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Haziran 2020

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 4 Mart 1933 ve 12 Nisan 1945 tarihleri arasında ülkenin tarihinin en çalkantılı dönemlerinden birinde 32. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Başkanı olarak görev yaptı. Bu süre zarfında oldukça popüler bir başkandı ve çoğu gazetelerde yazan eleştirmenlerini atlatarak doğrudan kamuya ulaşmak için radyoyu ustaca kullanımı ile dikkat çekti. Radyodaki ustalığının en ünlü örneklerinden biri, politikalarına destek toplamak için seçmenlerine gayri resmi bir şekilde hitap ettiği Şömine Sohbetleri idi. Bu tez, Başkan Roosevelt'in radyo propagandasını bazı eleştirmenlerinin argümanlarıyla birlikte inceleyiyor, ve bunlara dayanarak Roosevelt'in politikaları ve propagandası ile her zaman demokratik ilkeleri desteklemese de toplumun demokrasiye olan inancını korumayı hedeflediğini savunuyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Demokrasi, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Propaganda, Şömine Sohbetleri

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NRA	National Recovery Administration
WPA	Work Progress Administration
TNEC	Temporary National Economic Committee

## INTRODUCTION

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated as the President of the United States of America, he took the helm of a ship with its sails shredded, its hull damaged, and its crew despairing. The Great Depression had not only caused great financial calamity the likes of which had never been seen before, but it had also driven the American public to uncharacteristically doubt the social and economic system that they had previously held a strong belief in.<sup>1</sup> The public's faith in the system of private enterprise and democracy was what Roosevelt felt that he had to restore. He would often express a desire in his speeches to prove that democracy could be "efficient" starting with his first use of the theme in 1935,<sup>2</sup> and would continue to call the public to help prove that democratic American "government is stronger than the forces of business depression"<sup>3</sup> until the advent of the war made the struggle for Democracy more literal. Many Americans had held the prior president, Herbert Hoover responsible for the disastrous state of the nation, and they had voted for the opposing candidate who could not have seemed more unlike the incumbent President. Indeed, this was deliberate on the part of Roosevelt, who had personally accepted the Democratic nomination in a break

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<sup>1</sup> Russel D. Buhite and David W. Levy, eds. *FDR's Fireside Chats*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 3-8.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Defending the WPA and Pressing for Social Security – April 28, 1935," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 69.

<sup>3</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Combatting the 1937-1938 Recession – April 14, 1938," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 118.

from long-standing tradition, specifically in an effort to set a contrast to the reputation Hoover had developed as a hesitant, irresolute man.<sup>4</sup>

Not all perceived differences between the two opposing candidates were results of deliberate election strategies, though. Hoover's reputation had developed as a result of his limited visible intervention against the Great Depression. His stance prior to the Wall Street Crash of 1929 had been, as elucidated in his penultimate campaign speech on October 22, 1928, that free enterprise and commerce were essential to maintaining freedom of speech and all other freedoms that depended on it, and that the prosperity, freedom and social progress enjoyed throughout the 1920s was the government's withdrawal from the active role it had played in the American economy throughout the war.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Roosevelt, who would begin his administration carrying out the same policies Hoover had hoped to put into practice, would instead come to adopt the belief, as explained in a speech delivered almost a full decade after Hoover's on April 18, 1938, that dictatorships grew not "out of strong and successful governments, but out of weak and helpless governments," that a democratic government needed to be able to protect its people from "fear and starvation" or risk the failure of democracy as a whole,<sup>6</sup> and as explained on January 11, 1944, "...that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), 26.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Hoover, "October 22, 1928: Principles and Ideals of the United States Government," *Miller Center*, Accessed May 31, 2020, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/october-22-1928-principles-and-ideals-united-states-government>.

<sup>6</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Defending the WPA and Pressing for Social Security – April 28, 1935," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 69.

<sup>7</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "An Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," In Buhite and Levy, eds., 292.

Their views on economic policy and its relationship to democracy was not all that different between the two presidents. Throughout his term in office, Hoover had been a president who preferred not to address the general public, who prioritized focusing on policy over words, as he believed that this was how he would overcome the systemic problems that were the source of the Great Depression.<sup>8</sup> Roosevelt, on the other hand, had spent a significant portion of his time as Governor of New York addressing the public directly through radio broadcasts<sup>9</sup> in an effort to evade the hostile pens of pro-Republican newspaper editors.<sup>10</sup> FDR was notable for not just his skill at, but also for his willingness to speak.<sup>11</sup> And this just so happened to be what the nation needed at the time, just as much as it needed the well-thought-out policies Hoover sought to enact. As rhetorical critic Amos Kiewe put it, while all the policies surrounding the very first Fireside Chat had been planned by the Hoover administration, “What Hoover had not been able to produce was the necessary rhetorical plan essential for restoring the people’s confidence in the banking system and in government.”<sup>12</sup> The moment that marked one of Roosevelt’s greatest triumphs in the aftermath of Hoover’s loss of public support had come not from differences in policy between the two presidents, but in Roosevelt’s greater ability to propagandize in favor of the same policy they had both placed their hopes in, and to rally public opinion behind him. This situation could be read as foreshadowing the twelve years to follow; for, as a president, Roosevelt’s greatest

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<sup>8</sup> David Michael Ryfe, “Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats,” *Journal of Communication* (1999), 89.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> James McGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and The Fox*, (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 118.

<sup>11</sup> Buhite and Levy. *Fireside Chats*. ix-xx.

<sup>12</sup> Amos Kiewe, *FDR's First Fireside Chat: Public Confidence and the Banking Crisis*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), xiii.

strength would be his hold over the people, and his most important link to the people would be his informal radio addresses, his Fireside Chats.<sup>13</sup>

No analysis of a series of political radio addresses delivered throughout such a tumultuous period of controversy and conflict can be wholly disconnected from the relationship between propaganda and democracy, particularly “in a world in which democracy is under attack,”<sup>14</sup> as Roosevelt put it; hence, the speeches’ function as propaganda, as well as the relationship they indicate between President Roosevelt and democracy are central to the discussion of the Fireside Chats within this thesis. Which is why some discussions of propaganda by Roosevelt’s contemporaries should be kept in mind throughout the thesis.

In his 1922 book titled *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann dismisses the notion that each and every citizen can form their own informed opinion on each and every public issue as an “intolerable and unworkable fiction” and suggests that the press is often as fallible as the layman in providing unbiased information as the newspapers “necessarily and inevitably reflect” the flaws of the public’s ability to form informed opinions, sometimes intensifying how misinformed their readers can be; he argues that this difficulty of individuals to attain a competent opinion on public matters is a problem that hinders democracy.<sup>15</sup>

Lippmann defines propaganda as the use of power to make the public see a situation as one desires them to be seen, and suggests that because of the prevention of

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<sup>13</sup> Burns, *The Lion and The Fox*, 203-05.

<sup>14</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Defending the Plan to "Pack" the Court – March 9, 1937," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 95.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, (New York: The Free Press, 1965), 19.

independent access to the information on the situation that had been an integral part of wartime propaganda is no longer possible due to the availability of enemy communiques to the public as a result of the advancements in wireless communication, it may become impossible to perform the censorship necessary to construct effective propaganda.<sup>16</sup> He notes that the domestic propaganda efforts in the United States during the Great War gained access to almost the entirety of the American population, but that it was only possible to accomplish this through the kind of money, personnel and organization that would be unthinkable in peacetime, pointing out that the ability of all forms of communication and transportation to reach people is dependent on a plethora of technical and political factors,<sup>17</sup> including individual and community income, as well as what “social sets” of peers that would expect their individual members to be informed on certain topics and adds that in addition to such limitations are accompanied by the limited amount of time available to people for them to invest in pursuit of information on current affairs, citing a series of surveys that indicate that urban professionals and college students typically spent 15 minutes a day, on average, reading newspapers as an example.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, he dwells on the use of symbols, stating that they are a necessary component of enabling leaders to lead their followers, that by evoking individuals’ feelings, images and devotions for what they believe in, these symbols allow them to be united to work for a common end, making them essential for times of crisis when there is simply no time to obtain real consent for the timely accomplishment of a critical objective, but can easily be twisted into “...an instrument by which the few can

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 32-37.

fatten on the many, deflect criticism, and seduce men into facing agony for objects they do not understand.”<sup>19</sup> Another matter Lippmann takes notice of concerning the relationship of the leaders to their public is that they often put their plans into application while pretending these plans were merely discovered by them and were long within the public mind; he outlines the steps of this process, saying that leaders first need to “vocalize the opinion of the mass,” identifying themselves with the attitudes of the audience through methods including but not limited to telling a good story, demonstrating patriotism or bringing up a grievance, and thus having gained the audience’s trust, setting forth a plan that needs only to be “verbally and emotionally connected to” the public opinion that the leader had begun by vocalizing.<sup>20</sup>

The echo-chamber problem seems to have persisted throughout the 1930s, as George V. Denny, Jr. also identifies and laments the tendency of individuals to seek out only the information sources that reflect their biases and opinions in his essay titled “Radio Builds Democracy” written in 1941,<sup>21</sup> arguing that democracy presupposes the “dissemination of unbiased views and information;” he celebrates the radio discussion programs, which each of the four great national broadcasting networks provide on a weekly basis, suggesting that they provide an effective way to attract the public’s interest to discussions of public issues in a way that keeps the dominance of biases at bay.<sup>22</sup>

Clyde R. Miller acknowledges the same in his essay titled “Radio and Propaganda” published the prior month, but instead contextualizes the problem of the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 150-53.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 155-56.

<sup>21</sup> George V. Denny, “Radio Builds Democracy,” *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, Vol. 14, No. 6, (1941), 370, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2262537> (accessed March 15, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 376-377

public being informed as ensuring that the public has access to a plurality of opposing propagandas on a given issue, noting that American radio is the only place in which anything resembling a free trade in ideas occurs, with the discussion programs allotting equal time to different sides of the issue, and the Federal Communications Commission mandating the same in political advertising broadcast by networks.<sup>23</sup> Miller suggests that there is no way to disseminate information without conveying one's propaganda, and posits that the real risk would be a propaganda monopoly, which he considers a significant possibility as the American entry into the war seems more and more likely, and with the federal power to control broadcasting being palpable.<sup>24</sup>

Much of what has been written on Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Fireside Chats themselves, particularly the older works, include them only as a part of a greater whole that is studied by the work proper. James McGregor Burns' biography *Roosevelt: the Lion and the Fox* (1956)<sup>25</sup> is such an example. In his work, Burns emphasizes the climate during which Roosevelt presented the first of his Fireside Chats. He states that Roosevelt's greatest strength was his hold on the people and his greatest link to the people were his Fireside Chats, which cast him in the role of a father talking to a great family. He notes that the president's voice was "warm" and "reassuring," and that the chats helped Roosevelt appear human, yet courageous to his audience; something, he states, that the American public wanted to see. He also informs that Roosevelt made a

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<sup>23</sup> Clyde R. Miller, "Radio and Propaganda," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 213, (1941), 72, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1024057> (accessed March 15, 2020).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 118, 167-68, 203,205.

conscious effort to visualize his audience, in order to speak as though he was speaking to them in person.

Betty Houchin Winfield's book, *FDR and the News Media* (1990)<sup>26</sup> pays greater attention to the Fireside Chats, as it focuses on Roosevelt's methods of communication. She places emphasis on the president's prior experience with speaking through the radio, starting with his nomination speech for Al Smith, and followed by his radio speeches during his time as a governor. Once again, Roosevelt's ability to foster the feeling that he had spoken to his listeners personally, and just as part of a greater audience is highlighted. While the informal and short nature of the texts are mentioned, a special emphasis is placed on Roosevelt's voice, and how effective it was at inspiring confidence. The familiar forms of address also receive attention, linked to the impression of personal dialogue Roosevelt was able to form in his listeners. The number of Fireside Chats also take up focus, it is mentioned that what made the chats memorable was their scarcity. This, in turn, is linked to how well planned and executed the Fireside Chats were, as their casual form was achieved through rigorous polishing. Roosevelt's personal effort on the preparation of speeches is focused on, his rehearsals, drafts, personal attention to microphone angles and sound, as well as his tendency to revise and rehearse until the last moment, and even improvise during live broadcast.

In their 1992 introduction to a volume of 31 collected Fireside Chats,<sup>27</sup> Russel D. Buhite and David W. Levy begin by contrasting the role of an 18th Century president with the contemporary role of the president, crediting a significant portion of this shift to

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<sup>26</sup> Betty Houchin Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 104-110.

<sup>27</sup> Buhite and Levy, *Fireside Chats*, ix-xx.

Roosevelt, and his unique gift for communication. The president's ability for using language effectively is focused on, as well as his willingness to do so, through his many press conferences and his Fireside Chats. The importance of a neighborly tone for the purposes of allaying the public's fears is emphasized via contrast to the openly inflammatory rhetoric of Hitler and Mussolini, who achieved similar degrees of success in their use of the radio to reach their public directly. Speech writers are credited for assisting the president, but Roosevelt himself is still credited as the main force behind the Fireside Chats, his keen interest in the writing process is focused on, along with his deliberate focus on using simple language.

In his essay titled "Franklin Roosevelt and the Fireside Chats" (1999)<sup>28</sup> David Michael Ryfe analyzes the first eight of the Fireside Chats through the lens of Dayan and Kantz's theory of media events. The importance of the fireside chats for mobilizing public support for Roosevelt's New Deal policies is linked to the hegemonic function of media events to remind the public of their obligations and commitment to their country. Strongly emphasized is Roosevelt's use of the techniques of commercial mass culture industries. The president's effective use of a tone of "fellowship" largely used by advertisers and a tone of "domesticity" often seen in radio programs are specifically mentioned, as well as the narrative of community. Roosevelt's development of his skill at using the radio is focused on as well, his experimentation with the medium during his time as governor is credited for the great success of his use of the radio during his presidential terms. The importance of radio in the 20th century, in contrast to earlier

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<sup>28</sup> David Michael Ryfe, "Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats," *Journal of Communication* (1999), 80-103.

forms of presidential communication with the public is expounded upon, as well as Roosevelt's use of radio technology as a political instrument.

In his short essay, "The Fireside Chats" (2002)<sup>29</sup> Christopher H. Sterling emphasizes that while the Fireside Chats sounded informal, this was because informality was built into the text, the conversational tone just as scripted. Word choice is drawn attention to, and how commonly used words were specifically selected. Roosevelt's vocal pacing, and his slower delivery of his Fireside Chats, in comparison to more formal speeches also receives a similar focus. Growing public trust of the president fostered by the chats is emphasized, as is the high ratings enjoyed by the Chats, surpassing most commercial shows despite their political nature.

In his article "15 Minutes that Saved America" (2008)<sup>30</sup> for the *American History* magazine, H.W. Brands focuses on the circumstances surrounding the first Fireside Chat. Conversational tone is, once more, paid attention to, as is Roosevelt's voice, which is described as "soothing," and compared to that of an uncle telling a bedtime story, in line with Burns' description of a family-member atmosphere created by the chats. Roosevelt's role as the first president to truly make full use of the radio's potential is brought to the forefront, its importance further emphasized via a narration of the magnitude of the first Fireside Chat's impact.

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<sup>29</sup> Christopher H. Sterling, "'The Fireside Chats'—President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1944)," *National Registry* (2002).

<sup>30</sup> H.W. Brands, "15 Minutes That Saved America: How FDR charmed the nation, rescued the banks and saved capitalism," *American History* (2008), 34-41.

Elvin T. Lim, in his essay “The Lion and The Lamb: De-mythologizing Franklin Roosevelt’s Fireside Chats” (2003),<sup>31</sup> focuses on refuting the idea that the language Roosevelt used in his Fireside Chats was “intimate.” Connections to the platform style of speech-giving are drawn, and keywords, as well as the readability of the Fireside Chats are analyzed alongside the tone. It is stated that the language of the Fireside Chats was far from being simple, but instead projected a strong authority and leadership. Use of declamatory language in contrast to intimacy is also highlighted. It is argued that the impression of intimacy was caused by how Roosevelt’s oration contrasted the prior radio addresses, instead of being viewed as its own literary genre.

Geoffrey Storm, in his paper titled “FDR and WGY: The Origins of the Fireside Chats” (2007),<sup>32</sup> focuses instead on President Roosevelt’s use of the Fireside Chat format during his two gubernatorial terms, drawing attention to Roosevelt’s “colloquial” and “paternal” broadcasting style, as well as his ability to “clarify issues and connect with his constituents over the radio,” remarking that these were skills he had developed as the governor of New York alongside his use of the medium to “skirt an obstructionist Republican legislature.”

Rhetorical critic Amos Kiewe, in his book titled *FDR's First Fireside Chat: Public Confidence and the Banking Crisis* (2007),<sup>33</sup> explores the “larger dramatic context” of the first presidential Fireside Chat delivered by Roosevelt, beginning with the

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<sup>31</sup> Elvin T. Lim, “The Lion And The Lamb: De-Mythologizing Franklin Roosevelt’s Fireside Chats,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (2003), 437-464.

<sup>32</sup> Geoffrey Storm, “FDR and WGY: The Origins of the Fireside Chats,” *New York History*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (2007), 176-197.

<sup>33</sup> Amos Kiewe, *FDR's First Fireside Chat: Public Confidence and the Banking Crisis*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), xiii-xiv, 75.

interregnum period and the tension between Hoover and Roosevelt during this time, and explores the first Fireside Chat and the events leading up to it in detail, emphasizing the subtlety of Roosevelt's persuasion behind his stated purpose of informing the public. This work remains the most comprehensive and detailed study of an individual Fireside Chat currently available.

Throughout this thesis, I will attempt to demonstrate that, much like the story-telling uncle Brands described, President Roosevelt constructed narratives in his Fireside Chats.<sup>34</sup> And how in these narratives, he personalized complex issues into dramatized narratives, creating the appearance of a special relationship with his listeners to humanize himself and create a relationship of confidence with the public,<sup>35</sup> while also projecting a strong leadership.<sup>36</sup> I will also analyze the speeches in light of the events they explain or stem from as well as the criticism they received in an effort to evaluate their role as propaganda, in Lippmann's definition of the use of power to convince the public to see events the way one wants them to see,<sup>37</sup> how they were used to place social pressure on Roosevelt's opposition similarly to how they were used in Roosevelt's gubernatorial term,<sup>38</sup> and to examine them to explore the relationship they indicate between Roosevelt and democracy. This thesis will argue that while Roosevelt was far from the dictatorial figure his harsher critics viewed him as, he still endangered democracy through his willingness to circumvent democratic principles when convenient and through the

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<sup>34</sup> Brands, "15 Minutes That Saved America," 36.

<sup>35</sup> Ryfe, "Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats," 80, 91-96.

<sup>36</sup> Lim, "The Lion And The Lamb," 446.

<sup>37</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, (New York: The Free Press, 1965), 27.

<sup>38</sup> Storm, "The Origins of the Fireside Chats," 176-197.

drought of competition his propaganda enjoyed on the radio by circumstance if not by design.

Among the primary sources used within this thesis, the most central ones are the Fireside Chats themselves, which I have accessed through the anthology titled *FDR's Fireside Chats*, edited by Russel D. Buhite and David W. Levy both due to the ease of access and due to the helpfulness of the editors' own comments as a secondary source. Raymond Moley and Samuel I. Rosenman both provide an insider's view into the Roosevelt administration in their works *After Seven Years* and *Working with Roosevelt* respectively, but from different perspectives, as Moley was intensely critical of the administration after his departure from its ranks while Rosenman after rejoining Roosevelt's speech-writing team after the end of the President's first term in office remained a close friend and advisor of Roosevelt's until the very end. Unfortunately, Moley's criticism is directed largely at the President's administrative abilities and rarely engages with the Fireside Chats and the topics they discuss in a direct way, which is why it is used in a very limited capacity. Rosenman's book, on the other hand, is intimately familiar with the speeches delivered by Roosevelt, and explanations about the preparation of, as well as the personal involvement of the President with the Fireside Chats make up a major part of it, which is why it is used extensively throughout this thesis.

Both to balance the uncompromisingly pro-Roosevelt perspective of the thesis that had been developing as a result of the two most heavily used primary sources belonging firmly to President Roosevelt's camp, thus facilitating a discussion of the themes of democracy and propaganda and to provide outsiders' perspectives on the administration, I have decided to include the columns of four of the most prolific critics

of Roosevelt and his administration. Walter Lippmann, a political commentator who was among the most respected journalists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>39</sup> Mark Sullivan, another highly respected journalist who was also a personal friend of Herbert Hoover's;<sup>40</sup> David Lawrence, who was a widely-read conservative journalist and publisher;<sup>41</sup> and Westbrook Pegler, another highly successful journalist who was particularly notable for his acerbic style and exposing of labor racketeering.<sup>42</sup> All of these journalists' syndicated columns were published in a wide variety of newspapers across the United States.

The columns were accessed through the online archives of newspapers.com, I have then selected columns depending on how relevant they were to any individual Fireside Chats or the topics discussed therein or the larger discussion on Roosevelt and democracy discussed by this thesis. The primary difficulty of using these columns as sources was the discrepancy between the times of writing and publishing, which tended to vary depending on a variety of factors including the location of the author and the distance between them and a publishing newspaper as well as whether the newspaper was a daily or weekly publication, and while some newspapers included the date when the column was written most did not, leading to a lack of clarity on the exact time of writing and thus on the information available to the authors while they wrote. In this thesis, I have attempted to feature the earliest published version of a column as much as possible,

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<sup>39</sup> "Walter Lippmann," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Accessed June 22, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Walter-Lippmann>.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph S. Kennedy, "Columnist's words influence politics Chesco's Mark Sullivan informed the nation during the first half of 20th century.," *Wayback Machine*, Accessed June 22, 2020, [https://web.archive.org/web/20160817060005/http://articles.philly.com/2004-05-02/news/25382970\\_1\\_family-farm-influential-political-columnists-law-degree](https://web.archive.org/web/20160817060005/http://articles.philly.com/2004-05-02/news/25382970_1_family-farm-influential-political-columnists-law-degree).

<sup>41</sup> Alex Kingsbury, "David Lawrence: A Profile," *U.S. News*, Accessed June 22, 2020, <https://www.usnews.com/news/national/articles/2008/05/16/david-lawrence-a-profile>.

<sup>42</sup> "Westbrook Pegler," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Accessed June 22, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Westbrook-Pegler>.

but I have been limited by the availability of issues in the archives as well as the legibility and the completeness of the columns, as not all issues of a newspaper are available in the archives and not all archived issues are perfectly legible and some publishers seem to omit short portions of the columns they publish due to space constraints. As they are featured in this thesis, all columns are cited with the date of their available publication, and the date they were written on is referred to within the text when available and relevant.

As the focus of the Fireside Chats changed with what Roosevelt believed to be an important matter to speak with the public about at a given time, the thesis and the speeches examined therein are divided into five chronological periods that are conducive to discussing a specific theme within this larger discussion on democracy.

The first chapter includes the eight Fireside Chats of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first term in office beginning with the first presidential Fireside Chat on the banking crisis broadcast on March 12, 1933 and ending with the Fireside Chat delivered on September 6, 1936. Due to the state of political truce in effect during this period, especially at its beginning, his contemporary critics focused on Roosevelt's methods first and foremost, which makes this period particularly useful for discussing the nature of the Fireside Chats, their role as propaganda and whether it is even possible for a leader to speak to his constituents in such a direct manner without propagandizing.

The second chapter begins with the extremely controversial attempt by Roosevelt to "pack" the Supreme Court and the Fireside Chat meant to defend this attempt broadcast on March 9, 1937 and ends with another controversial radio talk where the President announced his intent to participate in the primaries for the Democratic Party on

June 24, 1938, and includes the three Fireside Chats between these two. This was a time period when Roosevelt was seen as attacking institutions essential to democracy with their function of defending the rights of the citizens, and when he displayed a willingness to circumvent these democratic institutions with the stated goal of preserving democracy in the long term, all the while championing the delegate model of representative democracy against the trustee model in his speeches; all these factors found in this period provide an excellent opportunity to discuss the President's own relationship with the tension between the public will and the democratic institutions meant to safeguard their rights.

The third chapter encompasses the five Fireside Chats that signify the United States' process of gradually becoming embroiled in an indirect war by supporting the nations actively fighting Germany, Italy and Japan, beginning with the Fireside Chat delivered on September 3, 1939, two days after Germany had marched into the free city of Danzig, and ending with the Fireside Chat delivered on September 11, 1941 in response to the sinking of the *Greer* shortly before the United States would be pulled into the war. This period is one where the time Roosevelt spends discussing domestic affairs is minimized in favor of speaking on the measures being taken to defend American interests in response to the international situation, counseling more and more support for the nations actively fighting the Fascist states with whom he suggests that the United States has no chance of coexisting in the long term, while undermining the initially dominant isolationist sentiment that had reigned supreme since the conclusion of the First World War; this process sets a contrast to the dominant themes of the second chapter as Roosevelt is placed in the position of feeling the need to safeguard the interests of the

people in ways the people themselves did not necessarily agree with by pushing his own brand of “neutrality” over the popular isolationism, effectively acting as a trustee rather than a delegate of the public that elected him.

The fourth chapter is concerned with the bleakest period of the United States’ experience as an active participant in the Second World War, beginning with the Fireside Chat of December 9, 1941, two days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and ending with the Fireside Chat on May 2, 1943 concerning the coal miners’ strike, containing a total of six Fireside Chats. Throughout this period a dominant theme in Roosevelt’s radio addresses is his efforts to provide hope in the face of despair and defeatism, accompanied by the question of whether and how much relevant information a democratic government is justified in keeping hidden from the public in the name of security. The latter ties directly into the question of the government monopolization of legitimate information, this being a period when rumormongering would be able to do very real physical harm to the country.

The fifth chapter begins with the Fireside Chat delivered on July 28, 1943 concerning the fall of Mussolini, and ends with the final Fireside Chat delivered by Roosevelt on January 6, 1945, also containing the five radio addresses delivered between these two. These radio talks by Roosevelt contrast those in the previous chapter in that the President’s efforts to kindle hope are replaced largely by efforts to dispel overconfidence and complacency; victory in the horizon brings with it a return to the idealistic imaginings of a better future accomplished via reforms reminiscent of the pre-war Fireside Chats, this time with the added goal of reforms in international affairs to achieve a lasting peace by creating a functioning international system of democracies.

This period is conducive to discussing the questions of whether a democracy should or can even afford to care for peoples other than its own, and whether expansions of citizens' rights and duties are needed.

But before the analysis of the Fireside Chats can begin, President Roosevelt's high degree of competence in his speech technique, and the kind of writing process that was employed must be established. First of all, the Chats were prepared thoroughly, sometimes by a dozen different people, including the president and his cabinet.<sup>43</sup> Roosevelt also had a tendency to keep altering and editing the Chats until the last minute, and even then, continue to improvise.<sup>44</sup> Thanks to this tendency, he tended to be the primary source of ideas and arguments in most of the Chats.<sup>45</sup> He had a firm grasp of how to utilize his voice through the medium of the radio, he paid attention to sound, microphone angles, and even wore a false tooth during recording in order to prevent any whistling noises from being heard due to a gap in his teeth.<sup>46</sup> He spoke somewhat faster than the currently-prescribed 100 words per minute, saying at least 117 words per minute,<sup>47</sup> but much slower than the political norm of the time, which tended to be at a rate between 175 and 200 words per minute.<sup>48</sup> All of this would be recorded as Roosevelt spoke, visualizing a personal conversation with the listener.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 106.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>45</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, ix-xx.

<sup>46</sup> Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 107.

<sup>47</sup> Lim, "The Lion And The Lamb," 446.

<sup>48</sup> Christopher H. Sterling, "'The Fireside Chats'—President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1944)," *National Registry* (2002).

<sup>49</sup> Ryfe, "Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats," 90.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE RADIO PRESIDENT

Matthew A. Baum and Samuel Kernell cite Gallup polls in 1937 and 1940 where wealthier Americans reported a 98 percent rate of radio ownership while those on relief reported 62 and 73 percent on 1937 and 1940 respectively; noting that, according to the same polls, radio ownership “closely tracked” exposure to President Roosevelt’s Fireside Chats, with 54 percent of radio-owning relief recipients and 62 percent of wealthier radio owners polled listening to the Fireside Chats in 1937, and 61 percent of radio-owning relief recipients and 78 percent of wealthier radio owners reporting tuning in to the President’s radio talks in 1940.<sup>50</sup> This was the massive audience President Roosevelt spoke to each time he entered the broadcasting room of the White House, with a little over a third of the Americans least able to do so and well over half of the rest of the country listening to his radio addresses at the lowest recorded rate.

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<sup>50</sup> Matthew A. Baum and Samuel Kernell, “Economic Class and Popular Support for Franklin Roosevelt in War and Peace,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (2001), 19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3078802> (accessed March 13, 2018).

Writing in 1942, sociologist Paul F. Lazarsfeld noted that the radio had “larger social coverage” than the newspapers because while the newspaper-reading rates declined greatly as one went down the social scale, radio-listening rates only saw a slight decrease, with the lower educational and income groups favoring the radio over newspapers; because, while the radio did not directly compete with newspapers, the reading “facility” that could cause one to favor the newspapers over the radio for its own conveniences could not be expected to develop in the “lower educational half of the population,” who had only grade school education.<sup>51</sup> This suggests that a significant portion of the population existed who regularly listened to the radio, but did not regularly read newspapers.

Writing in 1941, Clyde R. Miller acknowledges that, while the Federal government possesses increasingly absolute control over the airwaves because of the war and the networks themselves also possess the power to impose a “propaganda monopoly” should they judge it profitable, American radio stations are the only broadcasters that allow a “free trade in propaganda;” pointing out that it was the Federal Communications Commission that recognizes “that propaganda or persuasion is present in every discussion of a controversial issue” and requiring the allotting of equal time to political campaign issues.<sup>52</sup> This means that by the Roosevelt-era federal government’s own definition, the President was able to present his propaganda to the great percentages of

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<sup>51</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “The Daily Newspaper and Its Competitors,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 219 (1942), 39, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1023890> (accessed May 7, 2020).

<sup>52</sup> Miller, “Radio and Propaganda,” 71-72.

the American population each time he addressed the public through the radio, though he did not hold what Miller calls a “propaganda monopoly.”

Writing on April 30, 1935 in response to one of the President’s Fireside Chats discussed in this chapter, David Lawrence noted that the President’s remarks over the radio were not commented on nor were his “definite assertions” challenged; the radio audience had no way to learn whether these remarks are controversial through the radio itself, because the only sources who could speak up in criticism of the President over the radio were senators and congressmen who possessed the “privilege of the air” but invited the skepticism of the radio-listening public due to being politically active and partisan by nature of their profession.<sup>53</sup> Lawrence suggested that print media was the only source capable of offering trustworthy commentary and criticism to the President’s Fireside Chats in a timely fashion.<sup>54</sup> Mark Sullivan wrote of an exception to the rule thus established by Lawrence in a column published on October 15, 1937, discussing a “spontaneous radio debate” that occurred due to immediate response to one of the President’s Fireside Chats by the then-former head of the National Recovery Administration (NRA) Hugh S. Johnson, who had spoken to argue against Roosevelt less than five minutes after the conclusion of the latter’s Fireside Chat, Sullivan noted the fluidity of Johnson’s speech and suggested that he may have acquired an advance copy of the President’s address in order to prepare a response.<sup>55</sup> This exception strengthens rather than weakens the argument put forth by Lawrence, because while Johnson was no longer

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<sup>53</sup> David Lawrence, “The President’s Radio Talk on Works Program Discussed,” *Alton Evening Telegraph*, April 30, 1935. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed May 1, 2020).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Sullivan Finds President to be Less Dramatic,” *The Nebraska State Journal*, October 15, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

a government or political figure and could thus be seen as non-partisan by the listeners at this point, he was in the privileged position of a former member of the Roosevelt administration that had, in the very least, allowed him to know enough about the contents of the Fireside Chat in advance to know that words he would like to argue with would be said and arrange for a timeslot immediately after the address, and if Sullivan's guess was correct, enough remaining connections at the White House to secure a copy of the President's address beforehand. That it had taken someone in such a privileged position to offer immediate non-partisan critique to Roosevelt over the radio suggests that Lawrence was correct and that it was indeed difficult and rare for someone to be able to contradict the President on air shortly after one of his Fireside Chats. This casts doubt on how much the "free trade in propaganda" applied to the presidential Fireside Chats, even though there is no reason to suspect the networks or the Roosevelt administration made any attempt to curtail criticism of the President on air, as critics capable of utilizing the radio well enough to challenge the President's effective control of radio propaganda in his Fireside Chats were simply not there. Though Miller cites Father Coughlin and Huey Long as skilled radio propagandists just like Roosevelt,<sup>56</sup> and both of these figures were critical of the President, neither of them were critics and commentators by trade.

Lawrence's observations indicate that, rather than any effort to control the airwaves by the government or the networks, this situation was caused by the most capable and professional critics and political commentators of the time reaching out to the public almost exclusively through print media, possibly due to how new the radio was as a channel of propaganda. Combined with Lazarsfeld's comparison of the radio-

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<sup>56</sup> Miller, "Radio and Propaganda," 70.

listening and newspaper reading rates of the public, this meant that a significant portion of the population listened to Roosevelt's words without being exposed to the criticisms his radio addresses faced. Rather than intentionally striking against democracy and silencing his critics, it seems that Roosevelt was merely reaping the benefits of being among the trailblazers of radio propaganda. But it could still be argued that the President's highly competent use of this medium endangered democracy through a shortage of opposition if not through his intent.

Roosevelt's willingness to use his platform to rally his supporters to exert social pressure upon others in support of the National Recovery Administration in a maneuver reminiscent of some of his dictatorial contemporaries in his Fireside Chat broadcast on July 24, 1933 drew intense criticism and served as a reminder that even noble intentions could lead to unintended consequences when backed by a near-monopoly of the airwaves. At least the prompt curtailment of NRA in response to the setbacks it suffered after some employers who suffered ostracization turned out to be unable rather than unwilling to follow its lead<sup>57</sup> suggests that it was shortsightedness rather than malice that had motivated the President's ill-fated use of social pressure, and that the social strife thus caused had been the result of a mistake on Roosevelt's part, which he had proven willing to correct upon realization. This event, discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, should be kept in mind throughout this thesis as concrete evidence that President Roosevelt was not shy about making use of what Walter Lippmann called "government

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<sup>57</sup> Mark Sullivan, "NRA Easement Helps Purpose," *The Decatur Daily Review*, October 30, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

by propaganda,”<sup>58</sup> though that a similar accident of such wide-reaching consequent social strife did not occur afterwards suggests that this event had been a growing pain of Roosevelt’s style of government and that he had learned to be more responsible with his grasp of public opinion. However, being more responsible in the wielding the hammer of public opinion would not mean cessation. Going forward, the President’s tendency to rely on populism to tackle obstacles to his administration would continue to raise the ire of his critics, such as Westbrook Pegler, who would respond to one of the times Roosevelt called for moderation by citizens in their exercise of free speech and expressed a distaste for “appeals to prejudice” by comparing him to Hitler’s propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, criticizing the President and his supporters for failing to practice what he preached.<sup>59</sup>

When the inaugural address of President Roosevelt was delivered on the 4th of March, 1933, the situation was dire. The crisis was centered around the financial sector,<sup>60</sup> banks were failing one after another, and since this was before federal deposit insurance, a bank closing down meant that the depositors lost their entire savings with it.<sup>61</sup> On March 6th, Roosevelt utilized a law, left over from the First World War, to declare a national bank holiday; a bank law was passed on the 9th, retroactively authorizing the president to act as he had.<sup>62</sup> This bought time, but as new legislation was considered and prepared, the real matter of the hour was whether the public’s confidence in the banking

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<sup>58</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, July 27, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>59</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough,” *The Bristol Herald Courier*, April 19, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>60</sup> Brands, “15 Minutes That Saved America,” 38.

<sup>61</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 11.

<sup>62</sup> Brands, “15 Minutes That Saved America,” 39.

system could be restored before the banks re-opened.<sup>63</sup> It was in this climate that the first of Roosevelt's famous Fireside Chats was delivered, on the 12th of March. Raymond Moley recounts the preparation of the very first Fireside Chat on the Banking Crisis, which was drafted by Charles Michelson, rewritten by Under Secretary of the Treasury Arthur A. Ballantine, and edited by the President before recording.<sup>64</sup>

He begins by explaining to the public how banks work, how the money deposited is invested, and why it can't instantly be repaid during the conditions of a panic.<sup>65</sup> Here, he first demonstrates to the nation his way of narrativizing events, shaping the moving forces into characters, transforming structural concerns into psychological states.<sup>66</sup> In this particular Chat, the problem was the public's confidence of the banks, which had been damaged by the incompetence of a few bankers, who had dragged all banks down with their failings.<sup>67</sup> He predicts and allays the people's fears concerning the banking holiday,<sup>68</sup> and casts the restoration of confidence in the banking system as the solution to the problem.<sup>69</sup> This was an oversimplification of the issue, but restoring public confidence in the banks *would* help resolve the problem.<sup>70</sup> He offers the listeners his reassurance that their money is in good hands, and he implores them to help save the economy; "The success of our whole national program depends, of course, on the cooperation of the public..."<sup>71</sup> he says, placing the listeners in the center stage, handing

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>64</sup> Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), 155.

<sup>65</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Banking Crisis – March 12, 1933," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 13.

<sup>66</sup> Ryfe, "Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats," 93.

<sup>67</sup> Roosevelt, "The Banking Crisis – March 12, 1933," 13-16.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>69</sup> Ryfe, "Franklin Roosevelt and the Fireside Chats," 93.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Roosevelt, "The Banking Crisis – March 12, 1933," 15.

them the role of the protagonist of the tale. And he concludes with supreme confidence carried in the words “Together we cannot fail.”<sup>72</sup>

Raymond Moley would later describe the informal address to be “As simple and moving as any presidential uttering in the history of this country..” even as he stressed that the policies undertaken to resolve the crisis were of entirely conservative nature.<sup>73</sup> Policy-making had been conducted the same way Hoover or any other president most likely would have acted. It had been the warm, reassuring voice of Roosevelt that had filled the public with hope,<sup>74</sup> and that was what had made all the difference. The public response was extremely positive;<sup>75</sup> over 10,000 telegrams had been received by the White House after the Chat.<sup>76</sup> Reopening banks were not beset by depositors demanding their money back, some were even making deposits.<sup>77</sup> The people had seen a president courageous, yet human, and, most importantly, who was taking action.<sup>78</sup> This was exactly what they’d wanted to see. As Walter Lippmann had written in his newspaper column shortly before the broadcast, the public had been resolved to support the administration not out of a belief in the administration’s perfection but out of the realization that “to move calmly and quickly in a reasonably right direction is infinitely better than to stand still and argue;”<sup>79</sup> within the week after the broadcast, this lukewarm endorsement of new administration would be followed by a statement that the Roosevelt administration had

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>73</sup> Moley, *After Seven Years*, 155.

<sup>74</sup> Burns, *The Lion and The Fox*, 167-68.

<sup>75</sup> Brands, "15 Minutes That Saved America," 41.

<sup>76</sup> Burns, *The Lion and The Fox*, 167-68.

<sup>77</sup> Brands, "15 Minutes That Saved America," 41.

<sup>78</sup> Burns, *The Lion and The Fox*, 167-68

<sup>79</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, March 4, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

earned all the praise it received, noting their accomplishment in restoring the public confidence, saying “In one week the nation, which had lost confidence in everything and everybody, has regained confidence in the government and in itself;”<sup>80</sup> by the end of the month, as rapid measures slowed down, he would characterize the public attitude for Roosevelt as “...the President has done marvelously, but can he keep it up?”<sup>81</sup> Indeed, this was not an end to the pressure of financial disaster, but thanks to Roosevelt, the moment of emergency was past.<sup>82</sup>

The second Fireside Chat began simply enough. After two months of the New Deal, on May 7th, 1933, it was delivered partly to explain what had been done, which at that point wasn't much, and what was being done, which was a great deal more.<sup>83</sup> Whilst explaining all of these, Roosevelt stresses particularly that “a well-grounded, well rounded plan”<sup>84</sup> is being followed, and that progress is being made towards “a definitive goal.”<sup>85</sup> These assertions most definitely did not reflect what was to come. Raymond Moley's most important criticism of, especially but not exclusively, the later parts of the New Deal was that it was an incoherent mess; he likened it to an orchestra where all players were playing something completely different whilst the conductor, Roosevelt himself, insisted that it was a harmonious symphony.<sup>86</sup> Of course, not even the most central actors of the New Deal could have known this. And Roosevelt's promise of

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<sup>80</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, March 11, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>81</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *Pasadena Post*, March 30, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>82</sup> Brands, “15 Minutes That Saved America,” 41.

<sup>83</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 18.

<sup>84</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Progress Made During the New Deal's First Two Months – May 7, 1933,” in Buhite and Levy, eds., 21.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>86</sup> Moley, *After Seven Years*, 370.

honesty, combined with his humble approach to successes had thus far<sup>87</sup> would not be unlikely to inspire trust. For the regulations proposed for farming, industry, and transportation, Roosevelt rejects the label of government control, preferring the term “government partnership” in decision-making.<sup>88</sup> Though not all were convinced, such as the columnist Mark Sullivan who had been calling the farming portion of the administration’s program an effort to render unto the secretary of agriculture the powers of a “benevolent dictator over all farming” since late March,<sup>89</sup> and continued to note that the proposed measures would place virtually every American industry under government control, though he suggested that the control granted to the government by these bills would be “elastic” and their application would depend on the people placed in charge of these programs, pointing out that for example, George Peek, who had been placed in charge of the farm relief bill that had already been passed, was unlikely to wield it as anything more than a “primer” to kick start the economy,<sup>90</sup> and that the time limit featured in the “industrial control bill” should reassure those fearing a permanent change.<sup>91</sup> Privately, the President acknowledged that this was a definitive step away from the *laissez-faire* economic policy<sup>92</sup> that had long been advocated in the United States. In a conversation with Raymond Moley before the broadcasting of the speech, he’d expressed an awareness of this, and a belief that *laissez-faire* was no longer viable, as well as great

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<sup>87</sup> Roosevelt, "Progress Made During the New Deal's First Two Months – May 7, 1933," 23.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Benevolent Farm Dictator Is Sought In Pending Bill,” *The Bristol Herald Courier*, March 21, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>90</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Government Control is Placed On Many American Industries,” *The Bristol Herald Courier*, May 15, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>91</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Control Bill Gives Great Power to ‘F.D.’,” *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, The Evening News*, May 19, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>92</sup> Moley, *After Seven Years*, 189.

confidence in the soundness of “government partnerships.”<sup>93</sup> To allay fears of new regulations, Roosevelt adopted the folksy style of a radio announcer and make use of anecdotal examples to familiarize the issues,<sup>94</sup> in the particular case of this Fireside Chat, he makes use of the example of child labor, starvation wages, sweatshop hours in the cotton industry, and why it is nearly impossible to get rid of them without government intervention of some sort.<sup>95</sup> Here, he adds villains to the narrative in the form of “the unfair 10 percent”<sup>96</sup> of manufacturers.

The third Fireside Chat of July 24, 1933 was, apart from praising the success of the first hundred days, concerned mainly with the National Recovery Administration, which required each industry to determine codes limiting them in a form of government-overseen self-regulation.<sup>97</sup> He looked back on the hundred days, using familiar forms of address such as “You and I know”<sup>98</sup> to personalize the Chat,<sup>99</sup> while looking back at the banking crisis.<sup>100</sup> He was uniquely able to use such familiar forms of address, like “my friends,” in his speeches without sounding phony thanks to his ability to inject a believable sincerity to his voice.<sup>101</sup> On the matter of the NRA, he expresses a desire to “bring industry back along sound lines,” giving the successful abolition of child labor in the cotton textile code as an example of the kind of good that such regulation can

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ryfe, “Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats,” 94-95.

<sup>95</sup> Roosevelt, “Progress Made During the New Deal’s First Two Months – May 7, 1933,” 23-24.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>97</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 28.

<sup>98</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Praising the First Hundred Days and Boosting the NRA – July 24, 1933,” in Buhite and Levy, eds., 30.

<sup>99</sup> Ryfe, “Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats,” 92.

<sup>100</sup> Roosevelt, “Praising the First Hundred Days and Boosting the NRA – July 24, 1933,” 30.

<sup>101</sup> Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 105.

accomplish.<sup>102</sup> He then uses the metaphor of the bright armbands soldiers performing night attacks in war wore to distinguish friend from foe in the dark while explaining that the supporters of the NRA should carry the badge indicating this.<sup>103</sup> It is unsaid, but implied, that non-supporters of NRA are supporting practices such as child labor and starvation wages, and that the president is declaring war on them, recruiting the listeners of the Fireside Chat as his soldiers, who will refrain from buying from businesses that lack an NRA badge in an effort to pressure these employers into falling in line. He'd used the narrative to designate villains in his prior Chat, and now he provides a way to spot the villains of the narrative in the real world, organizing the mass public against them in a tactic bordering on economic coercion.

What might make this tactic seem even harsher was that not all who refrained from supporting the NRA did so out of a disagreement with the goals it sought or the means through which said goals were sought. According to Mark Sullivan, in a column published on the day of the broadcast, some of the businesses that did not support the NRA, particularly small corporations along with retail merchants and individual businesses, often failed to do so not because they disagreed with it on principle but because they currently “literally have not the money to” invest in the higher wages prescribed by the NRA;<sup>104</sup> a point echoed with increased intensity by Walter Lippmann in three columns published one after the other over the following few days after the broadcast, where he remarks that a blanket increase in industry wages would only

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<sup>102</sup> Roosevelt, "Praising the First Hundred Days and Boosting the NRA – July 24, 1933," 32-33.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>104</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Industry Puzzled by Wage Issue," *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, The Evening News*, July 24, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

generate the increased buying power sought if the employers were able to absorb the higher labor costs without increasing the prices, which many smaller businesses could not do, and advised that the benefits of the NRA would “depend on the discrimination with which it is enforced,”<sup>105</sup> pointing out that applying the new regulations would be sensible in the case of “the well to do and the powerful” but “brutal” in the case of the “weak and helpless;”<sup>106</sup> expresses a dislike for the administration’s use of “government by propaganda” and “moral coercion” in its efforts to encourage businesses to apply the code and points out that wielding them against large anonymous corporations that can but refuse to follow the code and wielding them against small businesses are fundamentally different matters as the latter involves setting neighbors against each other and unjustly creating strife, arguing that “...anything that requires a propaganda of intolerance is worse than useless. It is monkeying with dynamite;”<sup>107</sup> and harshly criticizes the President’s indiscriminate use of public opinion to convince all businesses to follow suit as an “utterly unjust” measure that will “aggravate the disease,” saying that this approach threatens to “unloose a mob spirit” on those small businesses who financially cannot afford to pay the price for and NRA badge and that “...once the mob spirit is loose it is farewell to justice and sympathy and decency among men.”<sup>108</sup>

By the time 22nd of October had arrived, most of the early New Deal had been put in action; it hadn’t been perfect, the agricultural prices, for example, hadn’t seen the

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<sup>105</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, July 28, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>106</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Lippmann Sees Dangers in Recovery Plan,” *The Pantagraph*, July 29, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>107</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, July 27, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

<sup>108</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Lippmann Sees Dangers in Recovery Plan,” *The Pantagraph*, July 29, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020).

desired rise, but there were encouraging improvements to offset the disappointments, and on that positive note, an attempt would be made to raise prices through manipulating currency.<sup>109</sup> The humble tone of the previous Fireside Chats, the willingness assure that more would be done with the refusal to offer guarantees had worked out, enabling Roosevelt to deal with problematic issues in the Chats without looking like he was backing out. “We have a long way to go but we are on the way.”,<sup>110</sup> summarizes the tone of the fourth Fireside Chat. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration is focused on this time; FDR expressed that he is “amazed” at the “extraordinary cooperation” shown by the farmers, except for the farmers of the Mid-West, whom he is sure will follow along in a “similarly magnificent” fashion.<sup>111</sup> They most likely would, they were being shamed into action before practically the entire country. The industrial sector is another area where success is touted; child labor, sweatshop conditions and low wages were dealt serious blows and the secret, the President says, was everyone’s willing cooperation.<sup>112</sup> Of particular interest is how Roosevelt’s narrative, through repeatedly stressing willing cooperation, conjures the image of a nation, Americans from all walks of life, working together to overcome the difficulties of the day. It reinforces the imaginary community, invigorating national consciousness behind the new symbol of the New Deal.<sup>113</sup> New villains are introduced, in the form of “chiselers,” dishonest individuals who attempt to carve out economic or political benefit to themselves out of the New Deal.<sup>114</sup> It was no

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<sup>109</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 37.

<sup>110</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Assessing the New Deal and Manipulating the Currency – October 22, 1933,” in Buhite and Levy, eds., 38.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>113</sup> Ryfe, “Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats,” 80.

<sup>114</sup> Roosevelt, “Assessing the New Deal and Manipulating the Currency – October 22, 1933,” 41-42.

accident that these “chiselers” also happened to be among the critics of the New Deal. A partisanship of progressivism (pro-New Deal) and conservatism (anti-New Deal) was being pushed forth. Finally came the issue of “managed currency,” the method for which Roosevelt explains to be a government market for gold, which will buy newly mined gold at prices that would be adjusted gradually, and clarifies to be “a policy and not an expedient,”<sup>115</sup> which seems like it was meant to create the impression that it wasn’t that currency manipulation was merely a way now thought of to counter the setback of agricultural produce prices, but that the admittedly disappointing rise of produce prices were an opportunity to introduce this part of the New Deal that had always been part of the plan.

The currency measure was a major topic of discussion in the days immediately after the Fireside Chat. Writing two days after the broadcast, columnist David Lawrence praises the currency management measures as a wise move that was similar to measures by European states that had achieved more stabilized currencies afterwards;<sup>116</sup> while Mark Sullivan’s column written the following day is more ambivalent, suggesting that many “inflationist leaders” supporting the measure are also of the opinion that it would be an insufficient step in the right direction;<sup>117</sup> Walter Lippmann, in a column published on the 27th of October, notes that while the measure has “bewildered” markets, it has not caused a panic, and that while the measure is clearly experimental, the United States is the only country in the world besides France with enough gold to be able to attempt such

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>116</sup> David Lawrence, “Plan to Stabilize Dollar Analyzed,” *Rutland Daily Herald*, October 25, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>117</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Roosevelt Is Using An Inflation Method Authorized By Congress,” *The Bristol Herald Courier*, October 26, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

an experiment and hope to succeed and instead points towards the corn farmers of the Mid-West as the main cause for concern for this policy, suggesting that while it had clearly been planned for some time, the timing of the managed currency policy was an obvious response to the corn farmers' protests and that the administration should avoid managing country-wide economic policies according to "the political pressure from a part of the people,"<sup>118</sup> also criticizing the President's Fireside Chat for creating this impression, which he suggests resulted in a decline in the trust enjoyed by Roosevelt that he would be able to act for the benefit of the nation rather than parts of it, because to many listeners the Fireside Chat appeared to be an appeal to farmers that he would not only increase the prices of their own products but that he would do so by regulating the value of dollar for all, an impression that Lippmann notes not to exactly match the President's radio address, but also one it fails clearly to dispel, which he warns is an impression that Roosevelt cannot leave alone as he must act in the national interest rather than special interests not only in fact but also in appearance for the political truce in this time of crisis to continue.<sup>119</sup>

On the matter of the public reaction to the setbacks suffered by the NRA, Mark Sullivan writes that those currently most disillusioned with the NRA are the "communities which participated in the initial evangelistic fervor" and hoped for "immediate economic paradise," while those who opposed it most vehemently initially, often in farming towns, were placated by the exemption granted to retail shops with

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<sup>118</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, October 27, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>119</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, October 31, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

fewer than five employees in settlements of populations under 2500, and that the administration has won a generally positive public opinion by acknowledging and abandoning mistakes, with the added benefit that retreating from those among these villages which exclusively deal in intrastate trade will also save the NRA the legal complications of attempting to impose federal regulations on intrastate businesses; but remarks that the exemptions may have come too late to prevent damage to some communities, such as one where teachers encouraged the children to discriminate against some shop owners who had not signed on with the implication of their lack of patriotism.<sup>120</sup>

The first half of 1934 had been an excellent period for New Deal legislation, reviewing the success of the New Deal so far went hand in hand with responding to the critics on both the left, who said the New Deal was not doing enough, and the right, who were alarmed by the President's increased power and feared for both free enterprise and personal liberties; in response, Roosevelt spends a significant portion of his June 28, 1934 Fireside Chat insisting that everything in the New Deal was in line with American traditions<sup>121</sup> in the most impassioned Fireside Chat thus far. Roosevelt divides the duties that the government has undertaken into three headers; he states that relief is the first, because the primary concern of a humane government is to prevent people from starving; he remarks that second is recovery, because greed and selfishness has driven the nation into depression and recovery is ongoing; and he asserts that the third is reform and reconstruction, because it seems that justice had been forgotten in the period preceding

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<sup>120</sup> Mark Sullivan, "NRA Easement Helps Purpose," *The Decatur Daily Review*, October 30, 1933. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>121</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 45-46.

the depression, and the economic structure needs to be reformed and reconstructed to become better.<sup>122</sup> In response to all criticisms concerning the economic recovery and relief efforts, FDR asks that the listeners look to their personal experience in the past year and ask themselves “Are you better off than you were last year?” responding to criticisms concerning the loss of individual liberties in a similar way, assuring the public that their liberties, proclaimed by the Bill of Rights, are as secure as ever by asking them to look to their own experience to find if any liberty has been lost.<sup>123</sup> To more specific accusations such as Communism and Fascism, he responds that such theoretical principles have never been a guiding principle of the New Deal, which he suggests to be made up of practical solutions for practical problems; he uses the metaphor of adding a few additional rooms to the White House to portray the new responsibilities of government as a continuation of those duties that it already had, remarking that “Our new structure is a part of and fulfillment of the old.”<sup>124</sup> According to Roosevelt, the real villains of the story are, of course, the selfish minority that exists in all walks of life, who desire to forestall this rebuilding process for their own benefit at the expense of the greater good,<sup>125</sup> implying that it is these conservatives who are the ones behind these accusations. For future plans, he speaks of “social insurance,”<sup>126</sup> possibly to placate the left, who supported him, but wished he would do more.<sup>127</sup> He concludes this Fireside Chat by sharing his vacation plans,<sup>128</sup> the same way one’s next-door neighbor might speak up about another topic after

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<sup>122</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Answering the Critics – June 28, 1934,” in Buhite and Levy, eds., 47-48.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-49.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>127</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 45-46.

<sup>128</sup> Roosevelt, “Answering the Critics – June 28, 1934,” 52.

a casual conversation about politics, further strengthening the humanizing aspect of the Fireside Chats.

Mark Sullivan, in a column written shortly after the broadcast, challenges Roosevelt's implied claim that no liberties were lost during his administration, arguing that the NRA regulations each represent a lost right, ranging from the limitation of working hours to price controls to the restriction of private gold ownership, noting that while the President's word choice is misleading, his intended meaning was likely that these forfeited liberties were, in Roosevelt's mind, the price for greater benefits and suggests that both this opinion of the President's and the word choice it was conveyed through is merely a symptom of his optimism, which Sullivan argues has proven useful in the past year, but should face frequent "correction" by public opinion.<sup>129</sup>

The sixth Fireside Chat, broadcast on September 30, 1934, five weeks before the congressional elections,<sup>130</sup> was fairly straightforward in reminding the public of the New Deal gains. However, it was significant for marking Roosevelt's open movement towards the Left, and outlining the philosophy of the New Deal, which meant to combine free enterprise with government regulation to form a third way.<sup>131</sup>

In this Fireside Chat, the President delves into the philosophical argument, stating that free enterprise requires assistance and regulations "...lest it destroy not only itself but also our process of civilization."<sup>132</sup> Roosevelt then dives straight into the

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<sup>129</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Affairs in The Nation," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, July 3, 1934. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>130</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 53.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>132</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Government and Modern Capitalism – September 30, 1934," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 55.

accomplishments of the New Deal with a casual "...as you know, the banks had collapsed..."<sup>133</sup> It is no coincidence that this was where he transitions. He not only reminds the listener what calamity the New Deal had rescued the nation from, but also conveys the undertone that such calamities are what happens when free enterprise is unregulated. He brings up the success of the New Deal, saying that "...the gains of trade and industry as a whole have been substantial..."<sup>134</sup> but expresses mildly amused frustration at the critics of the current policies of the New Deal, who insist that the latest regulations are unnecessary, stating "Now that these people are coming out of their storm cellars, they forget there ever was a storm."<sup>135</sup> To further underline the notion that regulations were to be the preventive medication of capitalist economy.

According to David Lawrence, in a column published two days after the broadcast, this Fireside Chat was the most encouraging of the President's speeches delivered since his inauguration as far as business and finance were concerned, mainly due to the "impartial approach" Roosevelt utilized; Lawrence suggests that the style of argument and appeal of cooperation the President used will see many a businessman rally to his banner, now that he has allayed the fears of state socialism that had gripped the business circles, and describes the Fireside Chat, sans "certain phrases doubtless put there to hold the left wing in line" and "other certain phrases that might still make the right wing nervous- such as the term 'fair' profit with its implications of government control of

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

profit” as “a heroic effort to produce industrial peace” and “...reconcile conflict in our midst.”<sup>136</sup>

Mark Sullivan has a similarly positive, but more ambivalent reaction to the Fireside Chat, noting that all the material conditions for recovery have already been achieved and that it is the lack of confidence on the part of businessmen, brought on by the administration’s policies, that restrains recovery and praises some of Roosevelt’s assurances as “concrete” while he criticizes the “curious reluctance to make them clear and forthright,” pointing out that the President’s statement concerning counting on “individual initiative and the incentive of fair private profit” is a clean break from collectivism, which he states is close to what business had wanted to hear from him for some time, and interprets Roosevelt’s proposal of a truce between labor and employers as a recognition of strikes as an obstacle before recovery;<sup>137</sup> he also suggests that the speech can be read as an expression of doubt in and a declaration of intent to retreat from New Deal policies, which he views as a positive direction, especially since Roosevelt may be considering the abandonment of “what many consider the fundamental fallacy of the new deal,” and a root cause of many of the restrictions that had drawn criticism thus far.<sup>138</sup>

The seventh of the Fireside Chats, broadcast on April 28, 1935, had two main aims, to defend the Work Progress Administration (WPA) from the criticism it received,

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<sup>136</sup> David Lawrence, “David Lawrence Dispatch,” *The Paducah Sun-Democrat*, October 2, 1934. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>137</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Affairs in the Nation,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 4, 1934. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>138</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Affairs in the Nation,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 5, 1934. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

and to garner public support for the Social Security Act, which was still pending.<sup>139</sup> Both of these measures tied in to the goal of reducing unemployment.

President Roosevelt opens this Fireside Chat by providing assurance that the measures being taken are all interconnected and while they may look haphazard to the casual, this is because of the many complex and detailed parts necessary for the useful structure being built; he speaks of how the nation came together as a community in the past three years, and are increasingly placing the good of all over their individual and group selfishness, making it a point to praise the public's ability to "sift the wheat from the chaff" in the information they receive and their awareness that what is being done "is being done in spite of the few who seek to confuse them and to profit by their confusion,"<sup>140</sup> which was likely a dig aimed at some of his harsher critics like Mark Sullivan, who had recently begun to cast the administration's policies as the greatest obstacles before recovery.<sup>141</sup> The objective of the WPA is, clearly, to put people to work instead of relief, Roosevelt says, noting that it would also materially help "in our already unmistakable march toward recovery," and implores the American public that their entirely valid concerns of laziness, inefficiency and corruption occur more rarely in government programs than in most other fields and can easily be addressed if they are vigilant in reporting such matters.<sup>142</sup> The uses of social security are laid out simply; the elderly will be able to retire with pensions, opening up room in the workforce to employ the young, and unemployment insurance will not only protect the unfortunate, but also

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<sup>139</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 63-64.

<sup>140</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Defending the WPA and Pressing for Social Security – April 28, 1935," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 64-65.

<sup>141</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Affairs in the Nation," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 4, 1934. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>142</sup> Roosevelt, "Defending the WPA and Pressing for Social Security – April 28, 1935," 65-70.

prevent the kind of under-consumption crisis that occurred during the Great Depression.<sup>143</sup> The Social Security Act also called back to the promise of “social insurance” a little less than a year ago. The President notes that while social security will be a goal to work towards in the future, the work relief program is a more immediate concern, outlining the principles of usefulness, having wages as a major part of the expense, the potential to generate revenue for the Treasury, prompt spending of allotted funds, and the number of people in relief rolls in the areas a work relief project is planned,<sup>144</sup> calling for “a great national crusade” against “enforced idleness.”<sup>145</sup> He once more casts the public as the protagonist of his narrative assuming the role of a kind advisor, suggesting that it is time to respond to cynical claims that “a democracy cannot be honest, cannot be efficient,” and asking for the public’s assistance to prove these cynics wrong, saying “If you will help, this can be done.”<sup>146</sup> Roosevelt then summarizes and argues in favor of a series of legislations awaiting the Congress’ approval, mentioning that the NRA bill is approaching its expiration date of June 16 and will need to be renewed to avoid giving up gains such as the ban on child labor, maximum hours, minimum wages and the right to collective bargaining; he attacks the “absentee management” of “unnecessary holding companies,” asking for legislation against them; and states that the new banking bill is meant to make “a minimum of wise readjustments” to the Federal Reserve System and its powers to control credit, because “...the resources of banking must be most fully utilized in the economic life of the country.”<sup>147</sup> This

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<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

comment on banking may have been motivated by what the remainders of Roosevelt's irritation with the banks' failure to voluntarily assist the government with recovery efforts as much as the President thought they should, as mentioned in Mark Sullivan's earlier columns.<sup>148</sup> Roosevelt concludes this Fireside Chat on an optimistic note, saying that never before since his inauguration had he "felt so unmistakably the atmosphere of American recovery."<sup>149</sup>

Walter Lippmann, writing two days after the broadcast, compares the President's statements concerning the legislation before in his Fireside Chats to a report published by the National Association of Manufacturers the day after the broadcast to discover the Manufacturers' attitude towards the policies outlined by Roosevelt, noting that the manufacturers expressly agree with the President's concluding assessment that recovery has come further than ever before, and concludes that they presumably accept Roosevelt's stated goals of expanding the NRA, attaining legislation for regulating highway, water and air travel, as well as granting old age pensions, judging the matter's lack of presence in the list of measures they find undesirable; Lippmann summarizes the main point to which National Manufacturers' Association objects in the President's program as unemployment insurance, a bill to eliminate "unnecessary holding companies" in utilities, and the bank bill, particularly the portion concerning the central control of credit; he argues that if the Association's statement concerning recovery being at hand is accurate, then it cannot be seriously endangered by any of Roosevelt's measures that they oppose can only pose problems in the long term, describing these

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<sup>148</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Affairs in the Nation," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 5, 1934. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>149</sup> Roosevelt, "Defending the WPA and Pressing for Social Security – April 28, 1935," 72.

concerns as valid but not fundamental and suggesting that the disagreements are over what “ought” to be done and not what “must” be done; a situation, he remarks, was likely the reason for Roosevelt’s “quiet and confident tone” in the speech, noting that the Congress has already given the President all that he truly needs to ensure that recovery takes place.<sup>150</sup>

David Lawrence, writing on April 30 just as Lippmann, reads the Fireside Chat as indicative of the President’s recognition of “certain widely held impressions about his policies,” and of an effort to counteract them which he notes is a task not new to presidents, but contests that prior presidents lacked the advantage of being able to speak directly to their constituents through the radio, millions of them at a time, with no challenge or comment on any statement they may make for days or weeks heard by the audience through the same medium, noting that Roosevelt uses the radio often as “one of the most valuable ways to develop public opinion;” Lawrence also notes that the President’s opposition was manifest in this Fireside Chat in ways they had not been included before, with Roosevelt’s words targeting specific criticism directed at his policies, such as his assurance that the recovery program was intricately planned being meant to offset the criticism that his administration had been largely opportunistic in its measures and been relying on trial and error alone to solve problems with no plan in mind; Roosevelt’s remark on the nation having come together to set aside individual and group selfishness for the common good Lawrence describes as “obviously what should be the objective of the nation,” which he contests doesn’t match reality which is populated

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<sup>150</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, April 30, 1935. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

by many a lobbyist; Lawrence also challenges Roosevelt's remark that the relief rolls are declining by quoting the official figures and suggesting that while a slight decline has been occurring since January, a much larger increase has occurred in the prior year; he suggests that while the President's statement that government projects are less likely to grow corrupt were true in the past, the present state of government works over which the civil service meritocracy has less influence than before is more likely to employ people according to their "political pull" and thus more likely than before to grow corrupt, but praises Roosevelt's open invitation for the public to voice any "improper practices" they see; Lawrence drives home his main point using his criticism of Roosevelt's remark on the right of every citizen to advise the government on how public money can be spent better as a springboard, noting that shortly before the time of the column being written a plan for private enterprise to take on some of the work currently performed by the work relief efforts was proposed and that it has received no comment from the government, which is unlikely to accept it since it "would require the repeal of some of the pet theories of the administration and some of its socialistic reform programs," pointing out that this side of the story will not be heard on the radio except from a rare Senator or Congressman who might be aired and even then, it will be mistrusted due to partisanship, essentially depriving radio listeners who do not also read newspapers from any contrasting points of view that the American press provides.<sup>151</sup>

Over one year after the seventh Fireside Chat came FDR's pre-election appeal to the farmers and the laborers, he attempted to unite the two in cooperation, and succeeded,

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<sup>151</sup> David Lawrence, "The President's Radio Talk on Works Program Discussed," *Alton Evening Telegraph*, April 30, 1935. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed May 1, 2020).

albeit temporarily.<sup>152</sup> On his radio address aired on September 6, 1936, President Roosevelt speaks of the devastation brought on by the draught, but it is not his focus, the focus of Roosevelt's words is the perseverance of the farmers in the face of such difficulty<sup>153</sup>; he implores the public that helping the farmers in finding gainful employment constitutes an investment in the following year's agriculture, when farms will have better yield once more.<sup>154</sup> This narrative takes something as unpredictable and mindless as a natural disaster, and personalizes it by turning it into a challenge to the American character.<sup>155</sup> Roosevelt calls upon the laborers and farmers to look out for one another in the upcoming election, declaring that "...city wages and farm buying power are the two strong legs that carry the nation forward."<sup>156</sup> And the narrative of cooperation was back, this time to inspire the two politically powerful groups that tended to vote differently to vote together. And it would work, along with other New Deal victories, granting Roosevelt a landslide victory. Though the difficulty of uniting farmers and labor would continue to be a recurring challenge for Roosevelt for the rest of his administration.

So concluded the Fireside Chats of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first term in office. The Fireside Chats were, as demonstrated throughout this chapter, a potent tool of propaganda. They, through granting a direct channel between the President and the public, made it possible for him to reach large sections of the population without interference from his critics. The Fireside Chats were his great political tool as a gifted

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<sup>152</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 73-74.

<sup>153</sup> Ryfe, "Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats," 93.

<sup>154</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A Pre-Election Appeal to Farmers and Laborers – September 6, 1936," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 74-76.

<sup>155</sup> Ryfe, "Franklin Roosevelt And The Fireside Chats," 93.

<sup>156</sup> Roosevelt, "A Pre-Election Appeal to Farmers and Laborers – September 6, 1936," 79.

orator and talented story teller. They made the public feel close to the President like they'd never felt before.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE MANDATE OF THE BALLOT AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

In the first year and a half of his second term as President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt appealed directly to the public through the medium of the radio in one of his Fireside Chats quite frequently. Between the beginning of March 1937 and the end of June 1938, five fireside chats had been broadcast out of the White House in less than sixteen months; before his second term, only the struggle to pull the nation out of the worst of the Great Depression in his first year as a president had motivated Roosevelt to make use of a Fireside Chat as frequently; and he would only increase the frequency of his Fireside Chats further after the United States entered the Second World War. However, it is not difficult to see why he so often felt the need to reach out to his constituents as directly as he could in this period; this was when he met some of the greatest opposition to his policies, and put some of his most controversial plans in motion to overcome said opposition. His plan to “pack” the Supreme Court and his attempt to “purge” the Democratic Party were both presented to the judgement of the public, and were defeated, in this period. The question of how much these defeats benefited or hindered democracy is one that remains.

Judging by his words, both in his speeches and in private, Franklin Delano Roosevelt seemed to truly believe that democracy was worth preserving. And he had very real concerns that the democratic government failing to resolve the economic problems of the Great Depression could mean the downfall of American democracy and the rise of a dictatorship in its place, by that point this scenario had already happened multiple times in Europe. As he pointed out multiple times in his Fireside Chats between March 9, 1937 and June 24, 1938, all branches of government and the public needed to work together to make democracy succeed and overcome these new challenges it faced in the twentieth century; and both the Supreme Court and the conservative Democrats could justifiably be accused of hindering democratic processes at a time when they needed to proceed as smoothly as possible. On the other hand, there is no denying that both of these controversial plans, if successful, would have increased the President's personal power and expanded the influence of his office as the chief executive; possibly resulting in the very same end he was so determined to avoid. It should be noted that not all who disagreed with Roosevelt's court proposal disagreed with his goals and his view that the Court's attitude against New Deal legislation was contrary to the spirit of American democracy. Lippmann was one such critic who was in agreement with the President that the Supreme Court had overstepped the proper bounds of its duty in the judiciary branch, and suggested legislation being discussed at the Congress at the time that, in his view, would better remedy the problems experienced by Roosevelt in getting reform legislation

to combat “social evils” passed, without risking such damage to the independence of the judiciary posed by the President’s court plan.<sup>157</sup>

When President Roosevelt’s second term began, Supreme Court had overruled much of the New Deal legislation passed in his first term in office and found them unconstitutional; some of his New Deal measures were ruled to be under the jurisdiction of the states that involved them and not under that of the federal government, which troubled him since he knew how difficult it would be for the forty-eight states act together as one as was required by the national conditions; and some were ruled to be measures neither the states nor the federal government could constitutionally adopt.<sup>158</sup> The plan that was eventually decided upon by the President to end the effective paralysis of the legislative branch by the Supreme Court via the appointment of an additional Justice for every Justice over the age of seventy that refused to retire was recommended by the Attorney General Homer Cummings, who had previously advised the President against proposing a plan to automatically retire Supreme Court Justices once they reached the age of seventy due to its unconstitutionality.<sup>159</sup> In theory, this plan wouldn’t reduce the power of the judiciary branch, but the prior presidents’ ability to influence those that came after them. The reason Roosevelt had struggled so much with the Court’s decisions had been because of over a decade of conservative presidents had had the opportunity appoint like-minded Justices, and left him to face a conservative majority in the Supreme Court. Had this plan gone into effect, newly-elected presidents, and the legislators they

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<sup>157</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, March 10, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

<sup>158</sup> Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), 140.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-47.

would be working with, would have had an increased ability to enact legislation contrary to the policies of their predecessors since the number of Justices who believed as the prior president did would be balanced out with the infusion of new Justices that believed as the new president did; a newer president and newer legislators would have a more up-to-date understanding of newer problems and how the public preferred those problems to be resolved; if the public chose poorly, they could simply vote again in the following elections and the president and legislators would be in a position to undo the mistakes of their predecessors more easily. However, this interpretation of the issue hinges on Roosevelt's assertion that "no president fit for his office would appoint, and no Senate of honorable men fit for their office would confirm" the kind of Justices that would "disregard the law and would decide specific cases as I wished them to be decided."<sup>160</sup> Whether or not this was true for Roosevelt himself, his plan would still have the drawback of accelerating the process of corruption should a string of several "unfit" presidents, willing to appoint what Roosevelt called "spineless puppets"<sup>161</sup> to the Court, were to be elected alongside sufficiently supportive Senates.

What Roosevelt seemed to miss or ignore was, as Walter Lippmann put it, that the point of having a Supreme Court to review laws to ensure their constitutionality was to ensure that the personal integrity of no president would ever be the deciding factor of whether the Constitution was upheld; Lippmann also points out that the proper way of making such a change to the Supreme Court would be through a constitutional

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<sup>160</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Defending the Plan to "Pack" the Court – March 9, 1937," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 91.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

amendment,<sup>162</sup> echoing a significant portion of the President's critics. David Lawrence suggests that previously more controversial amendments had been passed in as little as a year before in his objection to Roosevelt's assumption that an amendment would take too long to ratify.<sup>163</sup>

The greatest impact of President Roosevelt's court plan would most likely be in the short term, as it would enable Roosevelt to avoid being deadlocked by an uncooperative Court while attempting to pass reform laws for the rest of his time as president, which was almost certainly the sole intent of Roosevelt and his advisors as, according to Rosenman, they had already considered several ways to, as quickly as possible, continue New Deal legislation without fear of the new laws being struck down by the Court before settling on the plan.<sup>164</sup> It could be argued that after President Roosevelt and Attorney General Cummings considered a variety of options, including a few that involved constitutional amendments, the court plan in particular was chosen as a short term solution to a visible and very specific problem experienced by the Roosevelt administration, especially because of its limited potential to have a significant impact on the country outside of the very specific circumstances present at the time.

This interpretation of Roosevelt and his advisors valuing speedy accomplishment of reforms over all else in their court proposal is in line with the recurring theme of "proving that democracy can be efficient" the President had been returning to since

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<sup>162</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 12, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

<sup>163</sup> David Lawrence, "Today in Washington," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, March 11, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2020).

<sup>164</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 144-45.

1935.<sup>165</sup> Little more than a year after his controversial court proposal, during his Fireside Chat on combatting the recession, Roosevelt would return to this theme again, pointing towards Europe, where, driven into desperation by their governments' inability to deliver them from the perils of economic downturn, some people "chose to sacrifice liberty in the hope of getting something to eat," and remarks that "If by democratic methods people get a government strong enough to protect them from fear and starvation, their democracy succeeds; but if they do not, they grow impatient."<sup>166</sup> Thus, he may have felt it necessary to act in such a way to restore the public's faith in democracy itself by proving that their democratic government was able to adequately defend their interests in a timely manner. This worry was most likely on his mind during the days leading up to the Court fight, judging by Roosevelt's decision to end his otherwise entirely domestic Fireside Chat on his Court plan by saying that "...in a world in which democracy is under attack, I seek to make American democracy succeed."<sup>167</sup>

While Roosevelt's rhetoric on the matter revolves around accelerating the democratic process to eliminate "inefficiency" as a flaw that endangered liberty by making authoritarian forms of government attractive to desperate people, David Lawrence protests that "the price of liberty is the cumbersomeness of democracy," and cites the words of Justice Brandeis that friction between the branches of government is not a flaw in the democratic system but how it accomplishes its function of restraining all arbitrary uses of power.<sup>168</sup> Viewing the problem from this perspective suggests that

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<sup>165</sup> Roosevelt, "Defending the WPA and Pressing for Social Security – April 28, 1935," 69.

<sup>166</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Combatting the 1937-1938 Recession – April 14, 1938," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 118.

<sup>167</sup> Roosevelt, "Defending the Plan to "Pack" the Court – March 9, 1937," 95.

<sup>168</sup> David Lawrence, "Today in Washington," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, March 11, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2020).

Roosevelt's efforts at creating a quicker and more democratic system, if allowed to succeed, may have defeated the purpose of having a Supreme Court to review the legislature in the first place.

In the end, it would not be the heavy-handed attempt by Roosevelt to arrange for legislation to gain a more compliant Supreme Court that would solve this deadlock, but a willing change of attitude by the Supreme Court towards a more cooperative stance. Roosevelt would eventually acknowledge this shift in a Fireside Chat, describing the recent decisions of the Court as an “eloquent testimony of willingness to collaborate with the two other branches of government to make democracy work.”<sup>169</sup> According to Rosenman, this voluntary change had been made within the Court as early as December 1936, but had remained hidden from all parties outside the Supreme Court itself until the decisions made after the shift began to be announced on March 29.<sup>170</sup> Rosenman argues that the primary reason for Roosevelt's failure to rally the mass public to support the immediate changes he had sought had been that with the Court's voluntary cooperation, the public saw no problems which would warrant such a change.<sup>171</sup>

According to Rosenman, Roosevelt's “purge” of the Democratic party was partly motivated by his personal resentment of the “shenanigans” of politicians willing to run on a liberal platform and refuse to honor the campaign promises they had implicitly made, but mostly because of his concern that these politicians were impeding the progress in

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<sup>169</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938,” in Buhite and Levy, eds., 128-129.

<sup>170</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 160-61.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

legislation he believed to be necessary for raising the country's living standards and for strengthening the United States to withstand the international strife that was brewing.<sup>172</sup>

While the conservative faction within the Democratic Party had first troubled the President during the court fight, its opposition to the President's policies had emerged earlier. Mark Sullivan, had spotted the beginnings of a split in the Democratic Party in 1936 before the end of the Roosevelt's first term in office when *the Baltimore Sun*, a newspaper well-respected among Southern Democrats, had spoken up against the President;<sup>173</sup> Sullivan had also expressed hopes a few months before the primaries that the President may decide to lead the new Democratic Congress in a manner they would accept rather than attempting to impose his will on them,<sup>174</sup> but those hopes were dashed when Roosevelt had made the decision to participate in the Democratic primaries.

Two of his central arguments to defend his decision to take an active role in party primaries was the idea that different parties should stand for different ideals so that the votes cast in favor of one of them can provide a sense of direction,<sup>175</sup> and the concern that voters were being misled into voting for candidates that were associated with platforms they did not support, or were outright untruthful about their political stance.<sup>176</sup> Both arguments raise the same question on how meaningful votes are when it is difficult to ascertain why they were cast in favor of a candidate. Could candidates who had been elected while facing opponents with identical platforms claim to represent the public will

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<sup>172</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 175-77.

<sup>173</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Southern Democracy," *The Decatur Daily Review*, September 16, 1936. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>174</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Looking Ahead," *Oakland Tribune*, April 17, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>175</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 125.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

when opposing views had not been represented to be voted on? Or, as Roosevelt's arguments seem focused on hinting, could candidates who had been associated with a party platform they did not agree with honestly claim that none of the votes they received had been cast with said platform in mind?

It could be argued that Roosevelt was essentially leaning more towards the delegate model of representation in his reasoning rather than the trustee model, positing that the public was electing their representatives with clear, if broad, goals in mind that they wished fulfilled; and he was proposing that the structures of political parties needed to shift in order to better understand what their voters wanted. His involvement in the primaries was to serve as an indicator on which Democrats were acting adequately as delegates of a public that wished to see the Democratic Party platform carried out. The voters' refusal to support the candidates Roosevelt favored can be read as an indication of their disagreement with this idea of representatives as delegates, and an expression of their trust in their incumbent trustees over the less-popular candidates the President had attempted to inject with some of his own public support. And while Roosevelt's stated goals would, in theory, increase the influence of the voters on their representatives; it is not difficult to imagine how it could just as easily result in an influx in partisan politics, with party members refusing to part from the party line even at the behest of their constituents for fear of presidential support for their opponents come the next primaries, disenfranchising voters rather than empowering them.

According to Rosenman, the lesson Roosevelt had learned from his defeat at the primaries was that as long as the Democratic Party was organized the way it had been in the past decades, it would always remain splintered; Rosenman remarks that the President

had begun to think that the fundamental solution to the problems he had been having with his party in pushing new reforms would be through a combination of the liberal forces present in both parties, and suggests that Roosevelt may have attempted to realign the two parties along the lines of liberalism and conservatism in his second term had his attention not been forced abroad by the outbreak of war in Europe.<sup>177</sup>

Both of Roosevelt's major defeats during this period, when read together with the setbacks suffered by the NRA during the President's first term, paint a picture of Roosevelt as a man with a hammer to whom everything appeared to be a nail. Rosenman recounts that Roosevelt frequently used the radio to call upon his constituents for their help against the Legislature during the time he spent as the governor of New York, describing the "flood of letters" that would "deluge" the members of the legislature after each radio talk as "...the best weapon Roosevelt had in his struggles for legislation."<sup>178</sup> It was then that Roosevelt had begun to use Fireside Chats as a handle with which he could wield the hammer of public opinion to break through obstacles in the way of the legislation he wished to implement. According to Geoffrey Storm, when Roosevelt had been inaugurated as governor of New York in 1929, "the radio industry was just beginning to mature,"<sup>179</sup> and Roosevelt was a pioneer in making political use of the medium. Explaining his perspective and appealing to the mass public through the radio seems to have been his preferred method of dealing with obstacles, even when it was not necessarily the best solution for a given problem.

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<sup>177</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 180-81.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>179</sup> Geoffrey Storm, "FDR and WGY: The Origins of the Fireside Chats" *New York History*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (2007), 179.

After reelection, President Roosevelt's first Fireside Chat during his second term in office was in defense of his proposal on the fifth of February to appoint a new judge for every judge past 70 that refused to retire.<sup>180</sup> The proposal was a surprise to almost everyone, including the Congress and some of his close advisors,<sup>181</sup> as it had only been discussed with the Attorney General and the Solicitor General as it was being formed, and was met with strong opposition by many in the Congress, the press and the Supreme Court itself.<sup>182</sup> Though it hadn't initially been cast as such in the President's proposal, that the measure's target was the Supreme Court, the conservative majority of which had struck down anti-depression measures as well as other progressive legislation,<sup>183</sup> consequently the opponents of the measure denounced it as "packing the Court."<sup>184</sup> The congressional opposition was led by the Democrats,<sup>185</sup> which infuriated Roosevelt after he'd led them to victory at the polls on a very liberal platform.<sup>186</sup>

The President delivered two major speeches in support of his controversial proposal, the first of which was on March 4 at a dinner of Democrats celebrating last November's victory, but it failed to rally the public support he sought.<sup>187</sup> Thus, he addressed the public on March 9, 1937 from the White House in the first Fireside Chat of his second term in office. This Fireside Chat was written with the assistance of Rosenman, Thomas Corcoran, Donald Richberg and Benjamin V. Cohen, this speech is

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<sup>180</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 83.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 156.

<sup>183</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 83.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 156-57.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 157-158.

also noted as being the last one on which significant work was done by Richberg.<sup>188</sup> President Roosevelt was very confident that he could win,<sup>189</sup> and he made his case for the necessity of change in a performance described by Russel D. Buhite and David W. Levy as among his “aggressive best.”<sup>190</sup> Yet, the public backing Roosevelt sought did not appear<sup>191</sup> and in its absence the debate dragged on, and the death of Senator Joseph Robinson of Arkansas, the leader of the congressional fight for the measure, caused further problems.<sup>192</sup> Samuel I. Rosenman argues that while the measure’s defeat had many factors behind it, it was the change in the Supreme Court’s decisions that was the most important cause; starting with upholding the states right to impose a minimum wage for women on March 29, the Court had made various rulings in favor of New Deal decisions throughout the spring; and this change of attitude made it impossible for even Roosevelt to convince the public of the necessity of immediate change.<sup>193</sup> Justice Owen Roberts had made the decision to change his position in December, which had turned the conservative majority into a minority, but it hadn’t been known outside the Court itself until the announcement on March 29.<sup>194</sup> And with the very conservative Justice Willis Van Devanter’s retirement on June 2, Roosevelt had the opportunity to assign a Supreme Court Justice for the first time and his Court proposal was buried.<sup>195</sup>

President Roosevelt opens the Fireside Chat of March 9, 1937 with a tone of fellowship, addressing the public as “My friends” and thanking them for their support

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>190</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 83.

<sup>191</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 160.

<sup>192</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 84.

<sup>193</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 160-61.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 161.

after his March 4 speech.<sup>196</sup> Without further delay, he immediately begins pointing out the economic recovery of the past 4 years made possible by the nullification of gold with congressional authority, which had come close to being overturned by the Supreme Court.<sup>197</sup> Roosevelt casts the event as a near-disaster, saying “In effect, four justices ruled that the right under a private contract to exact a pound of flesh was more sacred than the main objective of the Constitution to establish an enduring nation.,”<sup>198</sup> with the implication that some of the Justices did not care about the spirit of the Constitution. He uses the phrase “you and I” when he speaks of knowing better than to risk another Great Depression in 1933,<sup>199</sup> both further impressing on his audience a sense of familiarity with the President and making it clear that he credits the public’s prudence as well as his own, rather than using “we” which may have been mistaken for a reference solely to his administration. Having established that he views the public as participants in his policies, he then safely uses “we” for the rest of his reminiscing about how the decisions to enable government intervention in the economy and to reduce its abuses and inequalities in order to make it “bomb-proof” were made four years prior.<sup>200</sup> He then makes a dire warning that the economic recovery is accelerating enough that a repeat of the stock market crash of 1929 may be possible in the near future.<sup>201</sup> This serves both as the warning it’s worded as, and a boast that a the prosperity of the Gilded Age may not be far off; effectively reminding the public of both the rewards of New Deal policies and the risks of halting them to repeat the mistakes of the past. Having established the danger, Roosevelt

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<sup>196</sup> Roosevelt, "Defending the Plan to "Pack" the Court – March 9, 1937," 84-85.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

launches into the first of his arguments about the necessity of immediate change. He argues for the necessity of national legislation to complete his program, pointing out the failure of individual and state efforts a decade prior; he notes that legislation can take time that sometimes can't be afforded, reminding his audience that it was almost too late four years ago; he cites the public having voted in support of Roosevelt three times now as proof of their support of his policies; and he accuses the courts of casting doubt on elected Congress and jeopardizing its ability to protect citizens as they wish to be protected.<sup>202</sup> He describes the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government as a three-horse team and casts the American people themselves as the driver; whose will the horses must work together to carry out, with the implication that it is not he and his executive branch that the judiciary branch is obstructing by failing to work with the executive and legislative branches, but the public will.<sup>203</sup> He argues that the reason the Constitution was written exactly because the states themselves couldn't resolve problems on a national scale, and that the Congress was endowed with the authority for national action for this reason; he then turns to the first landmark case where the Court found a statute passed by the Congress to be unconstitutional on 1803, citing Justice Bushrod Washington's advice that the Court should not overrule the Congress unless the unconstitutionality of its actions is "proved beyond all reasonable doubt."<sup>204</sup> Roosevelt then attacks the Court's failure to grant reasonable doubt to New Deal legislations, quoting dissenting Justices Charles Evans Hughes and Harlan Fiske Stone to support his point; from there, he leads into his most damning accusation that the Court usurps

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-87.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

legislative powers by acting as a “super-legislature” and reading into the Constitution words and implications which are not there, and which were never intended to be there.”<sup>205</sup> He frames his Court proposal as a measure to “save the Constitution from the Court and the Court from itself.”<sup>206</sup> The President then moves to address arguments already made against his plan. According to Rosenman, the claim that correct way to deal with the problem was via constitutional amendment was the strongest of the opposition’s arguments,<sup>207</sup> which Roosevelt responds by quoting the last election’s Democratic platform, which he reads as a promise to only seek an amendment if there was no other way, and contests that to “infuse new blood into all our courts” is the only remaining way to resolve the problem without an amendment.<sup>208</sup> The President’s decision to quote the Democratic platform with which the election was won strengthens his narrative that casts him as a servant of the American people, but also carries the implicit accusation that the Democrats currently opposing him are failing to serve the public, as they are refusing to keep their campaign promises. He expounds on the need to bring in judges who possess a “present-day sense of the Constitution” and who will not overstep the bounds of the judiciary; and reminds the audience that forty-five out of the forty-eight states in the country are chosen for limited terms, and many of those have mandatory retirement ages, while federal judges are appointed for life and can continue as long as they choose.<sup>209</sup> He then outlines his plan to appoint an additional judge for any judge or justice of a federal court that chooses not to retire upon reaching the age of seventy, with the two goals of

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>207</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 159.

<sup>208</sup> Roosevelt, "Defending the Plan to "Pack" the Court – March 9, 1937," 89-90.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 90.

accelerating the work of the courts and appointing younger judges with first-hand experience on modern problems currently experienced by average citizens.<sup>210</sup> By describing his plan after mentioning existing practices of mandatory retirement ages and strict term limits, he positions himself as a moderate in comparison. Indeed, he outright says “There is nothing novel or radical about this idea.” and describes the role of the measure as one of maintenance, citing the Judiciary act of 1869 as precedent,<sup>211</sup> which had, among other things, increased the size of the Supreme Court and contained the first provision that allowed judges over the age of 70 to retire with their full salary, while also having had the stated goal of accelerating the federal justice system,<sup>212</sup> which Roosevelt had counted among his goals. He then points out that the opposition to his court plan only object to the plan where it effects the Supreme Court, and argues that, being the only judicial organ with no appeals, restraints that apply to lower courts should most definitely apply to the Supreme Court as well,<sup>213</sup> leaving the implication that his opposition does not truly care for the issue based on principles. From there, President Roosevelt leads into his response to the specific allegations that he intended to “pack” the Court, which he personally dictated due to being particularly sensitive about the accusation,<sup>214</sup> He opens by charging his accusers with attempting to “arouse prejudice and fear” and declaring his intent to “end all honest misunderstanding” on his aims; he then proclaims that no president and senate worthy of their office would appoint “spineless puppets” that’d disregard laws in favor of their benefactor and declares his intent to be the appointment

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>212</sup> “Landmark Legislation: Circuit Judgeships,” *Federal Judicial Center*, Accessed November 25, 2019, <https://www.fjc.gov/history/legislation/landmark-judicial-legislation-text-document-8>.

<sup>213</sup> Roosevelt, “Defending the Plan to “Pack” the Court – March 9, 1937,” 91.

<sup>214</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 160.

of “justices worthy to sit beside present members of the Court” who will “act as justices and not legislators” and that the majority of the public supports his goal.<sup>215</sup> The accusations he felt strongly about thus answered, his response to the argument that changing the number of justices by congressional authority lacks all the vitriol present before. He merely points out that the Congress always possessed the authority to change the number of Supreme Court justices, and that the precedent already exists, the number of justices having already been changed during the administrations of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant.<sup>216</sup> Roosevelt goes on to posit that the measures proposed by him are only mild changes based on clear principles, and argues that they’re a logical conclusion of existing laws that allow federal judges and justices to retire with full pay, which he interprets as a clear indicator that appointing younger judges and justices is clearly viewed as beneficial to the nation in principle.<sup>217</sup> Afterwards, he focuses on the current justices of the Supreme Court, pointing out that five of them will be over seventy-five, and one will be over seventy soon; which leads into his argument that his court plan is meant to be legal assurance against “chance and disinclination of individuals to leave the supreme bench” causing such an imbalance of ages in the Court again, not an attack on the Court but a restoration of it.<sup>218</sup> “...we cannot yield our constitutional destiny to the personal judgement of a few men who, being fearful of the future, would deny us the necessary means of dealing with the present.”<sup>219</sup> He expresses hope that a constitutional amendment will be unnecessary,

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<sup>215</sup> Roosevelt, "Defending the Plan to "Pack" the Court – March 9, 1937," 91.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-93.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

lamenting the difficulty of ratifying any amendment opposed by any major economic interest or party leader and that those who honestly believe an amendment to be the proper way to enact such change are being misled by those who insincerely support the idea with the intention of burying any proposed amendment in an effort to oppose progressive legislation.<sup>220</sup> He concludes his arguments with an assurance that the proposal will not infringe on civil and religious liberties, reminding his audience that appeals to the fear for liberty had previously been baselessly used by propagandists in opposition to the Social Security Act.<sup>221</sup> Finally, the President refers to the troubling international situation of 1937 for the first time in a Fireside Chat when he promises his audience in his closing remarks that "...in a world in which democracy is under attack, I seek to make American democracy succeed."<sup>222</sup>

David Lawrence, in a column written before but published after the broadcast, argues that the timing of President Roosevelt's attack on the Supreme Court taking place during the deliberations but before the decisions on several of the Court's cases relating to whether or not the Congress has the right to pass legislation penalizing "unfair labor practices," as well as the President making his case through public statements rather than a formal appeal both make it a serious departure from the customary way of expressing executive disagreement with the Court, implying that while he does not find it likely that the public controversy will affect the Court's judgement at this time, that the Court is being encouraged by the President to bow to political sentiment rather than the legal

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<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-94.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

merit of the cases at hand sets a dangerous precedent.<sup>223</sup> Lawrence then notes, in a column written after the Fireside Chat, that the President “has come at last into a defense of the real ground for his controversy,” pointing out that the President’s speech has failed to mention that the Court was unanimous in finding the NRA unconstitutional, which Lawrence suggests was the decision that Roosevelt is most anxious to reverse, and instead focused on the cases where Roosevelt agreed with the minority instead, comparing the President’s arguments to those made by Republicans who felt that the minority rather than the majority was right in response to Roosevelt’s election, but notes that it is generally good form to accept the majority decision anyway, implying that Roosevelt is acting like a sore loser; he also challenges Roosevelt’s claim that an amendment would take too long to pass and ratify, arguing that more controversial amendments have been ratified in as little as a year before, and that something as straightforward as a compulsory retirement age of seventy-five would not have nearly as much trouble, citing a university lecture given by current Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes after he had served as an associate justice, where Hughes had stated that compulsory retirement could easily be defended; he also points out that while the President is not wrong that further recovery and avoiding a crisis requires action, the Roosevelt administration has refused a series of proposals that suit the current Court’s understanding of the constitution by economists and businessmen advising the department of commerce, arguing that the bulk of the measures struck down by the Supreme Court have been relatively insignificant for the administration’s policies and insisting that the President’s real concern has always been reviving the unanimously

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<sup>223</sup> David Lawrence, “Today in Washington,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, March 10, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2020).

struck down NRA which would not be possible even with the six additional justices Roosevelt seeks; Lawrence finally attacks the President's description of the kind of justices he intends to appoint, pointing out that no justices ever concede the claim that they "override the judgement of Congress on legislative policy" and that Roosevelt would have no way of knowing in advance how any of his appointees would read the constitution unless he extracted promises on the matter from them beforehand, concluding that the President's Fireside Chat would only intensify the opposition of those "...who realize that a judicial system dictated by the executive as to the views the justices shall hold is no judicial system at all."<sup>224</sup> In another column published the same day, Lawrence remarks that while the President's Fireside Chat has the advantage of being plausible to the average citizen who is interested not in procedures and prolonged debate, but in quick results and assertive leadership, it must be kept in mind that Roosevelt's stated goal of efficient government has been achieved by Fascist dictatorships more directly than any other system; he argues that "the price of liberty is the cumbersomeness of democracy," citing Justice Brandeis' words that the inevitable friction between the three independent branches of government established by the separation of powers is the means through which the system aims to safeguard against arbitrary uses of power, noting that even if the President can cite his past track record to assure the public of that he will not infringe on religious liberties, he cannot give the same assurance for future presidents and congresses; he stresses that the age limitation introduced in the Court plan is not only an arbitrary one and can be substituted with any number of similarly arbitrary limitations by future administrations, but is also plainly unconstitutional as the

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<sup>224</sup> David Lawrence, "Today in Washington," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, March 11, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2020).

constitution states that justices are to serve for life; Lawrence suggests that while the President speaks of preventing another disaster like the Great Depression, he is asking for no additional powers related to the economy that the Congress has not already granted him and that additional power over the Court will not be of use for this purpose even if he does achieve it.<sup>225</sup>

Mark Sullivan notes that Catholic and Lutheran periodicals and clergymen oppose President Roosevelt's Court plan because they were reminded fairly recently that the majority is not always in the right and the Supreme Court is there to protect the minority in these cases, comparing Roosevelt's stance that the Court should uphold legislation supported by the majority of the public to the position of the majority in a 1922 Oregon state legislation accepted by referendum which would indirectly ban private schools by making public schooling compulsory, a piece of legislation struck down by the Supreme Court; a case that many religious opinion leaders recall, in which the majority was kept from discriminating against the minority in a time of extensive suspicion towards religious institutions.<sup>226</sup> In another column, Sullivan notes that many commentators draw parallels between Roosevelt's Court plan and Wilson's advocacy of the League of Nations, but notes that the determined minority that defeated Wilson's League proposal was made up of exceptionally determined people, and suggests that the fate of the Court fight will depend on how earnestly it is opposed.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> David Lawrence, "Lawrence Comment," *The La Crosse Tribune*, March 11, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2020).

<sup>226</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Affairs in the Nation," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 16, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2020).

<sup>227</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Affairs in the Nation," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 21, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2020).

Walter Lippmann announces that the constitutional crisis involves “the greatest of all public questions,” the form of government as well as the fundamental rights of the people, acknowledging that it is indeed apparent, by the dissenting opinions of justices on how much the Congress’ powers should be affected by them, that the Supreme Court has indeed reached beyond the strict definition of its function of judicial review according to the constitution, but arguing that President Roosevelt’s proposed solution of packing the court with people certain to regard any of his future actions as constitutional would not only fail to solve the actual problem but would accomplish nothing but give the President free rein “by destroying the integrity of the court;” Lippmann proposes that to truly increase the effectiveness of representative government and increase its ability to regulate the economy by making the Constitution more flexible on these matters, while avoiding damage to the independence of the judiciary and the safeguards protecting the citizens’ rights, a combination of the Wheeler-Bone amendment that prescribes that an act of Congress outlawed by the Supreme Court should be able to be passed afterwards by a two-thirds majority vote in the Congress as long as a general election has occurred since the Court ruling and Senator Norris’ plan to increase the majority that the Supreme Court requires to outlaw acts of Congress.<sup>228</sup> Lippmann challenges the President’s statement in his Fireside Chat that an appeal to the Constitution on the Supreme Court’s conduct should be made, pointing out that the constitutional amendment is the method of such an appeal and that the President’s current Court plan is currently avoiding this, accusing Roosevelt’s “clarification” of his election platform in his Fireside Chat that his pledge was to only to seek an amendment if all else fails being, in the President’s own words, “a

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<sup>228</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, March 10, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

tortured construction” of his solemn promise to the people, and pointing out that the President has only begun to acknowledge the very real danger of another crash “in a year or two” once his judiciary plan began to face opposition; Lippmann argues that this constitutional crisis has nothing to do with preventing another crash because the President already possesses all the powers necessary to avert such a disaster, and that the actual reason Roosevelt is in a clash with the Supreme Court has more to do with how he lacks the power for “the reform of deep-seated social evils,” and notes that the President couldn’t answer the “unanswered challenge” of poverty “in a year or two” even if he “had the powers of Mussolini and Stalin combined,”<sup>229</sup> noting that while he speaks of immediate dangers, the reforms he suggests couldn’t be completed in less than two decades,<sup>230</sup> emphasizing that many who oppose Roosevelt’s Court plan agree that the President requires more powers to push through the long-range reforms necessary for that but take issue with the “act of lawless legality” through which the Roosevelt is attempting to proceed, and stresses that the purpose of a constitutional system is specifically to ensure that the liberty of the people is never up to the personal assurances the President attempts to provide in his Fireside Chat,<sup>231</sup> and suggests that the real reason that Roosevelt is engaging in such a reckless gamble may be because he fears the creeping inflation that threatens to get out of hand all over the world and believes he will need the power to control prices and wages keep it under control.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 12, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

<sup>230</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, the Evening News, Wilkes-Barre Record*, March 15, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

<sup>231</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 12, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

<sup>232</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, the Evening News, Wilkes-Barre Record*, March 15, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

The Fireside Chat of October 12, 1937 was primarily meant to outline and gather support for the proposal President Roosevelt intended to put before the Congress the following month.<sup>233</sup> His efforts to pass a series of economic legislation that is sometimes referred to as the Second New Deal had been a “bitter and difficult fight”; the damage his popular support and prestige had suffered due to his defeated Court proposal as well as the recession that had begun was making his job more difficult; with his opponents holding Roosevelt, who took great pride in the economic recovery during his first term, personally responsible for the recession, charging him with crimes such as “strangling business” and “ruining confidence” with his reforms.<sup>234</sup> In contrast, Roosevelt believed that the recession was caused by overproduction, a too-quick increase in prices and a too-quick reduction in government action and that more government reform was needed to resolve the problem.<sup>235</sup> After a trip through the country to gauge public opinion, he called the Congress into an Extraordinary Session in November to reconsider his legislation, which had previously been turned down during regular session in July.<sup>236</sup> He hoped that by delivering his Fireside Chat while Congressmen were at home in their districts, he could have their constituents pressure them and impress upon them their desire for action.<sup>237</sup> Both the Fireside Chat and the formal message to the Congress on the same matter, were worked on by Rosenman, Thomas Corcoran and Benjamin Cohen, with William Bullitt also assisting with writing the Fireside Chat.<sup>238</sup> After the speech, the reforms which he described as an effort to secure the prosperity attained in the past four

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<sup>233</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 96.

<sup>234</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 169.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

years, were initially met by the combined resistance of Republican conservatives and southern Democrats; but by January 1938, it would become impossible to ignore a worsening recession and the Congress would allow Roosevelt to enact his reforms to combat it.<sup>239</sup> This Fireside Chat also touched upon the deteriorating international situation, being broadcast a week after the President's famous "quarantine" speech to a predominantly isolationist nation that desired reassurance.<sup>240</sup>

He first begins by informing his audience of the special session of the Congress on November 15, to give them an opportunity to consider his legislation before the regular session in January so that a lengthy session extending through the summer can be avoided.<sup>241</sup> He argues that, despite how some "enemies of democracy" may call it "bad for business" and the "tranquility of the country" to have a special session, an essential part of democratic government such as a session of Congress can never be an intrusion in a democratic nation.<sup>242</sup> With his defense of the special session itself concluded, he moves onto the issues of the day. He opens his arguments with a mention of his recent trip through the country due to anyone proposing or judging national policy requiring firsthand knowledge of the country, which leads into the responsibilities of a president to consider not just sections but the entirety of the nation and not just current situations but future possibilities as well.<sup>243</sup> Throughout the Fireside Chat, his trip through the country serves as a framing device he uses to lead into topics and bring up specific examples he personally witnessed during his trips to support his points. He then remarks that both

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<sup>239</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 96-97.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "New Proposals at Home, Frightening Storm Clouds Abroad – October 12, 1937," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 97.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

peace and prosperity need to be “sound and permanent,”<sup>244</sup> an idea which forms the core that the President builds his arguments around in this Fireside Chat. He speaks of his impression during his trip of how well the average citizen seems to understand the broad strokes of his policies and objectives, saying “Five years of fierce discussion and debate, five years of information through the radio and the moving picture, have taken the whole nation to school in the nation’s business.”<sup>245</sup> His observation of the people’s keen interest in government affairs was one Roosevelt took pride in, as he believed that his speeches and Fireside Chats had greatly contributed to said interest.<sup>246</sup> He continues to remark that this processes helped foster a sense of national community, and that it had taught the country to think as a nation and to feel themselves as a nation.<sup>247</sup> Roosevelt then remarks on the optimism he witnessed in his trip, as it had been a good year for most; but argues that this prosperity was not yet fully stabilized, that efforts to prevent excessive agricultural surpluses and to set minimum wages and maximum hours as well as put an end to child labor had all been hindered.<sup>248</sup> Notably, the President uses “the people of the United States” as the subject of the sentence being prevented from taking these measures,<sup>249</sup> casting these efforts as the public will as clearly as possible. He casts the hindrance of these efforts as a reason for the continued poverty still present in the United States, argues that the public wants the government “not to stop governing” due to recovery and that the government is viewed as “organized self-help.”<sup>250</sup> Amply armed

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

<sup>246</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 169.

<sup>247</sup> Roosevelt, "New Proposals at Home, Frightening Storm Clouds Abroad – October 12, 1937," 99.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

with his part in dealing with the Great Depression, Roosevelt has no trouble charging his critics in charge of businesses with hypocrisy. He first attacks his detractors in the financial and railroad sectors, who benefited from government help when their businesses were being bailed out in 1933, but now are adamant that government should stay out of the economy.<sup>251</sup> As he moves on to discuss his intended agricultural policy, he responds to criticisms of his crop surplus control plans by big manufacturers, accusing them of objecting to “economy of scarcity” but being quick to fire their employees and reduce the public’s purchasing power when “it is their baby who has the measles.”<sup>252</sup> He proposes that crop surplus control will serve to stabilize food prices everywhere in the long run.<sup>253</sup> For his land use policy, he gives the examples of the Boise Valley in Idaho that provides for thousands of victims of the Dust Bowl from across the nation and Grand Coulee Dam in the state of Washington the half of which had been built by materials purchased from over two-thousand miles away in the country, to illustrate that while projects by the program may be taking place in a handful of specific places, they benefited people across the country; and uses the scope of these projects as a springboard to his proposal to increase the efficiency of the administrative and executive branches of government, which he describes as a “higgledy-piggledy patchwork of duplicate responsibilities and overlapping powers,” and argues that while the democratic process is expected to be slower than the dictatorial, modern programs need modern machinery to carry out.<sup>254</sup> The President then makes his case for establishing minimum wages and maximum working hours, arguing that both employers and employees would benefit from it in the long run,

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<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-100.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-01.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 101-03.

with workers enjoying better pay and hours being able to afford a better standard of living for themselves and to significantly bolster internal demand for the products sold by their employers; farsighted businessmen already know this, he says, and most businessmen are aware that the government has no intention of destroying their profits and businesses, but merely means to make property more secure by giving “every family a real chance to have a property stake in the nation,” casting his detractors in business as a handful of alarmists who wish to “regain control over American life.”<sup>255</sup> He portrays “private monopolies and financial oligarchies” rather than government action as the real threat to business, whom the present anti-trust laws are inadequate to restrain, with the government working to free legitimate businesses of the shackles of monopolists by improving said laws.<sup>256</sup> Concluding his efforts to rally support for his legislation, he moves to allay the fears stirred up by his “quarantine” speech. The general public did not share Roosevelt’s wariness about the international situation’s ability to affect them without the United States choosing to get involved according to Rosenman who described the public sentiment “To the American people the clouds- so small and so far off in the horizon- were hardly noticeable.,”<sup>257</sup> the public instead feared a repeat of the events of the American entry into the First World War, with Roosevelt being accused of wanting to entangle the nation in foreign disputes once more.<sup>258</sup> Thus, the President had to establish how the nation could be harmed by events it did not willingly entangle itself in. He opens his argument by linking the international situation with domestic prosperity which had been the main focus of the day; noting that the prosperity currently present is in no small

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 103-04.

<sup>257</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 168.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 171.

part thanks to foreign trade which another world war abroad would surely disrupt.<sup>259</sup> He suggests that the United States needs the continuation of a civilized world so that future generations of Americans can also enjoy a lasting peace; arguing that “aloofness from war isn’t promoted by unawareness of war” and that in a “world of mutual suspicion” peace needs to be actively pursued; he posits that world peace depended on international cooperation and on nations accept some fundamental decencies in their relations, which he points out as the reason that the United States will attend the upcoming conference of the Nine Power Treaty of 1922 concerning the renewed Japanese aggression in China.<sup>260</sup> Confident that he can dodge the mistakes that drew the United States into the war in 1917,<sup>261</sup> he seeks to reassure the public by bringing up his post as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, saying that he was in close proximity with international affairs between 1913 and 1921, and learned very well what not to do and concludes this Fireside Chat with the words “America hates war. America hopes for peace. Therefore, America actively engages in the search for peace.”<sup>262</sup> According to Rosenman, this section of the speech, penned personally by Roosevelt, despite being meant to be an assurance that no matter what came, the United State wouldn’t physically enter a war, was left as vague as it is on the President’s insistence even though his speechwriters suggested it should be more explicit.<sup>263</sup>

Mark Sullivan comments that this Fireside Chat seemed “deliberately undramatic” and on unsurprising topics with the same, familiar arguments if expressed

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<sup>259</sup> Roosevelt, "New Proposals at Home, Frightening Storm Clouds Abroad – October 12, 1937," 104.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-05.

<sup>261</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 171-72.

<sup>262</sup> Roosevelt, "New Proposals at Home, Frightening Storm Clouds Abroad – October 12, 1937," 105.

<sup>263</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 172.

less forcefully than before, and adds that General Hugh Johnson the former head of the NRA, spoke on the radio only a few minutes after the President with his prepared responses to, presumably, an advance copy of the Fireside Chat, where he “hammers home the truth about taxes” that they would increase the cost of living and suggests that the President was hinting that he intended to seek a third term with his phrase on “some future president.”<sup>264</sup>

Westbrook Pegler deduces, based on some comments in First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt’s column, that Thomas Corcoran was present in the White House and was likely working on the Fireside Chat on the night before the broadcast, and characterizes the Fireside Chat as Thomas Corcoran addressing “his subjects on the state of the nation” through the President.<sup>265</sup>

Walter Lippmann reaches a conclusion concerning the crisis similar to but different than the one reached by the President, noting that while the administration reduced its spending and began to balance the budget while expecting private investment to fill the gap it left, it also terrified private enterprise by following its New Deal pincer of an alliance between a strong government and powerful organized labor with the Court fight, which, he suggests, created the impression among businessmen that Roosevelt intended to abolish all existing restrictions on the political control of private enterprise; he advises that either public standing must be increased or taxes reduced, and that he must discard the “New Deal pincers” by reducing his support for organized labor and

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<sup>264</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Sullivan Finds President to be Less Dramatic,” *The Nebraska State Journal*, October 15, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>265</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 16, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

reassuring investors that he has laid aside the purposes behind the attempt to pack the Supreme Court.<sup>266</sup>

The Fireside Chat on November 14, 1937 was a shorter one, matching the narrowness of its scope. It was President Roosevelt's effort to rally popular support for a National Unemployment Census, due to private censuses conducted by counting agencies yielding wildly different results.<sup>267</sup> The Census did not turn out to be very successful, and while a later house-to-house survey calculate results adding 3,047,088 to the National Unemployment Census' findings of 7,822,912 unemployed and partially-employed citizens, the recession would soon render both figures obsolete as unemployment drastically increased.<sup>268</sup>

Roosevelt brings up to topic without delay, opening with his intent to appeal to the people to help the government carry out an important task that is an essential part of the government's aim of achieving full employment.<sup>269</sup> He acknowledges that unwilling unemployment, or "enforced idleness" as he calls it, is a complex and difficult problem that has existed since the dawn of the industrial age and that plagues every civilized nation; and that while some countries have solved it with large armament programs, the United States would look for another way.<sup>270</sup> He points out that while "as a nation, we adopted the policy that no unemployed man or woman can be permitted to starve for lack of aid," this measure falls short of permanently solving this problem; which could be

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<sup>266</sup> Walter Lippmann, "What is Happening?," *The Decatur Daily Review*, October 27, 1937. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>267</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 106.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Supporting the Unemployment Census – November 14, 1937," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 106-107.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

accomplished by finding suitable jobs for all, but planning for that would require information not currently available; he adds that employers as well as employees and the government would have to participate in planning such an economy in order to avoid any overproduction crises,<sup>271</sup> linking the problem with the more extreme case the public had lived through not long ago. He stresses that the census will be entirely voluntary, as is the most democratic way to conduct one, and expresses confidence that with the government doing everything possible to inform them the people need only to listen to their sense of self-interest and responsibility as citizens.<sup>272</sup> He then describes the process where every home will receive a card with fourteen questions, meant to be filled and sent back only by unemployed and partly-employed citizens, but entreats employed citizens to offer help and encouragement to their unemployed neighbors.<sup>273</sup> He assures his listeners that the information they put on the card will neither be treated as an application for relief or some unspecified job nor be used against them in any way, describing the census as a “neighborly” effort to find solutions.<sup>274</sup> He then addresses the issue of unemployment as a whole, pointing out that prosperity requires that people have purchasing power so that they may consume what is produced, arguing that unemployment concerns everyone and is a problem that needs to be discussed with logic rather than prejudice and concludes this Fireside Chat with an appeal to national unity in the face of a problem that the nation certainly possesses the resources to solve and expressing that people have an inherent right to work.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

The economic recovery experienced until late in the summer of 1937 had been significant; industrial productivity had increased by 80 percent since 1932 but still fell short of the level it had been at in 1929, and agricultural income had almost reached the heights it had in 1929; nonetheless, improvement had been so great that President Roosevelt had felt safe enough to attempt to balance the federal budget by cutting back on government recovery efforts, such as reducing farm subsidies and the funding of the Work Progress Administration, and disallowing Reconstruction Finance Corporation from making new commitments, the federal deficit dropping from \$4.36 billion to \$2.70 billion in a year; however, these sudden belt-tightening measures proved to be more than what the recovery could handle, triggering an economic downturn that left nearly 4 million workers unemployed, with the industrial index and the stock market falling significantly.<sup>276</sup> The purpose of the Fireside Chat on April 14, 1938 was simply to inform the public of the nature of the problem, what was being done and why; it was one of the fastest written of Roosevelt's speeches, due to being delivered during a very busy period for the President, broadcast after the message to the Congress delivered earlier on the same day.<sup>277</sup> This Fireside Chat was revised and worked on by Rosenman, Thomas Corcoran, Grace Tully, Dorothy Jones and Harry Hopkins after the President had dictated the initial draft.<sup>278</sup> The message had asked the Congress for increased public spending to combat the recession, the Congress would acquiesce to President Roosevelt's requests and the economy would enter recovery once more.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 111.

<sup>277</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 173-74.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 111-12.

Roosevelt opens this Fireside Chat with warm greetings and laments being unable to delay the speech until the following week, after the holidays; but expresses that the urgency of the situation and its importance to people's lives prevented him from doing so.<sup>280</sup> He notes that after four and a half years of recovery, in the past seven months the economy had suffered a "visible setback," and that after waiting to see whether the private sector could combat the recession, it had become clear that this was not a problem that the government could risk not acting to resolve.<sup>281</sup> He is quick to reassure his audience that this recession is not another Great Depression, and after listing several ways in which the situation is not as dire as that of five years before he points out that now, the government now recognized and was recognized having a function to provide relief.<sup>282</sup> The President acknowledges that many of the audience suffered, and that the difficulties of the recession are unevenly distributed, "But I conceive the first duty of government is to protect the economic welfare of all the people in all sections and in all groups."<sup>283</sup> He recounts a promise he'd made in his message opening the last session of the Congress, notifying them that the government would act if the private sector did not provide the employment needed by the people.<sup>284</sup> Then, with the memories of the Great Depression stirred up thanks to his earlier reassurances, he presents the need for government action in terms of a lesson learned from tragedy: "We have all learned the lesson that government cannot afford to wait until it has lost the power to act."<sup>285</sup> He

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<sup>280</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Combatting the 1937-1938 Recession – April 14, 1938," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 112.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

continues on what was learned from the crisis, quoting the same day's message to the Congress that pointed out that "overspeculation in and overproduction of" virtually all goods without a matching increase in the purchasing power of the public, leading to reduced production and skyrocketing unemployment, resulting in the collapse of the economy.<sup>286</sup> He cites the reduction in national income from 1929's \$81 billion to 1932's \$38 billion and its recovery there to \$68 billion in early 1937, but points out that "the very vigor of the recovery" in early 1937 had brought with it the problems that had led to the crash in the first place; giving the example of the overproducing automotive sector, which had increased its production, thus its demand for materials, which had also resulted in overproduction of these goods as well; he then points out the sudden increases in copper and steel prices as further examples of undesirable practices, citing how in some cases prices rose so high in the summer of 1937 that the people consuming them simply stopped doing so; with the combined effects of these ills resulting in continuous layoffs so dire that all parties involved from the banks and businesses to the government and the workers agree on the need for government action.<sup>287</sup> Roosevelt then stresses the need for economic security for the public, as amidst all of these systemic problems, there lie human beings with human problems and whether they can feel safe that they have the opportunity to work and feed their families will determine the well-being of the nation as a whole; promising to do all in his power to provide said security.<sup>288</sup> He then posits that the American people possess "a deep conviction" in the necessity of fair business practices for a secure prosperity and that neither the Congress nor the President can or

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<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-15.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

should deny the public will by taking steps back on New Deal reforms; and argues that while new problems require new solutions, maintaining what has been gained is both possible and advisable.<sup>289</sup> He then repeats his recommendation to the Congress of three groups of measures to combat recession, adamant that all of them need to be taken together, asserting that “You and I cannot afford to equip ourselves with two rounds of ammunition where three rounds are necessary.”<sup>290</sup> The groups of measures he recommends are to increase the funding of government relief programs such as Works Progress Administration, Farm Security Administration, National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps in order to maintain the same efficiency in the face of increased unemployment; additional bank reserves for credit purposes freed up by reducing the reserves required by the Federal Reserve Board; and finally to provide more work to the population by allocating greater funds to a variety of public projects from slum clearance projects, to expanding the federal aid highways, to flood control and reclamation efforts.<sup>291</sup> The President emphasizes that not just immediate economic needs but also personal liberties are to be protected during this struggle; noting that democracy disappeared in other nations not because people disliked it but because they had grown weary of unemployment, insecurity and starvation brought about government inaction and lack of leadership, leading them to sacrifice their freedoms in desperation.<sup>292</sup> He insists that democratic institutions can protect their people from the ills that drive them to desperation, but that it takes a determined government used efficiently to take bold action to accomplish that; he points out that dictatorships grow not out of strong, successful

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<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-16.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-17.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-18.

governments but those that fail to protect the interests of its people and that democracies succeed when a democratic government can protect its people and their livelihoods; he adds that such a government requires a people strong and well informed enough to maintain sovereign control over it.<sup>293</sup> This refusal to forfeit democracy for economic welfare was one of Roosevelt's favorite themes,<sup>294</sup> which he aptly summarizes as "We are a rich nation; we can afford to pay for security and prosperity without having to sacrifice our liberties into the bargain"<sup>295</sup> in his closing sentence for this line of argument. Rosenman notes that this part of the speech reflected Roosevelt's strong determination, which those working with him could feel as he consulted with others and searched for solutions which he could then implement in the form of quick, decisive actions.<sup>296</sup> He then harkens back to the early days of the United States, when the nation was poor in capital, industry and workers, but rich in land and resources and government subsidized private enterprise by giving land and resources; he then points out that while the country now lacks vast tracts of unused land and unclaimed natural resources, it now possesses everything it once lacked in abundance; he casts government subsidies to get private enterprise back on track as "following tradition as well as necessity;" and while he acknowledges that it will be costly to end the recession this way, he argues it would be costlier to let it continue, pointing out that national income has dropped by \$12 billion since the recession began; he reminds his audience of the worries expressed about government expenditure in the early days of his administration and how it led to a richer, rather than a poorer country in the end, with government spending having acted as the

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 173-74.

<sup>295</sup> Roosevelt, "Combatting the 1937-1938 Recession – April 14, 1938," 118.

<sup>296</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 174.

trigger for much greater private investment.<sup>297</sup> He points out that as national income recovers, government will expend less and taxes will accumulate, eventually resulting in profit; a prosperity, which the entire public, “the people at the bottom as well as the people at the top,” are entitled to benefit from as it will be their money that has been invested; from there he reiterates the wages and hours laws he’d been fighting to pass for months, portraying it as a measure “to ensure a better distribution of our prosperity, a better distribution of available work, and a sounder distribution of buying power.”<sup>298</sup> Roosevelt then acknowledges that his administration’s earlier attempt to pay off the national debt met with failure, and assures the public that the new additions to national debt, which will amount to less than \$1.5 billion, will not be a cause for concern, since they will return to the nation through the improved purchasing power of its citizens, which would be necessary to pay off the existing national debt as well; and he continues that since the current income of citizens is not enough to drive the economy faster, it’ll take the government supplementing the regular process to attain the prosperity needed to balance the federal budget.<sup>299</sup> He then calls for unity as he echoes that the mistakes of 1929 should be avoided in the recovery process, overproduction and overspeculation chief among them, and acknowledges that government alone cannot accomplish this, and must work with business to overcome such obstacles; he proposes that with the nation as a whole is equipped with the money, resources and skill; and that the deciding factor will be a national will to act, because “Our capacity is limited only by our ability to work together;” he continues his call for national unity, asserting that “the discipline of a

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<sup>297</sup> Roosevelt, "Combatting the 1937-1938 Recession – April 14, 1938," 118-20.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-21.

democracy” should be shared by every citizen of the United States, that everyone must stay aware “that immoderate statements, appeals to prejudice, the creation of unkindness are offenses not against an individual or individuals, but offenses against the whole population of the United States,” as are attempts by any group to leverage their position to gain more from the common fund than their share; arguing that “There can be no dictatorship by an individual or by a group in this nation, save through division fostered by hate” and that a well-informed public opinion that knows better than to be tricked by propaganda and better than to believe hostility is a helpful part of public affairs is necessary to avoid that.<sup>300</sup> President Roosevelt concludes this Fireside Chat by emphasizing that he never allows himself to forget that he lives in a house owned by all the people of the United States, that he’s always careful to look past the official aspect of matters and see the human problems underneath, that he makes time to listen to all points of view brought to his attention; he calls out to his listeners “My friends, my enemies, my daily mail, bring to me reports of what you are thinking and hoping.” and asks them for their input so that he may always avoid being blinded by his high office to “an intimate knowledge” of the hopes and fears of the public.<sup>301</sup> Rosenman acknowledges that these concluding paragraphs would have sounded “corny” if delivered by a less gifted speaker, but for Roosevelt “...they expressed the deep, sincere, warm emotions of a leader who was terribly concerned about the millions of human beings whose welfare was so greatly affected by the policies of the government he led.”<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 121-22.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 122-23.

<sup>302</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 175.

David Lawrence criticizes the economic policy proposed by the President in his Fireside Chat as a “magic philosophy of new economics” that generates an artificial income by borrowing money and objects to any further efforts at increasing the national income via “pump priming,” suggesting that balancing the budget should be prioritized over attempts to stimulate the economy via “pump priming” as the latter has already proven to be a failure; he compares the President’s “magic philosophy” to the “new era” Wall Street circles used to discuss shortly before the crash in 1929, citing Roosevelt’s own words to the Congress in the day following his very first Fireside Chat as president that all of economic recovery rested on the government’s “unimpaired credit” and that “liberal governments have been wrecked on the rocks of loose fiscal policy” too often, asserting that the President Roosevelt of 1933 made more sense than the President Roosevelt of 1938;<sup>303</sup> he also accuses Roosevelt of ignoring the “great constructive plans” presented to him as alternatives to his disastrous course of more and more inflation-via-pump-priming out of a desire to avoid admitting to errors and potentially losing his party seats in the upcoming congressional election, and of concealing the “frightful” economic effects of the current taxes and increasingly massive bank deposits because “capital, in the form of savings, is stagnant in utter fear;”<sup>304</sup> and in a column published a few days afterwards, Lawrence suggests that there is reason to believe that Roosevelt is using undue influence on the members of the house committee discussing a tax revision bill to reduce taxes on savings and thrift to keep them in a deadlock and to prevent them from taking the matter to the house to be voted on, in defiance of what he

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<sup>303</sup> David Lawrence, “Lawrence Comment,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, April 16, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>304</sup> David Lawrence, “Today in Washington,” *The Daily Courier*, April 16, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

describes as a “nation-wide sentiment” for tax revision, accusing the President of being “a dictator in the American sense.”<sup>305</sup>

Walter Lippmann’s stance on the President’s economic policy is that there exists a gap between the policies proposed and what Roosevelt claims them to be, and that they are essentially “a great expansion of private borrowing and investment, assisted by a moderate amount of pump-priming expenditure” rather than the inflationary spending by the government that the President portrays them as; Lippmann suggests that the President may have misunderstood the programs his advisors convinced him to accept, as the proposals do not involve more than a trifling increase to present expenditures, with the only “quick and significant” spending proposed being through new WPA projects which will take months before any significant expenditures on wages or materials begin; the real additions of the program proposed, he points out, will be through private spending of money that will now be able to be borrowed from the banks and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, but, he adds, this will only help if private businesses do borrow and use the additional funds made available to them, criticizing the President’s failure to notice that private investment needs to be incentivized and that simply increasing the money available to be borrowed will otherwise take too long to produce results, and proposes that a revision of the tax system to incentivize debtors and investors to take the risk of borrowing or lending new money, because the current system greatly reduces potential profits without reducing the risks nearly as much, along with a reduction of

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<sup>305</sup> David Lawrence, “Lawrence Comment,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, April 19, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

government favoritism in collective bargaining and making peace with the utilities and railroads are the minimal measures necessary to make the program succeed.<sup>306</sup>

“Am I nuts or did I hear little Joe Goebbels speaking the other night...” says Westbrook Pegler as the opening of his discussion on Roosevelt’s words condemning “immoderate statement” and “appeals to prejudice” and the “creation of unkindness” in the Fireside Chat broadcast a few days before the publishing of his column, explaining the comparison by noting that it’s part of the Nazi propaganda minister’s job to suppress these same things in Germany except by the members of the Nazi regime on the grounds of patriotism and national unity, asserting that the most influential appeals to prejudice in the United States have come from the President and the members of his administration, suggesting that unless statement on this topic was meant to be an apology, the implication is that only the government is allowed to use such statements against its critics, as is the case in Italy and Germany; Pegler acknowledges that there have been publishers that “have been viciously and untruthfully partisan against the president” just as there have been those who have sold out “to evils of the New Deal,” but points out that Roosevelt’s words seem like they were meant to encourage suspicion against his critics and proposes that if the President had meant for moderation to be applied across the board, he should have clarified that this was his aim.<sup>307</sup>

The Fireside Chat of June 24, 1938 had several highlights; while President Roosevelt began with a fairly ordinary “report card” on the successes and failures of the

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<sup>306</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *Big Spring Daily Herald*, April 19, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>307</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough,” *The Bristol Herald Courier*, April 19, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

Seventy-fifth Congress, this would be the Fireside Chat where he put forth his own definitions of “conservative” and “liberal,” where he declared victory in the Court fight of the year before and where he compared the opponents of the New Deal with the Copperheads who opposed the Lincoln administration in the early-1860s; but all of these would be pushed aside by the President’s announcement that he would play an active role in the upcoming Democratic primary elections.<sup>308</sup> By the middle of 1938, most of the reforms Roosevelt had proposed had passed; there was a new farm program, the wages and hours bill, a ban on child labor and a commission to study monopolies and the concentration of economic power; and the economy would begin to improve significantly by December.<sup>309</sup> But Roosevelt was troubled that he had had to fight both Democrats and Republicans to get his laws passed; as there was a bloc of mostly southern conservative Democrats who joined with Republicans to consistently vote against his policies.<sup>310</sup> While the President’s opponents called it a “purge,” Rosenman insists that Roosevelt had no intention of keeping voters from electing the representatives they wanted to be represented by and mainly wished to clarify which Democrats weren’t supporting his administration and the Democratic platform on which they’d been elected and hoped that their constituents wouldn’t re-elect them; Roosevelt had a great deal of animosity towards the “shenanigans” of politicians willing to run with him on a liberal platform and then vote against the pledges of that platform once elected, and he had been nursing a personal resentment towards them since his defeats in the Court fight and the Extraordinary Session of 1937, the latter of which Rosenman views as the point when the idea for the

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<sup>308</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 124.

<sup>309</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 175.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-176.

“purge” had begun to form; but more importantly, Roosevelt felt that the reactionary Democrats were doing permanent harm to the nation by blocking policies and laws he believed to be necessary to both raise the living standards of the United States and to make the country strong enough to handle the next Great War that he saw on the horizon.<sup>311</sup> In turn, the conservative Democrats of the American South saw him as “a liberal meddler in the carpetbag tradition” and feared he might even meddle in race relations; fears which their willingness to voice helped them win in the primary elections despite the President’s endorsement of their opponents, alongside their better, more entrenched organizations and the scandal of the administration directing WPA spending in favor of its favorites.<sup>312</sup> According to Rosenman, it was the President’s resentment that blinded him to the risks this plan bore against his standing and prestige; and an excess of confidence on the part of both Roosevelt and some of his advisors, Thomas Corcoran, Harry Hopkins and Harold Ickes among them, led them to bet on the hope that they could use the leverage of preventing some of the conservative Democrats from being re-elected to convince the others to capitulate.<sup>313</sup> With that in mind, President Roosevelt would endorse the opponents of several conservative Democrats in the Senate and the House, and while he focused the most on toppling Walter George of Georgia, Millard Tydings of Maryland and Ellison “Cotton Ed” Smith of South Carolina.<sup>314</sup> While the President’s personal appeal and logic were compelling, they were outdone by the personal relationships the popular politicians he was attempting to defeat shared with their constituents, the effective and entrenched political machinery they possessed, and the fact

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 176-177.

<sup>312</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 124-25.

<sup>313</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 176-77.

<sup>314</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 125.

that most of the candidates supported by Roosevelt lacked the following needed to generate enough votes to compete with their opponents,<sup>315</sup> even with a President as popular as Roosevelt attempting to share his popularity.<sup>316</sup> Furthermore, Roosevelt had to surpass the public's resentment at having national figures interfering with local politics in places where they were outsiders; indeed, the only major victory he won would be the liberal James H. Fay's victory against the conservative Congressman John J. O'Connor of New York,<sup>317</sup> where he had previously been a major part of local politics and served as governor. He would not forget the lesson of this defeat, and would refrain from another attempt; and would come to realize that the increasing splintering of the Democratic Party between conservatives and liberals would always remain as long as the party organization remained as it had for the past seven decades.<sup>318</sup> This defeat in the primaries would be followed by further conservative gains in both Senate and Congress as Republicans enjoyed greater success and won more seats than they held in the November elections, making it very difficult to pass any kind of reform legislation.<sup>319</sup>

This Fireside Chat opens with improvisation on the President's part,<sup>320</sup> where he muses that the night's broadcast will be referred to as a "fireside talk" in spite of taking place during one of the hottest nights he's ever felt in Washington DC,<sup>321</sup> which helps establish the conversational tone of the speech. He then moves onto the first of his goals for the night, "to report to the real rulers of this country: the voting public."<sup>322</sup> He

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<sup>315</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 179.

<sup>316</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 125.

<sup>317</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 179-80.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>319</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 125.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>321</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 125.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

reminds his listeners that the Seventy-fifth Congress that has adjourned had been elected on an “uncompromisingly liberal” platform on November 1936; and points out that while it left much undone, such as not implementing the administrative reorganization of the executive branch proposed by Roosevelt as providing “more businesslike machinery” for it and failing to respond to the revenue crisis faced by the railroads, it still accomplished more than any Congress between the World War and his own administration.<sup>323</sup> He then lists what he views as the more important among these achievements of the Congress; he mentions the improved agricultural laws, ranging from providing farmers with fairer income and an all-weather granary, to helping tenant farmers towards independence and insuring crops<sup>324</sup> via the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 and the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937;<sup>325</sup> he celebrates the Congress finally acquiescing to his many requests to pass the Fair Labor Standards Act, to end child labor, and to establish a floor for wages and a ceiling for working hours, which he describes as “...the most far-reaching program, the most farsighted program for the benefit of the workers that has ever been adopted here or in any other country.” with the possible exception of the Social Security Act,<sup>326</sup> another of his New Deal programs. Roosevelt then attacks the critics of the act via a caricature of a “calamity-howling executive,” who makes \$1000 a day, impoverishes his employees and uses his stockholders money to pay for the postage of his personal opinion that a minimum wage of \$11 a week will spell disaster for all American industry; he’s quick to assure his listeners that such business executives are rare, and most of their colleagues disagree with their stance, and that having too many of

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 125-126.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 126.

<sup>326</sup> Roosevelt, “Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938,” 126-27.

such characters would be harmful to business as a whole, as well as the nation.<sup>327</sup> He points out that the topic of “wise business practices” is a “jungle of contradictory theories,” which the Congress has provided a fact-finding commission to navigate, so that well-informed legislation can be performed on matters such as monopolization, price-fixing, and relations between businesses; he asserts that while the United States keeps its faith in private enterprise and the profit motive “...we must continually seek improved practices to ensure the continuance of reasonable profits, together with scientific progress, individual initiative, opportunities for the little fellow, fair prices, decent wages, and continuing employment.”<sup>328</sup> The Temporary National Economic Committee (TNEC) established for this purpose would gather a sizeable body of data and make a number of recommendations on combatting monopolization, but by then the Second World War would have begun and the nation would be too occupied with foreign affairs and war production to make use of TNEC’s work.<sup>329</sup> The President then makes a mention of the placement of postmasters under the authority of the civil service and the establishment of the Civil Aeronautics Authority to supervise aviation and the United States Housing Authority for slum-clearance and for providing low-cost housing to low-income citizens, alongside the improvements made to the Federal Housing Act to help private capital construct more low-cost housing; he continues that the Congress reduced taxes on small businesses and loosened the restrictions on the Reconstruction Finance Corporation’s ability to extend credit to businesses; and finally notes that the Congress agreed to increase the funding of several existing New Deal agencies including the Works Progress

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<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 127.

Administration, the Public Works Administration, the Rural Electrification Administration, and the Civilian Conservation Corps.<sup>330</sup> This series of economic measures, Roosevelt describes as a “program for the national defense of our economic system” that moves on all fronts simultaneously, due to an understanding that various economic problems suffered by the nation are symptoms of one greater problem.<sup>331</sup> Thus concluding his report on the accomplishments of the Seventy-fifth Congress on the field of economics, he also makes sure to give a brief mention to the Congress’ authorization of an expansion of the armed forces in light of armament programs and international instability abroad,<sup>332</sup> via the Vinson Naval Expansion Act signed on May 17, 1938 that established the funding to expand the Navy into a “two ocean navy,”<sup>333</sup> an accomplishment the President was particularly proud of his part in.<sup>334</sup> President Roosevelt then refers to his Fireside Chat on February 5, 1937, where he had proposed a number of reforms to the federal courts, and the struggle that followed in the Congress, and declares “an important victory for the people of the United States” due to having attained the end goals he had been aiming for even if it had not been through the methods he had initially envisioned; a situation he describes as “a lost battle which won a war.”<sup>335</sup> Notably, his opposition’s victory is framed as a victory against the people of the United States, even though a net victory for the public was eventually achieved; situating his opponents in opposition to the will of the public. He notes the Supreme Court’s change of attitude towards a more cooperative stance since February, describing their decisions as

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<sup>330</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 127-28.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 128.

<sup>334</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 177.

<sup>335</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 128.

an “eloquent testimony of willingness to collaborate with the two other branches of government to make democracy work;” points out the government’s newly granted right to appeal directly to the Supreme Court and defend its interests on matters concerning the constitutionality of federal laws; he also points out that the creation of new judgeships help accomplish the faster trial process he had sought, as well as the provisions allowing Supreme Court justices to retire after ten years of service if they have reached the age of seventy; and praises the increased flexibility of the federal judiciary system in allowing the assignment of judges to congested districts.<sup>336</sup> According to Rosenman, Roosevelt had been hoping to shake off the inevitable accusation that he was engaging in the “purge” due to his defeat in the Court fight before it came,<sup>337</sup> which explains the timing of this declaration of victory; the contentment he expressed with the end result may have downplayed the part of the defeat in Roosevelt’s plans, but his words portraying his defeat in the Court fight as a victory against the people of the United States does little to minimize his apparent resentment. He calls attention to the public’s commitment to “a course of sane and consistent liberalism,” and applauds the Congress for its response of acting with the understanding of government’s responsibility to continuously meet with continuing problems if it is to keep up with the pace of modernity; this understanding is how Roosevelt characterizes “sane and consistent liberalism” as he sees it, portraying the contrasting position as “tired or frightened by the inescapable pace, fast pace of this modern world in which we live,”<sup>338</sup> these two quick descriptions of these stances are expanded upon later in the Chat once Roosevelt begins speaking on primaries. He

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 128-29.

<sup>337</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 178.

<sup>338</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 128-29.

responds to the idea that his faith in the public's tenacity is a sentimental mistake, and reiterates his faith in the people's conviction to ensure that the relationship between private enterprise and government possesses transparency in taxation and the spending of their tax money, as well as a respect for the needs of ordinary citizens.<sup>339</sup> Through these assertions, Roosevelt leads into his attack on the "concentrated campaign of defeatism" the Democratic platform was faced with since his re-election in 1936, on those who claim that the public is weary of reform and no longer opposed to handing the reins of the country back to the "small minority which, in spite of its own disastrous leadership in 1929, is always eager to resume its control over the government of the United States," comparing them to the Copperheads who opposed Lincoln and the Congress during the Civil War;<sup>340</sup> which, alongside accusing said defeatists of being disloyal to their country, had the side benefit of placing his administration on the same position as the one that had abolished slavery and placing the "small minority" mentioned earlier in the position of the slave owners. Rosenman credits Thomas Corcoran, who was among Roosevelt's advisors who were in support of the President's plan to take an active role in the primaries and one of the principal writers of this Fireside Chat, with suggesting the comparison to the Copperheads.<sup>341</sup> He concludes this line of argument by congratulating the Congress and the American people in their determination to work together for a better tomorrow in spite of the defeatism they were faced with.<sup>342</sup> Roosevelt then acknowledges that the recession is a very real problem, but assures his listeners that the total national income, while significantly lower than the \$70 billion of early 1937, is not expected to

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 129-30.

<sup>341</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 176-178.

<sup>342</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 130.

fall below \$60 billion and notes that this figure is far better than the low of \$32 billion that had been the total national income in 1932; he further supports his point by remarking that businesses, banks and farms are not collapsing the way they were in 1932 either.<sup>343</sup> He portrays the current recession as one caused by mistakes made by the leaders of private enterprise, labor and government; the private sector had asked for a sudden curtailment of government spending with the promise of filling the void themselves, but had made the mistakes of overproduction and of increasing their prices too quickly; some labor leaders were “goaded by decades of oppression of labor,” and went too far in their methods, alienating many who previously would have supported them; and the government had made the mistakes of being too optimistic in expecting no mistakes from capital and labor, of cutting back on government spending too early, and of not establishing minimum wages and maximum working hours in time to mitigate the recession.<sup>344</sup> While he words his sentences to imply shared blame between all parties, it’s difficult to miss that his sentence portrays the leaders of private enterprise as the somewhat guiltier party, as the government’s primary mistake is believing in the other two forces, and organized labor is portrayed as “goaded” by long term suffering. He expresses hope that, having learned from these mistakes, capital and labor can cooperate with each other and with the government more effectively in the future; an example on matters all three parties involved should be acting together is resisting wage cuts,<sup>345</sup> which United States Steel had already taken action to combat<sup>346</sup> by lowering its prices without cutting its employees’ wages in order to stimulate the market; a measure

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 130-31.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 131.

Roosevelt praises as the kind of farsighted decision by the private sector that could eliminate the need for a good deal of government spending if it became common enough to have broad enough effect.<sup>347</sup> He then takes aim at some of his critics, “a small opposition” who constantly ask for more and more concessions to “restore confidence” and convince them of the wisdom of cooperating with the majority of the population; he accuses them of consistently demanding a “restoration of confidence” regardless of how well or badly the economic situation progresses in any given area, only to eventually realize that “that hand has been overplayed” and to begin speaking of cooperation instead,<sup>348</sup> implying that they never had real concerns about tangible situations to begin with but were being deceptive in hopes of extracting more concessions. He contests that the majority of the people refuse to be deceived by these demands for “confidence,” because they possess confidence both in themselves and in their government’s support to solve the problems they face.<sup>349</sup> He asserts that the reason for the public’s continuing support for the government’s efforts to solve the economic problems suffered by the United States is that they are not yet satisfied with the progress made thus far, a sentiment he emphasizes that he shares; “I need all the help I can get” he says, and expresses his optimism for receiving help even from those who once fiercely opposed the progress he sought to bring.<sup>350</sup> This is when Roosevelt shifts his focus to the primaries. He starts by reminding his listeners of the way party nominations were decided in conventions by what the public imagined as “a little group in a smoke-filled room who made out the

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<sup>347</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 131.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-32.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

party slates,” and how the direct primaries were created to democratize the process.<sup>351</sup> This introduction for the topic of primaries is followed by the President suggesting that, as a matter of principle, everyone associated with any party should vote in any primaries they’re eligible to vote in and that they should think about what their party stands for as they do so; he posits that the voting done during the actual elections will then be a more meaningful choice and argues that “An election cannot give the country a firm sense of direction if it has two or more national parties which merely have different names but are as alike in their principles and aims as peas in the same pod.”<sup>352</sup> He’s careful to assert that clashes between liberals and conservatives are bound to happen in the upcoming primaries of all parties before presenting his definitions for these opposing “schools of thought.”<sup>353</sup> Liberals, he characterizes by the recognition that new conditions require new solutions, and that it is possible to use the existing system to achieve these solutions via a government that acts as an instrument of cooperation, avoiding a transformation into an authoritarian system as a result; he specifically restricts the term “liberal” as he uses it to mean those who believe in a progressive democratic system, and not “the wild man who, in effect, leans in the direction of Communism, for that is just as dangerous to us as Fascism itself.”<sup>354</sup> Conservatives, as Roosevelt describes them, do not share this notion that government action is needed to meet these new problems, and instead believe that private enterprise and charity will prove adequate to the task; he paints a picture of reactionary sentiment that would see many New Deal reforms repealed, that would put an end to social security policies, would bring back the gold standard, would deregulate the

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 132-33.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

stock market and let monopolies loose, "...return, in effect, to the kind of government that we had in the 1920s."<sup>355</sup> This was quite the damning assessment in a country fearing a return to the dark days of 1932 strongly enough that Roosevelt felt the need to reassure his audience that the economy wasn't and wouldn't be as bad as it had been during the Great Depression whenever he needed to speak about the recession in a Fireside Chat. After suggesting that voters should consider which school of thought candidates belong to as they cast their votes in the primaries, he emphasizes that his involvement in the upcoming Democratic primaries will be in his capacity as the head of the Democratic party, and not in his capacity as the President of the United States.<sup>356</sup> Rosenman notes that the Fireside Chat was written with the President's desire to "soften the blow" of his plan to get involved in the primaries in mind, though it didn't work;<sup>357</sup> Roosevelt's lengthy introduction for the topic, from the principles he lays out for primaries in general to his clarification of what he means by "liberal" and "conservative," appears cautious enough to break the news gently but firmly, even without how virtually every prior word in the course of this Fireside Chat seems to be calculated to make his arguments for his plan as convincing as possible without directly speaking of the issue. He argues that it is natural for the person charged with upholding the party platform to speak out in cases where a clear cut difference between candidates in a way that pertains to the principles of said platform, or the issue involves a clear misuse of his name; he asserts that he wouldn't side against a candidate that follows the party platform due to any other disagreements they might have with him; but points out that while progress can be

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<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, 133-134.

<sup>357</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 178.

hindered by honest reactionaries, it can be just as effectively by a “‘yes, but’ fellow” who agrees with a progressive objectives on principle but always finds a problem worth opposing any specific method to attain said objectives for; and adds that he could also be concerned enough to weigh in over candidates’ and their sponsors’ attitudes towards the right to assemble and the freedom of political expression,<sup>358</sup> this last point is thought to be Boss Frank Hague of Jersey City who was notorious for political intimidation.<sup>359</sup> The President’s mention of the misuse of his name refers to a number of conservative Democrats who had used their position as the party’s nominee to set up a pretense of being endorsed by him to gain additional votes,<sup>360</sup> something that must have been particularly irksome considering his resentment of what he saw as the dishonesty of conservative Democrats who merely agreed to run on a platform they disagreed with without resorting to such direct mendacity. Roosevelt concludes this Fireside Chat by cautioning liberal politicians to focus on their arguments and avoid resorting to striking “‘mean blows” of misrepresentation, personal attacks and appeals to prejudice; expressing faith that the voters will notice that whomever strikes first will have admitted the inadequacy of their arguments.<sup>361</sup> The implication that liberals specifically did not need to resort to “‘mean blows” due to having better ideas and arguments on their side comes across clearly; the comment also may have been a preemptive argument made in anticipation of the opposition’s reaction, as the inclusion of misrepresentation in the definition Roosevelt gives for “‘mean blows” seems appropriate for how he would regard the use of the term “‘purge” to describe his involvement in the Democratic primaries.

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<sup>358</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 134.

<sup>359</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 134.

<sup>360</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 178.

<sup>361</sup> Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party – June 24, 1938," 134-35.

Though it is clear he took his own advice during his involvement in the primaries, judging by his speech against Senator Walter George of Georgia where he refuses to resort to personal attacks and even praises the Senator's character in a section quoted by Rosenman, who remarks that he conducted the rest of his "purge" speeches in the same manner.<sup>362</sup>

Mark Sullivan, who had spotted the beginnings of a split in the Democratic party in 1936 when the Baltimore Sun had opposed the President,<sup>363</sup> but had expressed hopes that the President may decide to lead the new Democratic Congress' in a manner they accept rather than attempting to impose his will on them,<sup>364</sup> characterizes the Democratic primaries as a struggle to determine which group shall lead the Democratic Party and name the presidential candidate for the 1940 election, the New Dealers led "quite actively" by Roosevelt, or the "old Democrats" symbolized by the Democratic senators who opposed the President's Court plan, nine of whom are candidates for renomination, and followed by members of the house who did the same, who aim to return the party to its traditional point of view; a third faction of Democrats, including Vice President Garner and National Chairman Farley who hope to hold the party together and would like to nominate a compromise candidate are also acknowledged by Sullivan; he notes that a number of "old Democrats" who are from states where the nominations are made in conventions rather than primaries intend to run on "independent Democrat" tickets.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 180.

<sup>363</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Southern Democracy," *The Decatur Daily Review*, September 16, 1936. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>364</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Looking Ahead," *Oakland Tribune*, April 17, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>365</sup> Mark Sullivan, "1938 Primaries Will Determine Democratic Party Trend," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, June 26, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

David Lawrence, writing a few days after the broadcast, points to the case of a speech made by Aubrey Williams, the deputy administrator of the Work Progress Administration, where Williams directly appealed to a number of workers for their support at the polls, criticizing this mixing of politics and relief efforts as indicative of a trend that receives the approval of the President; though Roosevelt may be granting this approval in his capacity as “head of the Democratic Party” and not in his capacity as the President, as outlined in his Fireside Chat, and Williams may have made his speech in his capacity as a private citizen rather than a government official, Lawrence implies the distinction to be one without a difference, since they cannot stop holding the positions they do by merely saying they do, especially while using those positions as platforms to be heard; he notes that it is the President’s responsibility to appoint and oversee the heads of the federal agencies of the New Deal, something he no longer is in a position to be impartial about as he has announced his intentions to participate in the primaries; Lawrence points out that it would be unethical for the President’s travel expenses to be paid for by the government while he is acting outside of his capacity as president, as he plans to do in the case of his campaigning for the Democratic primaries, as it would be for people in charge of relief efforts to perform their duties, and spend government funds to that end, with the implication that it is contingent on the political support of the unfortunate, suggesting that such abuses of the “public purse” would gradually create the kind of conditions out of which dictatorships can be born.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> David Lawrence, *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*, June 29, 1938. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

## CHAPTER 3

### FIGHTING TO STAY OUT OF THE FIGHT AND BECOMING THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

When Germany had entered the free city of Danzig in September 1, 1939 the fragile peace structure established at the end of the First World War was finally collapsing, after having been challenged again and again throughout the 1930s.<sup>367</sup> As Great Britain and France's declaration of war on Germany solidified the crisis into all-out war in Europe, Roosevelt had already spent several months attempting to change neutrality legislation to remove the arms embargo,<sup>368</sup> possibly having anticipated that the war would be unavoidable on the long run. Isolationist sentiment in the United States was strong at this point, though perhaps the majority sentiment wasn't quite as hardline as that of the isolationist camp. As a whole, the country did not want to enter the war, but a majority was wary of Germany, and sympathetic to Great Britain and France; this was noticed and made use of by Roosevelt.<sup>369</sup>

Throughout the Fireside Chats of this period, it's possible to see a steady escalation of hostility towards Germany. What begins as a solemn pledge of neutrality in

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<sup>367</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 140-43.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-48.

deed but not in thought<sup>370</sup> slides steadily into a state of very-nearly war, all but challenging Germany to either declare war or to cease its unacceptable conduct on the seas.<sup>371</sup> According to Rosenman, Roosevelt “desperately” wanted to keep the United States out of the war, but feared that “half-measures” would doom Britain<sup>372</sup> and thus make a war of America alone against the Axis inevitable. There is little reason to doubt that the President believed that the United States had much to fear in the event of an Axis victory. The overarching theme of freedom versus subjugation, manifested in plots of world domination and a struggle to maintain the freedom of the seas dominated the Fireside Chats of this period. All other factors seeming to revolve around the central narrative of the democracies of the world rallying to defend freedom from the forces of darkness. In hindsight, it seems unlikely Roosevelt’s continued escalation of support to Germany’s enemies and hostility to Germany and its allies would have a peaceful conclusion. And it seems just as unlikely that it would end peacefully for Italy or Japan; the Fireside Chats made little to no effort to distinguish the three powers involved from one another, using the words “Nazi,” “Hitler” and “Axis” almost interchangeably, and treating them as a uniform evil seeking to plunge the world into a dark age.

But the fact remains that isolationist sentiment was powerful in the United States before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Rosenman stresses that this was a period when, though it may seem strange at the time he was writing, Americans truly and vocally believed that the Atlantic ocean was a “true defense,” that America could get along fine even if Europe

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<sup>370</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Reaction to War in Europe: Preparing for Cash-and-Carry – September 3, 1939," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 150-151.

<sup>371</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The *Greer* Incident: Quasi-War in the Atlantic – September 11, 1941," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 196.

<sup>372</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 284.

fell, and that Germany and Japan would never dare attack the United States; he remarks that Roosevelt's statements truly "startled" many people, and suggests that the President's "bold leadership" was a necessity to "awaken" Americans to the danger abroad.<sup>373</sup> On August 12, 1941, only four months before Pearl Harbor, isolationism was powerful enough that the isolationist faction of the Congress had almost defeated a bill for the extension the Selective Service Law, losing by a majority of only one vote after a "bitter" debate.<sup>374</sup> And this was after nearly two years of gradually making greater and greater commitments in support of all who fought the Axis, with isolationism being gradually eroded every step of the way. Earlier in December 1940, lend-lease legislation was invented by Roosevelt specifically because he knew that it was politically impossible to repeal the neutrality laws and that it would take a long and, in Rosenman's words, "dangerously bitter" political fight to repeal even some of its provisions.<sup>375</sup> At that point, Roosevelt was already the only president in the history of the United States to ever be elected for a third term and even with the immense popularity this implied, he was not confident enough in his powers of public persuasion to directly challenge the neutrality legislation any more than he already had. This was how entrenched a sentiment isolationism was for the American public.

Thus, it could be argued that President Roosevelt knew that his program of gradually offering all support possible, short of fighting men, to Britain was not what the American people wished, but had decided that his duty to safeguard the interests of the public was more important than his duty to carry out their wishes. This would mean that,

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid., 259-60.

<sup>374</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 290.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid., 256-57.

though he had championed the delegate model of representative democracy and espoused the government's duty to carry out the wishes of the public for two years in 1937 and 1938 against both the Supreme Court and against dissidents in his own party, Roosevelt spent the first two years of the Second World War acting as a trustee rather than a delegate of the people in direct opposition to his prior stance on the matter and acting in what he believed to be the best interests of the nation even if it meant undermining the public will.

The matter of what the public desired was not so simple. As Mark Sullivan pointed out at the very beginning of the war, the majority hoping for a British and French victory over Germany was just as large as the majority that wished to avoid entering the war,<sup>376</sup> and as David Lawrence remarked around the same time, no true neutrality was possible when the neutrality law was seen as an opposition to Britain and France, and its repeal would be seen as opposition to Germany.<sup>377</sup> In such a situation, it could just as convincingly be argued that Roosevelt understood that one of two great desires held by the public would be impossible to fulfill, and chose to persuade the public to give up on it while doing all in his power to ensure that the other remained possible.

The first wartime Fireside Chat was broadcast on September 3, 1939. In this address, Roosevelt's political acumen is particularly visible, as he simultaneously appeases and challenges public opinion, and in such a way that he can respond to critics of either approach by rejecting their claims and pointing to his contrary statements. The

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<sup>376</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Mark Sullivan Says," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, September 5, 1939. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>377</sup> David Lawrence, "German Propaganda Seeks to Create Dissension in the U.S., Says David Lawrence," *Alton Evening Telegraph*, September 12, 1939. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

theme of this Fireside Chat is caution, both the visible caution advised to citizens, and the underlying caution of a president that refuses to commit to a course of action that might end up being detrimental, either to himself or to the nation's interests. Statements with an internationalist bent, such as the expression of a desire to find a final peace for humanity as a whole,<sup>378</sup> and a warning that war in any part of the world endangered peace in the rest of the world<sup>379</sup> stand alongside reassurances that neutrality would still be America's policy even if there hadn't been laws in place making it mandatory<sup>380</sup> and condemnations of war profiteering that risks American citizens<sup>381</sup> and all the isolationist connotations that follow such statements. Not all of this Fireside Chat is so easy to place on the isolationist-interventionist spectrum. A paragraph that places emphasis on the safety of the nation and refers to George Washington's *Neutrality Proclamation* as the guide on the path to national safety, ties the same safety to keeping the war out of the Americas,<sup>382</sup> bringing it closer to the Quarantine Speech of two years prior than to Washington's original address. Departures from past policies do not end there. While promising the nation's neutrality to citizens, Roosevelt also refuses to request that they remain neutral in thought,<sup>383</sup> directly contrasting Woodrow Wilson's plea to the public a quarter century prior. Rosenman notes that while the speech as a whole was prepared in the State Department, the President himself had added "this frank admission of unneutrality."<sup>384</sup> Thus, not only does Roosevelt avoid tying himself to any one policy, but he also

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<sup>378</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Reaction to War in Europe: Preparing for Cash-and-Carry – September 3, 1939," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 148.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, 150-51.

<sup>384</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 189.

encourages the electorate to continue feeling as they do about the war and the sides involved. This ties into Roosevelt's claim that the American public is the best-informed, most enlightened public in the world, a statement that both celebrates free-speech, and indirectly criticizes the censorship practices of dictatorships.<sup>385</sup> With the public and the sanctity of its free-speech sufficiently lionized, Roosevelt warns them not to believe every rumor they hear or read, declaring that the greatest threat to the neutrality of the United States are those who make baseless predictions, of both safety and peril,<sup>386</sup> thus marking a foe for the public to struggle against, as is the case in most of the Fireside Chats. In this case, rumormongers who may cause panic or complacency, thus limiting Roosevelt's ability to direct public opinion. The most successful political maneuver contained in this Fireside Chat is, most likely, his mention of making the existing neutrality into a "true neutrality,"<sup>387</sup> which refers to his attempts to alter the neutrality legislation to allow the sale of arms to Great Britain and France, and supporting legislation to prevent the travel of American ships to dangerous zones<sup>388</sup> which had been unsuccessful prior to the war.

Though it may seem mendacious at first glance, the reasoning behind this plan is consistent with that of the rest of the address. Keeping American ships out of war zones would prevent a repeat of the circumstances that had led to the US entry into the First World War, while selling arms to the British and the French would, for anyone who believed in the idea of quarantining the war away from the Americas, could be argued to

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<sup>385</sup> Roosevelt, "Reaction to War in Europe: Preparing for Cash-and-Carry – September 3, 1939," 148-49.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>388</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 147-48.

be a necessity for making that quarantine possible. The refusal to ask the citizens to remain neutral in thought, meanwhile, contributes to these aims by subtly encouraging the dominant pro-Allied sentiment by refusing to discourage it. The praise of the freedom of press, and of the quality of information received by the American public, in turn, hints that the dominant pro-Allied sentiment is the correct belief, as it is the belief of the best-informed public in the world. Not a single line of argument in the address is lacking in support from the others, and not a single one fails to support another. Everything ties the prevailing mood of the nation to the policies intended by Roosevelt, inviting the public to support what they already believe simply by supporting the president's policies.

Mark Sullivan echoes the President's words, encouraging his readers to "Think things through."<sup>389</sup> He points out that while a large majority of Americans want the United States to avoid entering the war, just as large a majority hopes that the British and the French will win, and that the current neutrality law which does not allow the sale of arms to belligerents is worse for Britain and France than it is for Germany, since the former control the seas and can take advantage of any arms sold by American businesses while the latter cannot, presuming that Roosevelt's pre-war intention to change the neutrality law remains and predicting that a change in legislation to either allow belligerents to purchase arms from American manufacturers by bringing immediate payment alongside their own transports with which to carry their purchases, or to allow belligerents to purchase arms on credit, suggesting that both of these methods be the extent of how much the United States can help Britain and France while remaining

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<sup>389</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Mark Sullivan Says," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, September 5, 1939. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

“technically neutral,” as is the current, almost universally accepted, policy; he assures his readers that even if neutrality was to be abandoned as a policy, there would still be several degrees of participation in the war before sending a conscripted army to Europe would be considered and that “...no one, calculating at this time the future course of the war, should assume that America will ever send an army to Europe.”<sup>390</sup>

Walter Lippmann, though acknowledging that “this is no time for fault finding,” criticizes Roosevelt’s Fireside Chat, saying that it will not be able to reassure the public and provide them with the confidence they will soon need, noting that the personal assurances the President provides in his Chat will not be enough for the people as he is not only in the last year of his term, but has lost control of the Congress and has a divided party, asserting that the radio address does not serve its intended purpose because it merely voices Roosevelt’s thoughts on the matter, thus resting “...on the totally false assumption that Mr. Roosevelt still possesses sufficient power to conduct the affairs of the United States;” Lippmann proposes that the President must have “the humility and the magnanimity” to understand this truth and work to unite the public behind the administration that will replace him, and should follow the example set by “every other democratic leader” and call upon the leaders of his opposition to ask them to share his responsibility, suggesting that doing so would transform the “moral and political atmosphere” of the nation into one of calm, confident courage and resolution; he argues that while Roosevelt is correct in that the President is the best-informed person in the United States, the opposition leaders would need access to that same information to support him intelligently or to oppose him responsibly, pointing out that “there is a deep

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<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

feeling in this country” that the President’s “judgement is often impulsive and frequently biased” and remarking that inviting opposition leaders “...to take a continuous and responsible part in judging the information and formulating American policy;” Lippmann uses Prime Minister Chamberlain’s government in Britain as an example, noting that Chamberlain was able to dispel the mistrust suffered by his administration by including Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden in his cabinet, recommending that the President include in his councils former President Hoover who is experienced in wartime administration, Vice President Garner who is trusted by opposition Democrats and Senators Vandenberg and Taft who are the most likely candidates to succeed Roosevelt as president, since doing so would not only dispel mistrust in the administration but also help avoid partisan struggles in this critical time allowing Roosevelt to meet the needs of the hour as “...the President of the United States speaking and acting for a united people.”<sup>391</sup>

David Lawrence notes that, though the Roosevelt administration has made it clear that no censorship of the radio is planned, some “loose talk” on censorship is taking place, with a variety of arguments ranging from protecting America’s neutrality to defending against foreign propoganda, and objects to any censorship laws, remarking that American media was able to apply voluntary censorship quite well in the prior war and can do the same in this one without risking any real loss of the freedom of speech.<sup>392</sup>

Lawrence later announces, in the words of Stephen Early, secretary to the president, “the

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<sup>391</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, the Evening News, Wilkes-Barre Record*, September 6, 1939. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>392</sup> David Lawrence, “Today in Washington,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, September 9, 1939. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

end of the brain trust,” explaining that the administration recognizes that “the days of reform for reform’s sake are over” and is appointing conservatives where they will be useful, changing its attitude on them from one of distrust to one of genuine cooperation, suggesting that the reforms made will be a net gain for the country so long as conservatives “honestly amend and revise but do not sabotage” them.<sup>393</sup> Lawrence also notes that the debate on the neutrality law is escalating in intensity, with both those who favor the law and those who seek its repeal insisting that the other option will endanger the United States’ neutrality, arguing that no true neutrality is possible and that while repealing the law will be seen by the international community as encouragement and support of Britain and France, keeping it will be seen as encouragement and support for Germany and that it will cause great ill-will towards the United States in English-speaking nations including Canada, and he points out that international law experts are in a bi-partisan agreement that repealing the neutrality law is the best possible course.<sup>394</sup>

The lull in the fighting following the partitioning of Poland by Germany and the USSR was broken when Germany occupied both Denmark and Norway in April, later marching upon Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France; with British forces leaving the continent by the end of May.<sup>395</sup> Though not fully certain at the exact time of the decision, Rosenman expresses certainty that after the British evacuation at Dunkirk, Roosevelt had made up his mind to accept a third-term nomination.<sup>396</sup> The possibility that

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<sup>393</sup> David Lawrence, “Lawrence Comment,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, September 11, 1939. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>394</sup> David Lawrence, “German Propaganda Seeks to Create Dissension in the U.S., Says David Lawrence,” *Alton Evening Telegraph*, September 12, 1939. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>395</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 152.

<sup>396</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 193.

Germany could expand its military efforts to the Danish possessions of Iceland and Greenland was a particular cause for concern, since the former was partly and the latter was fully part of the Western Hemisphere.<sup>397</sup> At this time, Roosevelt hoped to prevent a British defeat on top of Germany's continental conquests, and needed to prepare public opinion to support his goals.<sup>398</sup> But he also needed to reassure the public about the United States' military readiness as well as its ability to expand its might, and to prevent a loss of morale in the face of the rapid pace of German victories.<sup>399</sup> As isolationist propaganda continued to grow "louder and more extreme," Roosevelt decided to speak to the nation in a Fireside Chat to ensure the public's support in his plan to help those fighting Hitler; the Fireside Chat was prepared by Rosenman and Harry Hopkins, who were given separate drafts previously requested from the Army and the Navy to work into a cohesive whole.<sup>400</sup> Rosenman recounts that the President seemed grim but determined the night the speech was broadcast, remarking that, though worried, Roosevelt never seemed scared at any point.<sup>401</sup>

Roosevelt's second wartime Fireside Chat on May 26, 1940 opens without pulling any punches; the very first sentence states that the matters to be discussed "...directly affect the future of the United States."<sup>402</sup> He first invites the public to help provide humanitarian support to the civilians affected by the war by urging them to donate to the American Red Cross, with an appeal to religious and humanitarian sentiments.<sup>403</sup> He then

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<sup>397</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 152.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>400</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 195.

<sup>401</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 195-96.

<sup>402</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Deepening Crisis in Europe and American Military Readiness – May 26, 1940," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 153.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*

arrives at the most highly contested matter of the hour, whether the war was a concern of the United States. Roosevelt situates himself as amongst, but not one of, the Americans who believed for one reason or another, that the war was none of their business.<sup>404</sup> His tone is free of admonishment while he proclaims that the separation of the Atlantic isn't enough for the US to be unaffected by the war, except when he chastises those whom he accuses of opposing Roosevelt's policies on partisan grounds alone.<sup>405</sup> He warns against panic, even as he explains that any illusions of inassailable safety should be set aside after the events of May; arguing that the fears of defenselessness and that freedoms and ideals would need to be set aside for security are unfounded.<sup>406</sup> He goes on to outline the state of American military readiness. The Navy, he describes to be larger than any peacetime naval force the United States ever had, and possibly more effective than the Navy during World War I,<sup>407</sup> a statement likely made more credible by his tenure as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during said war.<sup>408</sup> The Army receives a similarly positive description, the almost doubled numbers and the modernization being emphasized.<sup>409</sup> Improved air forces of both the Army and the Navy also receive a mention.<sup>410</sup> Roosevelt then explains that the private sector is to be the main provider of materials for expanding the US military forces, and that the difficulty they may have making the necessary investments to sufficiently expand industry to meet this demand will be mitigated by the government advancing them the money.<sup>411</sup> Despite discouraging strikes, he's careful to

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid., 153-154.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 155-156.

<sup>408</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 156.

<sup>409</sup> Roosevelt, "Deepening Crisis in Europe and American Military Readiness – May 26, 1940," 156.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., 158-159.

reassure his constituents that the social justice gains of the New Deal era are not to be rolled back, but instead expanded during this drive for military production; arguing that the increasing demand for labor would mean that the employers will be better equipped to give jobs to the unemployed and to pay their workers better wages.<sup>412</sup> According to Rosenman, Roosevelt was concerned that the emergency might be used as an “excuse to liquidate the New Deal and all that it had done for our citizens” and had decided that a Fireside Chat was a good opportunity to both respond to those urging this and to reassure the public that this would not happen.<sup>413</sup> The next portion of the speech is dedicated to warning the public against subterfuge. He warns of “the fifth column,” and how dissemination of discord and exacerbation of divisions among European states by enemy agents left them open to invasion by the dictatorships of Europe; he remarks that while such sentiments of “group hate” and “class struggle” never gained as much traction in the United States, this kind of deliberate propaganda for malicious purposes is different than the threats Americans have previously faced.<sup>414</sup> He concludes this address by emphasizing how every citizen can contribute something to defense efforts and making a mission statement casting the purpose of the United States as the building (and preserving) of a way of life “for all mankind,”<sup>415</sup> linking national defense efforts to the “city on a hill” grand narrative of American thought.

Throughout this Chat, Roosevelt remains tactful in his disarmament of isolationist sentiment. He blunts the worst of the blows he deals, and treats all the “illusions”

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<sup>412</sup> Ibid., 159-160.

<sup>413</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 197.

<sup>414</sup> Roosevelt, "Deepening Crisis in Europe and American Military Readiness – May 26, 1940," 161.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 162.

“shattered” by the events of the prior month as completely reasonable, if not fully rational stances; using the first person plural while referring to what the public believed, using phrases like “many of us” and “some of us” to situate himself as amongst, but not one of, those who were afflicted by said “illusions.”<sup>416</sup> He places his viewpoint between the unreasonable extremes of these “illusions” and that of those in “panic” about military defenselessness in order to appear more reasonable. While outlining the state of American military readiness, he emphasizes the numbers in consideration, continually comparing the past 7 years to the 7 before that and explaining where the money spent went and how;<sup>417</sup> hinting at how much more the Roosevelt administration had done to prepare the country for its current troubles than the prior Republican administrations had; which indicates that the troubles abroad hadn’t yet motivated Roosevelt to forget about elections despite his admonishment of purely partisan opposition to his policies. It could also be argued that his avoidance of more harshly challenging isolationism was also motivated by the upcoming elections, though it’s doubtful that he’d alienate the public in such a manner even without a vote in the near future. According to Rosenman, the President was very pleased with the public response to this speech, as he felt it was indicative that the people understood the urgency of the situation.<sup>418</sup>

David Lawrence, in a column published on May 27, warns his readers that “Mistakes and blunders of immediate consequence to America’s national security are being made.”<sup>419</sup> Lawrence asserts that there is a struggle between the administration’s

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., 153-154.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., 154-159.

<sup>418</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 198.

<sup>419</sup> David Lawrence, “Lawrence Comment,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, May 27, 1940. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

desire to “retain control over every phase of defense preparations” and save the New Deal, and the mostly anti-New Deal businessmen “who want to see reforms side-tracked wherever the national defense requires it,” with the army and navy’s requests are falling on deaf ears as the New Deal majority in Congress leaves the congressional investigation into the matter “choked off;” he argues that the greatest priority for national security should be accelerating production by stopping the “class warfare engendered by New Deal reform laws,” which he states will not happen so long as the President continues to invite a lack of confidence by business and industry by siding with “extremists and partisans in positions of authority notwithstanding abuses fully uncovered,” and accuses Roosevelt of refusing to do what needs to be done and concerning himself instead with political maneuvering and increasing his chances of reelection instead.<sup>420</sup> In a column published two days afterwards, Lawrence suggests that Roosevelt’s latest Fireside Chat alienated rather than reassured supporters because gestures such as combining the number of available and “on order” airplanes to hide the actual number are recognized by the public as signs that national policy is guided by political considerations; he argues that putting industrialists on the defense council in a purely advisory capacity alongside “the very men who have been baiting business for the last several years” is a grievous mistake, and that left-wing legislation the President currently insists in upholding needs to be modified to allow an acceleration of production necessary for the United States to build an adequate defense, Roosevelt’s insistence that there is no emergency that requires modifying the labor laws committing the country to a defense program of high labor costs and inadequate efficiency that cannot possibly be enough; Lawrence notes that with

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<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

presidential elections approaching, the public may decide not to “give the Roosevelt Administration any more opportunities to bungle the defense program,” though concedes that whether or not Roosevelt is reelected may be a separate question from the “necessity of electing a Republican majority in both houses” and that the force of public opinion might be enough to change the President’s course if the facts weren’t being obscured by the administration.<sup>421</sup>

Mark Sullivan comments that the day after he was “reassured,” by Roosevelt’s Fireside Chat that cautioned citizens to be vigilant of the “Fifth Column” of the enemy within the United States, he received in his mail a publicity pamphlet of the Communist party that announced that the party’s national convention would be broadcast nationwide as their request of free time was granted by three major radio chains; he notes that the pamphlet contained an advance summary of the expected party program which attacks Roosevelt, adding that the communists that used to praise Roosevelt have reviled him since he expressed sympathy for the Allies, and argues that the government should prevent the airing of the Communist party national convention, and that the right to free speech should not extend to fifth columns of foreign governments.<sup>422</sup>

Westbrook Pegler echoes Sullivan’s concerns of the Communist fifth column, and points out that around the time the President’s Fireside Chat warning against fifth columns was aired, Eleanor Roosevelt attended a meeting of the New York Youth Congress, a subsidiary of the American Youth Congress which Pegler describes as “a

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<sup>421</sup> David Lawrence, “Washington Slant of David Lawrence,” *The Evening News*, May 29, 1940. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>422</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Mark Sullivan Says,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, May 30, 1940. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

transmission belt of the Communist party,” where she disagreed with some of the speeches made and spoke in defense of rearmament, while Harold Ickes made a speech urging “a vigorous campaign against Fifth Column activities” to a similar, but unnamed, group in Cleveland; Pegler argues that there exists no justification “for the appearance of an officer of the American government or a member of the President’s personal and political family at occasions organized by the Moscow Fifth Column,” suggesting that thinly disguised communists whom Ickes and the First Lady consort with once worked to sabotage recovery and have turned against the New Deal because it is “attempting to arm against Stalin and his ally, Adolf Hitler.”<sup>423</sup>

By late 1940, according to Rosenman, Roosevelt was aware that Britain would soon become unable to pay for the American materials it needed; the President also knew that a repeal of the neutrality act, or of any of its provisions, would not receive the public’s support “without a long and dangerously bitter political fight,” and gifting war materials was almost a political impossibility; the solution that Roosevelt had arrived at was the “lend-lease,” first explained on December 17 by the President with the metaphor of lending one’s neighbor a fire hose.<sup>424</sup> In his first Fireside Chat after being elected for a third term, Roosevelt needed to convey to the public the urgency of supporting the British in the face of deepening German assault; the destroyers-for-bases deal concluded the prior month, which was a virtual act of war, hadn’t been nearly enough and a program to “lend” arms and materials to the British in order to get around their depleting funds and

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<sup>423</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Conduct of First Lady And Ickes Confuses Meaning of F.D.’s 5<sup>th</sup> Column Warning,” *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, The Evening News*, May 31, 1940. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>424</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 257-58.

the American neutrality legislation's ban on giving loans to belligerents were underway at this point, but public opinion still needed to be convincing for the lend-lease policy.<sup>425</sup> The preparations for the Fireside Chat often remembered as "the arsenal of democracy" speech had begun on December 26, with Rosenman, Robert E. Sherwood and Harry Hopkins working with the President on it, along with some comments by William Knudsen on an early draft, and some suggestions by the State Department on later drafts worked into the text.<sup>426</sup>

The Fireside Chat on December 29, 1940 starts by saying it's not about war, but about national security.<sup>427</sup> The aim of the planned foreign policy is set as staying out of a war for independence.<sup>428</sup> The threat is unprecedented, the Tripartite Pact had been made in September between Germany, Italy and Japan to unite against any American intervention in their ongoing wars, and Axis rhetoric suggests that no lasting peace is possible between their philosophy of government and that of the United States.<sup>429</sup> The British, the Greeks, the Chinese and the governments-in-exile of defeated nations are cast as those fighting to defend the very idea of freedom from encroaching dictators. The idea that would continue to remain central to Roosevelt's Fireside Chats on foreign policy is made manifest in a Fireside Chat for the first time here: The Axis cannot be allowed to control the oceans between them and the United States; Roosevelt draws on the Monroe Doctrine of 117 years prior, and notes how having the British as a naval neighbor kept

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<sup>425</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 163-64.

<sup>426</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 258-59.

<sup>427</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Arsenal of Democracy: Introducing Lend-Lease – December 29, 1940," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 164.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

the United States from being attacked.<sup>430</sup> He remarks that through modern technology the vast distances of the ocean become less and less important, and that the Axis will be able to threaten American shores if allowed to control the seas in place of the British.<sup>431</sup> He argues that while some might not want to believe it, there's no escaping the facts of Germany's recent actions; which included invading countries it had nonintervention pacts with, giving little to no prior notice and using excuses such as "protection" and "restoring order;" and that nothing but lacking control over the oceans kept it from repeating the process with South American nations.<sup>432</sup> He casts isolationist sentiments as wishful thinking, arguing that Axis agents have already been stirring up trouble in the Americas, being "...active in every group that promotes intolerance."<sup>433</sup> Roosevelt paints the Nazis as unappeasable, arguing that a negotiated peace would only be an armistice that'd lead to an arms race leading to an even greater war.<sup>434</sup> Having sufficiently expounded on the nature and magnitude of the threat, Roosevelt then turns his attention to policy plans. He states that since the conquering dictatorships cannot be negotiated with and must be defeated, the ability of the United States to stay out of the war depends on the ability of the defending nations to overcome their opponents.<sup>435</sup> He casts the course of wholeheartedly supporting the British and the rest of the defending nations as the path with the least risk of entering the war, and, he notes, these brave countries don't want Americans to fight for them, but only for the tools they need to keep up the good fight.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-167.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-170.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

He argues that providing materials to the defenders is no more belligerent an act than the providing of materials to Germany by nations such as the Soviets and the Swedish.<sup>437</sup> None of this is sentimental, he insists, it's all a matter of practical military policy.<sup>438</sup> He makes it a point to remark on the importance of workers and their rights in the United States, reminding the public that their system is worth fighting for, even as he warns that strikes and lockouts won't be acceptable in the coming struggle.<sup>439</sup> He emphasizes that this process can't be "business as usual," that concerns over post-war surplus production and current profits cannot be allowed to stand in the way of meeting the military production demands imposed by the international circumstances; "We must be the great arsenal of democracy." he declares, announcing that while the United States is not at war, its efforts are no less urgent.<sup>440</sup> Rosenman credits Jean Monnet, a representative of France in Washington at the time with coining the phrase "arsenal of democracy," and Justice Frankfurter with asking Monnet to refrain from using it so that it could be "given world currency" by Roosevelt.<sup>441</sup> He concludes by discouraging determinism, speaking of the perseverance of Britain and its allies, and encouraging hope.<sup>442</sup>

This Chat features Roosevelt at his verbal tightrope-walking best. He effectively portrays a dire, unacceptable, unreasonable threat in the Axis, while still managing to cast them as a threat that can be defeated. He brilliantly twists material support for the British into a war-dodging measure but avoids letting it seem like too much or too little investment in the war effort. The most brilliant part of it is that it makes sense; even with

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<sup>437</sup> Ibid., 170-71.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., 172-73.

<sup>441</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 260-61.

<sup>442</sup> Roosevelt, "The Arsenal of Democracy: Introducing Lend-Lease – December 29, 1940," 172-73.

the benefit of hindsight, it's difficult to say for certain whether this method could have worked. His eloquence doesn't end there. His language in denouncing the Axis is vivid, he calls concentration camps "...the very altars of modern dictatorships," and describes them as an "unholy alliance" to enslave the human race.<sup>443</sup> Having secured both re-election and further proof of the relentlessness of the German drive for conquest, he admonishes continuing isolationists with an infantilizing rhetoric, accusing them of "pulling the covers on [their] heads."<sup>444</sup> He gives a particular example that Ireland wouldn't be allowed freedom in an otherwise unfree world,<sup>445</sup> possibly in response to any Irish-Americans who might not have been happy about having to support the British again. He also makes good use of his past policies, reminding the workers what they gained during the New Deal,<sup>446</sup> and that they have much to fight for.

Westbrook Pegler, in his column published on the last day of 1940, speaks up in support of Roosevelt's words in the Fireside Chat, though he criticizes the President for not speaking sooner in as clear a denouncement of the Axis even though all that Roosevelt said were just as true a year ago, suggesting that "the election delayed things;" Pegler remarks that while the President "sugar-coated the bitter issue of war with a more palatable phrase" when he said that the Fireside Chat was about "national security," the speech does nothing to hide or minimize the "inevitability of a showdown between the United States and Germany" in the event of a British defeat, and asserts that those who attempt to deny this "truth" can only present a "blurry hope" of Germany being content

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<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

with dominating Europe, insisting on the wisdom of Roosevelt's plan of a nationwide effort to arm Britain and its allies against the Axis, especially in contrast to risking "a war later on two sides alone against a triumphal Axis;" he argues that the Nazi ideology of being the chosen people meant to rule their inferiors includes the American "mongrel breed" and has been anti-American from the beginning, and that with Mussolini having made openly baiting America the policy of the official press of Italy, this means that "Nothing the President said has impaired relations with any friendly power..."<sup>447</sup>

David Lawrence remarks that the purpose of the final Fireside Chat of 1940 was "to nip in the bud the growing movement" of appeasement, suggesting that President Roosevelt had been "distressed" by the way it had been progressing for several weeks and that while no one believed the movement to have the support of any substantial minority, Roosevelt considered the best way to put a stop to it was to argue it out on radio to ensure that his point of view was available to any citizens debating war issues; Lawrence points out that while the President "adopts the thesis that the way to keep America out of war is to help Britain lick the Nazis," his words would also serve as the foundations for his case if it becomes necessary for the United States to actively participate in the war, noting that when the President of the United States places America firmly behind Britain against the Axis "it comes as a sensational warning to all the peoples of the rest of the world that perhaps American military and naval might may yet have to be thrown into the scales" to ensure a result to the war that Roosevelt declares is necessary to preserve the United States; he also asserts that the timing of the speech was

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<sup>447</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "It's Good To Have Roosevelt's Speech on Record at Last," *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, December 31, 1940. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

shrewd, as there remains time before the return of the Congress, and public opinion will have a chance to “crystallize” before then, enabling the President to push through new legislation and amendments to the old where the issues he spoke of are concerned thanks to a united public opinion.<sup>448</sup> In another column, Lawrence also remarks that an unease remains among business circles, and clarifies that while the President is right to be concerned that many businessmen urge for peace, the reason they do so is not out of sympathy for Germany but due to “a deep-seated fear” that a system of state capitalism or collectivism will replace that of private enterprise with the war as an excuse, explaining that these concerns were inflamed by the President’s remarks that a pessimistic policy about the future will not impede the expansion of essential industries, which had this effect because of the struggle between New Dealers and executives of the steel industry, with the executives wanting to avoid asking their shareholders for the money to expand until they have concrete proof of the demand but fearful of accepting the government’s offer to foot the bill and take on the financial risk of expansion due to an “unwritten law” that government loans may come with stipulations that can push businesses to make changes to their management and labor policies, accusing the labor unions of “labor profiteering” and engaging in efforts to bring about “compulsory unionization” across the nation with help from the New Dealers, leaving industrial managers hesitant to accept government capital “...for fear they are putting their heads in a noose.”<sup>449</sup> His column on January 7 concerning what it means for the United States to become the “arsenal of democracy” is decidedly more pleased with the administration, noting that the President

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<sup>448</sup> David Lawrence, “F.D. Lines Up America With Britain,” *The Pantagraph*, December 31, 1940. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>449</sup> David Lawrence, “Washington,” *San Pedro News-Pilot*, January 7, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

seems to be taking “a more realistic attitude toward the making of vital decisions on the national defense program,” praising the executive orders appointing automotive executive William S. Knudsen as director of the new Office of Production Management and abolishing the 8-hour workday for employees constructing new bases in the Atlantic, reading them as early indicators of further delegation of authority and further suspensions of labor laws where called for respectively, things that Lawrence expects to be necessary for the unprecedented task of transforming the United States into “...a huge munitions factory, a granary, and a shipbuilding yard of stupendous proportions.”<sup>450</sup>

Germany’s successes in April, 1941 seemed to have limited Roosevelt’s options, non-intervention support for the British no longer seemed like they’d suffice and it looked increasingly like the President would need an incident like the *Lusitania* to justify declaring war; still Roosevelt avoided authorizing escorts for lend-lease convoys, and made do with issuing national emergency and espousing ideas of unity of the Western Hemisphere.<sup>451</sup> The President had made speeches to the pan American Union on Western Hemisphere affairs each year, but as the news of submarine sinkings continued to grow worse throughout May, Roosevelt had decided to deliver that years speech as a Fireside Chat instead of the formal speeches he had delivered before and include a proclamation of unlimited national emergency as well; the initial draft of the speech was dictated by the President on May 23 and worked on by Rosenman and Sherwood afterwards, their efforts unusually well-publicized due to Steve Early having let slip to the press their

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<sup>450</sup> David Lawrence, “Many Business Men Fear System of Collectivism, David Lawrence Declares,” *Alton Evening Telegraph*, December 31, 1940. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>451</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 174-75.

presence in the White House; Rosenman notes that the speech was too bold for the Secretary of State Hull's liking, and too cautious for the Secretary of War Stimson and Secretary of Navy Knox, with the latter pair's urgings for drastic action against the German destruction of American shipping in the Atlantic being ignored, as Roosevelt did not think the Congress would allow anything of the sort and feared being defeated by the isolationists at the Congress at this time might leave the United States helpless to aid Britain by any means besides entering the war.<sup>452</sup> The President may have been waiting for a good enough opportunity to maneuver out of the corner he'd found himself in.

Delivered on May 27, 1941, this Fireside Chat opens with "My fellow Americans of all the Americas," informing the public about Roosevelt's guests from the Pan-American Union and Canada,<sup>453</sup> and setting the tone of the speech. After appealing for Hemisphere unity against the Axis, that'll surely use Europe as a stepping stone for "world domination," he outlines everything done so far in order "to stay out of the war."<sup>454</sup> Much of it's a summary of the three prior Fireside Chats. He then notes that American production is currently arming the British, the Chinese, and will soon expand to arm everyone else fighting against the Axis.<sup>455</sup> The implication being that despite recent events, the position of the opponents of the Axis isn't as weakened as it seems. He emphasizes what Americans stand to lose in case of a negotiated peace, painting a bleak picture: The American labor, he warns, would have to compete with the virtual slave labor of the Nazis fueled by all conquered territories and would have to give up all social

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<sup>452</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 179-82.

<sup>453</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Proclaiming National Emergency – May 27, 1941," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 175.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-77.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

gains of the past decade, the American farmer couldn't negotiate a price in selling abroad with the seas under Axis control, the United States would need to practice permanent conscription just to survive, and there would certainly be no freedom of worship.<sup>456</sup> He doesn't fail to provide a hope, though, as Hitler is kept from ruling the seas, thus ruling the world, by the efforts of Great Britain; and if the Axis fails to take control of the seas by conquering Britain, they're doomed to failure.<sup>457</sup> Possibly the most significant part of the address comes when Roosevelt redefines what constitutes an "attack," using the rapid pace of modern warfare to separate it from past wars and the definitions used therein; according to Roosevelt, an attack on the United States can begin with the occupation of Iceland, Greenland, the Azores and Cape Verde; and that an attack anywhere on the Americas is a threat to all the Americas.<sup>458</sup> He remarks on how the isolationists' patriotic love of peace is misguided, and exploited by enemy agents, the importance of maintaining social progress and collective bargaining for labor despite preventing strikes, and on the importance of unity for a common goal.<sup>459</sup> He concludes by pointing at the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation as examples of times when underdogs fighting for their ideals overcame the odds to make their ideals reality, while framing the ongoing war as a contest between "pagan brutality" and "Christian ideal."<sup>460</sup>

While much of this Fireside Chat is made up of repetitions of points made in previous Chats discussed here, possibly partly for the benefit of the international cadre of

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<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-79.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, 179-80.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*, 182-83.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-86.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

guests that may not have heard the prior Chats in an official capacity, it still maintains and expands on existing themes to a degree. Though in this context, it appears more as though the goal was to maintain the existing morale of the nation by responding to both defeatism and isolationism. By casting the Battle of Britain as the deciding factor of the conflict, Roosevelt manages to justify both staying out of the war and continuing to support the British despite the changing circumstances; meanwhile he expounds on the evils of the enemy to remind the public why “cutting our losses” is not an option.

David Lawrence comments that the Grand Admiral Raeder of the Kriegsmarine may come to regret his threat to fire on American ships since by doing so, he has provided President Roosevelt a reason to make a declaration that cargo headed to Britain will be defended by force if necessary and has brought the possibility of an attack into the forefront of public attention, as the President had promised the public to keep the United States out of the war unless attacked, noting that this, alongside Roosevelt's order of patrols in strategic sea routes heading the American continent, means that the President stands ready to use his constitutional authority to repel an attack, and calling the Fireside Chat “not a declaration of war, but a declaration of American purpose;”<sup>461</sup> and suggests that the timing of the Fireside Chat was calculated to bolster American and British morale in the opportune moment, which had come when the German flagship *Bismarck* was sunk by the British navy following the sinking of *HMS Hood* off the coast of Greenland in an engagement that had shown not only that Germany was willing to ignore American warnings to stay out of the western hemisphere waters but also that the Nazis were far

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<sup>461</sup> David Lawrence, “Admiral Raeder May Repent,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, May 29, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

from invincible, giving Roosevelt the perfect opportunity to gather a larger audience with what Lawrence describes as “extraordinary” publicity and to deliver a speech that would, bolster American and British morale as well as serve as a potent objection to the isolationists;<sup>462</sup> the following day, Lawrence also proposes that “The Nazi reaction to President Roosevelt’s speech is perhaps more significant than the speech itself,” noting that the Berlin government chose not to make an issue which would bring America directly into the war, calling the speech “...a milestone in American foreign policy.”<sup>463</sup>

Mark Sullivan, having been skeptical of the neutrality laws since the beginning of the war, has a tone of vindication as he reports that the Cabinet recommends abandoning the remainder of the neutrality legislation in effect, he summarizes the history of neutrality legislation since 1935 and casts the repeal of neutrality laws as a reclamation of “ancient rights” abandoned before, assuring readers that this is not an act of war but merely a return to rights shared by all neutrals since “time immemorial under international law.”<sup>464</sup>

Walter Lippmann states that “In the five days preceding the President’s address the Nazi high command itself provided the overwhelming proof that the American policy, now clearly and irrevocably declared, is the only sound policy open to this country.” and recounts the story of the *Bismarck*, noting that the German battleship came closer to Newfoundland than the distance between Newfoundland and Boston while being chased

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<sup>462</sup> David Lawrence, *The Nebraska State Journal*, May 29, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>463</sup> David Lawrence, “President’s Address Was A Milestone in American Foreign Policy,” *Alton Evening Telegraph*, May 30, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>464</sup> Mark Sullivan, “U.S. Ready to Scrap All Neutrality Bans,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, May 29, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

by the most powerful navy in the world, having set out from a Norwegian port and successfully sailed past the fortified British naval base in Northern Scotland, sailed past Shetland and the Faroe Islands and circumvented the British-occupied Iceland and turned back to Europe before being sunk near Ireland, in spite of Britain being aware of its movements the moment it had left port in Norway thanks to having flying bases nearby and giving chase; he points out that if the Nazis had control over the Britain, American scout planes would have no way of reaching Europe to see whether a fleet was waiting to launch at any European port, and the United States would have all of the Atlantic to patrol in hopes of intercepting a German fleet; Lippmann argues that Roosevelt's response was his "plain and inescapable duty," and that going on war footing despite a popular desire to avoid war is not an abandonment but a defense of American democracy, that the mobilization of power and self-discipline will not destroy democracy but failing to act and being "encircled by overwhelming forces," asserting that democracy in Europe was destroyed by "ruthless force victorious over confused democracies," and concluding that "Only defeat will destroy our freedom. Only the whole power of this nation, aroused from its lethargy and concentrated to one end, can surely preserve democracy and insure the perpetuation of its liberties."<sup>465</sup>

As the year 1941 progressed, the isolationists in Congress still held a great deal of sway, and had almost managed to prevent an extension of the Selective Service Law for another year on the grounds that there was no danger of attack and that the situation was better than it had been the previous year, only barely defeated by one vote on August 12,

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<sup>465</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *The Pasadena Post*, May 30, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

1941.<sup>466</sup> It would be on September 4th, with the *Greer* incident; where a vintage American destroyer carrying mail to Iceland located and marked a German submarine for a British airplane and was, in response, fired upon by the submarine before returning fire; that Roosevelt would receive the excuse he needed to justify his prior orders to escort lend-lease convoys to Iceland, to escalate the American defensive measures to shoot-on-sight, and to eventually repeal neutrality legislation altogether.<sup>467</sup> Rosenman notes that, while President Roosevelt was determined not to allow an incident like this to result in a declaration of war, he was just as determined not to take the *Greer* incident lying down; the speech on the attack was initially planned for September 8<sup>th</sup> but the death of the President's mother Sara Ann Delano Roosevelt on September 7<sup>th</sup> resulted in its postponement; four drafts for the speech were provided by the State Department to Roosevelt, Rosenman and Harry Hopkins who worked on the later drafts, one of which was read by the President to the Secretaries of State, War and Navy during the writing process to consult with them, and the final draft was slightly adjusted in line with their suggestions.<sup>468</sup>

Roosevelt opens the Fireside Chat on September 11, 1941, the final Fireside Chat before Pearl Harbor, by preemptively responding to possible challenges to his narrative. The *Greer*'s identity as an American vessel was in plain sight, he notes, it wasn't a mistake that the incident occurred; nor was it an accident, the German submarine fired first; moreover, the *Greer* was in waters declared by the United States to be necessary for its self-defense, it wasn't anywhere it wasn't supposed to be when the incident

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<sup>466</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 290.

<sup>467</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 188-89.

<sup>468</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 190-91.

occurred.<sup>469</sup> There were only two ways this incident could have happened, Roosevelt claims; if the submarine could see the *Greer*, this was a deliberate attempt to sink an American ship; or if the submarine couldn't see the *Greer*, as the official German statement claims, then this was an indiscriminate attack on the seas.<sup>470</sup> Roosevelt describes the incident as "piracy," and begins to recount several other such incidents the same year; the sinking of the *Robin Moor* in June, which had received no apology, allegation of a mistake or reparations; the "attempted attack" on an American battleship in American waters by an unidentified submarine that followed it in July; the sinking of the *Sessa*, an American-owned, Panamanian ship, in August; and the sinking of the *Steel Sea*, an American merchant ship in the Red sea, on September 6th.<sup>471</sup> Roosevelt insists that his planned policy is no emotional response to an isolated incident, but a rational response to a pattern that indicates a general plan by the Nazis to abolish freedom of the seas; he points to Hitler's announcement that all ships entering some zones would be sunk and that this didn't keep the Germans from sinking ships outside these zones, as well as German-backed subversive activity in Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia and Columbia as evidence of the greater Nazi plot to take over the Western Hemisphere once Great Britain is dealt with.<sup>472</sup> He retreads familiar ground, once more casting the British resistance to the Germans as the last bastion between Hitler and the domination of the seas.<sup>473</sup> This time, however, he instead focuses on the history of the relationship between the United States and the freedom of the seas, on how maintaining it has always been a

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<sup>469</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The *Greer* Incident: Quasi-War in the Atlantic – September 11, 1941," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 189.

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.*, 189-90.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, 190-91.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 191-92.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-93.

central pillar of American foreign policy since the early days of the republic.<sup>474</sup> Here, the narrative turns triumphant and defiant: Roosevelt announces that to remain silent would condone German piracy, and that this is the point where the United States must say “stop” to an enemy of all that it holds dear.<sup>475</sup> He reiterates that he seeks no “shooting war” with Germany, but refuses to allow these “rattlesnakes” of the sea to strike at American ships before being fired upon.<sup>476</sup> Declaring a policy of “active defense,” Roosevelt announces his shoot-on-sight orders concerning German vessels in US waters of self-defense, as well as his intent to have merchant vessels in said waters escorted by the navy; he concludes the Chat by linking his policy to the historical precedents of John Adams’ orders to put a stop to European privateers in the Caribbean and South America, as well as Thomas Jefferson’s efforts against the Barbary corsairs; placing the burden of aggression on Germany, saying there won’t be open war unless Germans insist upon it.<sup>477</sup>

It bears mentioning that the *Greer* incident described in the Chat, and the *Greer* incident that happened do not match.<sup>478</sup> Roosevelt carefully avoids mentioning the presence of a third party through the proxy of which, the *Greer* initiated the hostilities, namely, the British plane that dropped the first depth charge. That casts doubt into his entire narrative concerning piracy, since the sinking of the *Steel Sea* may have been intended as a punitive response to the *Greer* incident, and the “attempted attack” in July may have been nothing of the sort to begin with. And yet the speech is internally brilliant. It conjures images of diabolical plots and ruthless pirates, pirates that finally overreached

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<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid., 195-96.

<sup>478</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 188-89.

and bit off more than they could chew. His hardline stance on the issue avoids seeming like an over-reaction, and is made to appear entirely reasonable and necessary; setting an interesting contrast to Wilson's technically more justified response during the First World War. Contrasting this chat to the previous one is a perfect example of how much more hard-hitting Roosevelt's speeches are when they're justifying bold action rather than caution. The ending of the address, in particular, is impressive: "There will be no shooting unless Germany continues to seek it."<sup>479</sup> The average listener sees only an ultimatum of a defender, pushed to the limit; while to the German authorities, it may have seemed to be a bold taunt, challenging them to respond, or even a declaration of an intent to further provoke a response.

In a column published before the broadcast, David Lawrence interprets the German reaction to the Greer incident, saying that the Nazis do not assert a legal right to sink a vessel even though they have claimed that the incident took place in blockaded waters, which would place them in a position to assert that the U-boat thus merely attacked a blockade runner if accused of firing first, which the United States could contest that the blockade was not effective; from this unwillingness to escalate the matter by the Germans and the calm reaction of American public opinion, Lawrence draws the conclusion that the Greer incident will not be what ignites a state of war between the two states, suggesting that the U-boat attack may have been Hitler's way of testing the United States' willingness to engage in a "shooting war," and that if so, Berlin has found out that President Roosevelt was not bluffing and is willing to escalate if pushed, meaning that

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<sup>479</sup> Roosevelt, "The *Greer* Incident: Quasi-War in the Atlantic – September 11, 1941," 196.

this incident has served as a warning to Germany.<sup>480</sup> After the broadcast, Lawrence points out that Roosevelt, in line with the historical support afforded by the United States to the doctrine, has long insisted on the freedom of the seas, arguing that while the Nazis may claim the President merely awaits an “incident” to serve as an excuse to enter the war, the United States has no shortage of “incidents” should it wish to raise the issue and that there is no indication of Roosevelt wanting to enter the war, rather than merely being prepared to ask the Congress for a declaration for a state of war should hostile acts by Germany escalate.<sup>481</sup> He also notes that while the policy of resistance outlined in by the President was foreshadowed, it still caused “a profound sensation,” citing the isolationists’ argument that Roosevelt has no constitutional authority to order the Navy to resist and that construe the Fireside Chat as equivalent to a declaration of war, a stance which Lawrence characterizes as the position that the United States should “let the Nazis shoot anything they please without resistance” since citizens are not allowed to travel by sea anyway, and the administration’s supporters’ response that there has been sufficient precedent for issuing such an order without the Congress’ specific approval and that a refusal to put a stop to attacks by Axis navies will mean further encroachment towards the coast of the United States, Lawrence argues that the new policy is similar to the “armed neutrality” that the Wilson administration abandoned, comparing current events to those that led to America’s entry into the prior war with German Navy announcing a “sink at sight program” and the United States’ insistence on the freedom of the seas and concludes that while the Congress’ stance on the matter is difficult to determine, aside

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<sup>480</sup> David Lawrence, “Washington,” *Monrovia Daily News-Post*, September 11, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>481</sup> David Lawrence, “Washington,” *Monrovia Daily News-Post*, September 13, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

from some groups who seem to be relieved not to have to vote on a declaration of war just yet, there are no signs that the President wants such a declaration and the situation rests on Hitler's willingness to escalate further.<sup>482</sup>

Mark Sullivan suggests that though the President announced a policy to shoot "Axis" vessels on sight, the statement was likely directed at German vessels specifically since there seems to be no talk of shooting at Japanese and the Italians tend to be less aggressive in the Atlantic, and remarks that the reason Roosevelt's statement that "submarines or surface raiders" would be shot on sight excludes bomber planes, in spite of the damage that can be done by bombardment by air, is likely that bomber planes often operate around active war zones, and their inclusion may have raised the question of just how close to active battle the President expects American ships to approach; he points out that Roosevelt spoke vaguely on where this policy would be applied, only saying "the waters which we deem necessary for our defense," but when asked the question in an informal press conference, defined these waters as anywhere in the seven seas, and that what now contains Iceland may soon be expanded practically anywhere on the world; Sullivan argues that whether this policy is justified cannot be answered by legalistic debate as the sides are not agreed on what vague terms of international law, such as "freedom of the seas" or "contraband," mean, and that one needs only to remember the case, also cited by Roosevelt, of the merchant vessel *Robin Moor* almost four months prior to be reminded that not only was the manner of its sinking without a warning or any provisions for the survival of its crew and passengers by a German submarine clashed

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<sup>482</sup> David Lawrence, "'Armed Neutrality' Policy," *Nashville Banner*, September 16, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

with anything that passes for international law, asserting that the absence of any explanation or apology by Germany implies that the sinking was an indicator of “a general attitude” towards the United States, which when combined with continued incidents of a similar nature since then necessitates exactly the response provided by the President unless the United States was to forfeit respect of the world as well as the confidence of its citizens.<sup>483</sup>

Walter Lippmann argues that the only reasonable way to assess the present position of the United States except by comparison to its position a year prior, pointing out that in the year since the September of 1940 not only was American military power “immensely” increased since then, but that Britain, standing between Germany and the United States, was also bolstered to a strength beyond what it had at any point since the beginning of the war, that China attained recognition as a formidable military power, and that Russia moved from being viewed as a potential ally of the Axis to being a definite enemy to them; he asserts that despite many mistakes, misunderstandings and shortcomings these facts prove that no matter how risky the current situation, it is far better than it was a year prior and that a great deal was accomplished since then, counseling confidence in the “American policy” being right and the resolution to pursue it to its conclusion.<sup>484</sup>

This escalation between Germany and the United States wouldn’t continue in that vein, however, since Japan would attack Pearl Harbor in only a handful of months,

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<sup>483</sup> Mark Sullivan, “‘Shoot First’ Traced Back to Robin Moor,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, September 18, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>484</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, September 16, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

doubtless surprising the American public who had, thus far, been focused heavily on the Atlantic. Germany would declare war on the United States on the 11th of December, four days after Pearl Harbor, despite having no means to attack the American mainland. Roosevelt would have the war he thought was inevitable with Germany, but not in the way he thought it would.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISPELLING DESPAIR AND DEFEATISM BY MONOPOLIZING THE LEGITIMACY OF INFORMATION

In a democracy, it is a generally accepted notion that the public should be able to access reliable information so that they may form an informed opinion which empowers them to participate in the democratic process. President Roosevelt certainly agreed, judging by his assertion celebrating free press that the American public was the best-informed, most enlightened public in the world in his Fireside Chat delivered immediately after the beginning of the war, as no censorship hindered the news they received.<sup>485</sup> It was also at this point, when the war had begun, but the United States was not an active participant that the question of restraining what information should be available to the public began to be discussed. David Lawrence, writing shortly after the war began, noted that, though the Roosevelt administration had made it clear that no censorship of the radio was planned, some “loose talk” on censorship was taking place, with a variety of arguments ranging from protecting America’s neutrality to defending against foreign propaganda; his argument against censorship laws was that the American

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<sup>485</sup> Roosevelt, "Reaction to War in Europe: Preparing for Cash-and-Carry – September 3, 1939," 148-49.

media had been able to apply voluntary censorship quite well in the prior war and could do the same in this one without risking any real loss of the freedom of speech.<sup>486</sup>

No official action meant to restrain the information available to the American public would be taken until the United States was pulled into the war by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, when the importance of information security was forced back into discussion in a question that needed to be addressed immediately: What needed to be told to the public on the extent of the losses caused by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor? Rosenman recounts that during preparations of the Fireside Chat delivered in response to the attack, there was a fierce debate taking place in Washington, with many, including Archibald MacLeish who was in the White House helping with the Fireside Chat, believing that the public needed to be informed fully of all that the government knew as soon as possible, but there was a certain amount of uncertainty on just how much the Japanese knew about the extent of their success, leading the President to the decision to err on the side of caution and share only the military information that couldn't be of use to the enemy;<sup>487</sup> this decision would later be formed into the general principles for public dissemination of war information that the information shared had to be accurate, and of no use to the enemy.<sup>488</sup> Nearly two weeks after Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt also signed the executive order to establish the Office of Censorship on December 19, 1941 with the "absolute discretion" to censor any communications from outside the United States,<sup>489</sup> which would continue to operate until

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<sup>486</sup> David Lawrence, "Today in Washington," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, September 9, 1939. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>487</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 309.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>489</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive Order, "Establishing the Office of Censorship and Prescribing Its Functions and

the executive order of its termination was signed on September 28, 1945.<sup>490</sup> The war information policy would later be explained as a logical conclusion of the public will by Roosevelt in a later Fireside Chat where he discussed the “solemn pact of truth between government and the people” with the words “The American people want to know, and will be told, the general trend of how the war is going. But they do not wish to help the enemy any more than our fighting forces do...,” appealing to the public to trust that their government would only withhold information from them if this information could be of use to the enemy, and to reject rumors designed by enemy propagandists to demoralize the nation,<sup>491</sup> and presumably to force the disclosure of secret information in hopes of rallying morale in response. This policy was supported by Walter Lippmann who remarked that a major disadvantage that the United States suffered from was having a public that was bad at keeping secrets, pushing the President and his advisors to silence to avoid leaks,<sup>492</sup> and later encouraged his readers to reject the enemy whispering campaign against the British.<sup>493</sup>

The secrecy policies of the government during the war were not wholly unopposed. Mark Sullivan criticized a bill that was being discussed in the Congress in late February, 1942, which meant to penalize the divulging of any information declared

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Duties, Executive order 8985 of December 19, 1941," *Federal Register* Vol. 6, no. 258 (December 23, 1941), 6625, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1941-12-23/pdf/FR-1941-12-23.pdf>.

<sup>490</sup> Harry S. Truman, Executive Order, "Termination of the Office of Censorship, Executive order 9631 of September 28, 1945," *Federal Register* Vol. 10, no. 193 (October 2, 1945), 12304, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1945-10-02/pdf/FR-1945-10-02.pdf>.

<sup>491</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fighting Defeatism – February 23, 1942" In *FDR's Fireside Chats*, edited by Russel D. Buhite and David W. Levy, 206-218. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.), 213.

<sup>492</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *Oakland Tribune*, February 26, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>493</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Enemy Whispering Campaign Is Working Both Britain And United States Residents," *Valley Morning Star*, October 18, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

confidential by statute or by government departments' regulations; his objection was not against penalizing information declared confidential by statute, which Sullivan agreed with as statutes had the democratic authority of the Congress behind them, but against the portion of the bill that empowered department regulations in the same way; the latter, he argued, was not a result of the democratic process, and was instead largely up to the discretion of the individual heads of government departments, which he viewed as dangerous as he suspected that the administration wanted to be able to use government information by preventing its release until it would be advantageous to New Deal policies, thus restraining the press' ability to criticize them.<sup>494</sup>

Sullivan's critique brings up an important distinction on how much a democratic government should be able to keep secret from its public. From Sullivan's perspective, the Congress represented the entire population, and its judgement on what should be secret was legitimate as it would mean that the body democratically elected by the nation to defend its interests had decided it, whereas department regulations were dependent on the arbitrary judgement of individuals in charge of said departments. Notably, Sullivan's objection was explicitly due to suspicion that the administration could potentially use the law to prevent criticism of their internal policies. It could, however, be argued that extraordinary measures concerning information security were needed in war time and that a leak of information that could be useful to the enemy, but not yet covered by statutes was a real risk that those proposing the law may have wanted to avoid by empowering another authority to more rapidly declare information to be confidential.

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<sup>494</sup> Mark Sullivan, "War-Secrets Bill Held Peril To Free Press in America," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, February 24, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

What remained more constant than the specifics of legislation or even foreign policy throughout the war was the President's appeals for the public to reject the rumormongering concerning the war. It was in the same Fireside Chat where Roosevelt celebrated the American freedom of press two days after the beginning of the war, he appealed to both the press and the public to exercise "...the utmost caution to discriminate between actual verified fact on the one hand, and mere rumor on the other."<sup>495</sup> The President's hostility to rumormongering in foreign affairs would escalate as the United States became an active part of the war. In the months following Pearl Harbor, a Fireside Chat would call the public to "pay little attention to the rumormongers and the poison-peddlers in our midst" and would condemn rumormongers as having "served the enemy propagandists" for spreading rumors concerning the losses taken at Pearl Harbor.<sup>496</sup>

Of course, few would argue that delegitimizing malicious rumors constitutes censorship, but it could be argued that these appeals against rumormongering, when combined with the Office of Censorship's efforts to censor all foreign information and the secrecy provisions adopted within government, created an atmosphere where all legitimate information was subject to government control. However, even the harsher critics of the administration seemed to agree that this level of control over war information was needed when facing enemies as able in propaganda as Germany was. It also bears mentioning that the critics of the administration continued to criticize the administration's internal policies throughout the war, as it can be seen through this

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<sup>495</sup> Roosevelt, "Reaction to War in Europe: Preparing for Cash-and-Carry – September 3, 1939," 149.

<sup>496</sup> Roosevelt, "Fighting Defeatism – February 23, 1942," 212-13.

chapter and the next, even as the newspapers themselves applied the voluntary self-censorship Lawrence had spoken of in 1939 to their reporting of war-related information.

The Fireside Chat of December 9, 1941 came two days after the sudden Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor; the day following the attack President Roosevelt had walked into the Congress with a war resolution and a declaration of war had been voted within thirty-one minutes with a single dissenting vote.<sup>497</sup> According to Rosenman, Roosevelt was particularly determined that this Fireside Chat provide his audience with “as complete a record as possible” of the recent history of US foreign affairs where it concerned Japan; he wanted to make it clear that the government had been trying to prevent war with Japan, not to appease them but to gain time in which the United States could grow stronger and afford to send more aid to the struggle against Germany.<sup>498</sup> A diplomatic crisis with Japan had been ongoing through much of late-1941, with Japanese expansion into Southeast Asia being responded to with economic sanctions; with Japan’s attempts to negotiate a mutual guarantee of imperial power falling flat.<sup>499</sup> Prior to the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor arrived, Roosevelt had intended to send a message to the Congress containing the full history of the negotiations with Japan on December 8, an abridged but still detailed version of which was to form the core of a Fireside Chat; this plan was derailed when the news arrived on December 7, with the original message to the Congress being scrapped in favor of a much shorter and more dramatic speech delivered personally by the President, who decided to leave the detailed description of the negotiations with Japan for the Fireside Chat, and the initial draft of the proposed

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<sup>497</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 197.

<sup>498</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 308.

<sup>499</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 197.

Fireside Chat prepared by Sumner Welles being reworked by Roosevelt, Rosenman, Robert E. Sherwood, Archibald MacLeish and Grace Tully in light of the recent developments, before the detailed history of the negotiations were removed from the final draft in order to avoid making the Fireside Chat too boring, with the President making the decision to instead announce the details in a separate message to the Congress based on Sumner Welles' draft.<sup>500</sup>

Roosevelt opens the Fireside Chat dead serious, noting that the latest attack by Japan was only the latest instance of “international immorality” that it had perpetrated for the past decade, the attack is described as a “treacherous violation” of the peace between the United States and Japan that had lasted for the eighty-eight years since the first formal contact between the two countries.<sup>501</sup> The president promises to submit the full record of the diplomatic contact between the two nations to the Congress, as he provides the first and last diplomatic contacts that punctuate the record in question,<sup>502</sup> the mission by Commodore Matthew C. Perry to open Japan to American trade and the visit by the Japanese emissaries Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura and Ambassador Saburo Kurusu to Secretary of State Cordell Hull,<sup>503</sup> the latter of which, he points out, came an hour after the attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>504</sup> And while the record of all diplomatic contact between the United States and Japan was removed from the Fireside Chat and moved to the next message to the Congress, Roosevelt had evidently not given up on the goal he'd spoken of to Rosenman and Sherwood of making clear that the United States had worked to

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<sup>500</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 307-10.

<sup>501</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "War with Japan – December 9, 1941," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 198.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>503</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 198.

<sup>504</sup> Roosevelt, "War with Japan – December 9, 1941," 198.

preserve the peace,<sup>505</sup> as he then assures the public that they can take pride in their country's efforts to achieve a Pacific peace that would be "...fair and honorable to every nation, large or small."<sup>506</sup> His condemnation of the dictatorship in Japan for their treacherous attack even as their special envoys were present in Washington flows into his assertion that there exists a well-coordinated collaboration between the German and Italian dictatorships' and that of Japan, not merely parallels; a grand scheme in which the strategists of the Axis view every sea and landmass in the world as "...one gigantic battlefield."<sup>507</sup> According to Rosenman, Roosevelt still considered Hitler's Germany to be the first target despite the Japanese attack; Germany had yet to declare war on the United States when the Fireside Chat was broadcast, but Roosevelt and his speechwriters were acting under the assumption that the German declaration of war would occur very soon,<sup>508</sup> they turned out to be right, as Germany would declare war on the United States only two days after the Fireside Chat was aired.<sup>509</sup> He then lists several Axis attacks on other countries in the past decade starting with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and ending with the attack on Pearl Harbor; every item on the list ends with the phrase "without warning" which further emphasizes the parallels between the United States and the other victims of Axis aggression; notably, the acts of aggression on the list perpetrated by Japan on Manchuria, Malaya, Thailand and the USA are stated as having been performed by "Japan" and Italian acts of aggression on Ethiopia, France and Greece are stated as having been performed by "Italy," but the German acts of aggression on

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<sup>505</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 308.

<sup>506</sup> Roosevelt, "War with Japan – December 9, 1941," 198-99.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>508</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 308.

<sup>509</sup> Roosevelt, "War with Japan – December 9, 1941," 198.

Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Russia are instead stated as having been performed by “Hitler.”<sup>510</sup> Rosenman states that Roosevelt feared that sections of the public would want the war against Japan prioritized over, or at least treated with equal importance to, the inevitable war against Germany,<sup>511</sup> which may have been a reason why Hitler’s is repeated several times, while Mussolini’s name is mentioned a single time and Japan’s leadership is only ever referred to as “the military dictators of Japan,”<sup>512</sup> an approach that only provides the enemy in Europe with a name and face while leaving the enemy on the Pacific front relatively abstract, possibly with the intention to focus the nation’s anger towards the repeatedly named Hitler. Establishing the Axis’ record of aggressive international action immediately after condemning the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and repeatedly mentioning Hitler by name after having painted Germany, Italy and Japan as a unified force can be said to carry the implication that Hitler is culpable for the attack on Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt describes the war, which every American is now part of, as “the most tremendous undertaking of our American history” and asserts the need to share both good news and bad news before admitting to have only bad news thus far from setbacks in Hawaii and the Philippines to the uncertainty in Guam as well as Wake and Midway islands.<sup>513</sup> He then empathizes with the anxiety felt by the families of members of the armed forces as well as those of civilians who live in cities that have been bombed, before promising that official information for the will only be delayed for the purposes of confirmation and denial of potentially useful information to the enemy; afterwards he

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<sup>510</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>511</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 308.

<sup>512</sup> Roosevelt, "War with Japan – December 9, 1941," 199.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid., 199-200.

urges the public to reject rumormongering as it can cause real harm by sowing chaos and forcing the government to release critical information to combat it.<sup>514</sup> This was the first, but certainly not the last, Fireside Chat for which military security was a concern. The scope of the damage done by the attack on Pearl Harbor had only become clear after the smoke had cleared in the aftermath; and while many in Washington, including Archibald MacLeish who was helping with the Fireside Chat, believed that the public needed to be informed fully of the situation as soon as possible, there was a certain amount of uncertainty on just how much the Japanese knew about the extent of their success, and the President came to the decision to err on the side of caution and share only the military information that couldn't be of use to the enemy;<sup>515</sup> this decision would later be formed into the general principles for public dissemination of war information that the information shared had to be accurate, and of no use to the enemy.<sup>516</sup> By providing factual information on the bad news that might otherwise become subjects of rumor, Roosevelt establishes the official channels as reliable, before asking the public to avoid rumormongering and pointing out the potential for harm that lies in seeking or disseminating unsanctioned information. He urges patience with the flow of information, as wartime requires the restriction of the military use of rapid forms of communication readily available in peacetime such as the radio, for fear of the enemy listening in.<sup>517</sup> He then addresses the press, pointing out that they have a great responsibility to the nation for the duration of the war, and that while they have the right to express their discontent should they feel that the government isn't sharing enough information with the public, it

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<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 309.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>517</sup> Roosevelt, "War with Japan – December 9, 1941," 201.

would be unethical of them to disseminate “unconfirmed reports in such a way as to make people believe they are gospel truth,” reminding his audience that the lives of soldiers and sailors in military service, thus the future of the nation is at stake, and that they each have the same responsibility.<sup>518</sup> He then defends his prior policies through the war by pointing out that the preparations made since the fall of France strengthened the United States, and that the aid sent abroad bought time in which the country could build up its strength, and its capacity for production.<sup>519</sup> Roosevelt emphasizes the difficulty of the path ahead as he points out that not only citizens the military but civilians will have to toil hard and give up much to make victory possible, as the United States maintained a steady supply of war production both for itself and for its allies; every war industry would need to work seven days a week for uninterrupted production and war production capacity would have to be increased both by building new plants for war industries and by repurposing existing plants.<sup>520</sup> “The United States does not consider it a sacrifice to do all one can, to give one’s best to our nation, when the nation is fighting for its existence and its future life.” he asserts, arguing that it is instead a privilege to serve in the nation’s time of need; he makes his point about sacrifice immediately before speaking of what shortages there will and will not be, remarking that while there will be no restrictions on food, there will most definitely be a shortage of metals for civilian uses.<sup>521</sup> Roosevelt then underlines that a final and complete victory is the only acceptable end to this conflict, and that the United States needs to ensure it can avoid another treachery like Pearl Harbor, and it thus needs to give up on the “illusion” that isolationism is possible; he expounds

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<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid., 201-02.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid., 202-03.

that the seas do not make country immune to attack, that they are no defense against sneak attacks “...in a world ruled by the principles of gangsterism.”<sup>522</sup> He acknowledges the skill with which the enemy accomplished the dishonorable act of treachery in attacking Pearl Harbor, and posits that war fought in the “Nazi manner” is “dirty;” accusing Germans of threatening Japanese with no share of the spoils should they fail to attack the United States, and that they were promised control over the Pacific islands as well as the west coast of the Americas; suggesting that the Axis possesses a clear global strategy where its members’ successes benefit one another and that Germany and Italy are at war with the United States even if they pretend otherwise; he argues that this global Axis strategy needs to be opposed by a global strategy where American successes will be helpful to the allies of the United States and vice versa.<sup>523</sup> The President sets an ambitious goal for the war, “not for conquest, not for vengeance, but for a world in which this nation, and all that this nation represents, will be safe for our children;” proposing that it will be through building a new world in which such a war cannot happen that true victory can be won, that defeating Japan will fall short of that goal should Germany and Italy triumph.<sup>524</sup> He then asserts that, even with such a grand goal, “...we are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows.”<sup>525</sup> President Roosevelt concludes this fireside chat with one of his appeals for international unity, asserting that the vast majority of humanity would side with the United States in this war, all of them praying for the United States even if they’re not among the number already fighting the enemy.<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Ibid., 203-04.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid., 204-05.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

David Lawrence, in a column published on December 10 but presumably written earlier judging by his omission of the declaration of war on December 8, echoes Roosevelt's argument that "Hitler – not just Japan – has attacked the United States." by "using the militarists of Japan as his catspaw" to thwart the Japanese liberals and moderates, predicting that the attack on Pearl Harbor will result in national unity across party lines, the armed forces operating on war basis without waiting for the Congress, longer work shifts, the United States being forced to reduce aid to Britain as Hitler likely intended, united action with Russia and China in the Far East and prioritizing arming the latter, labor legislation passing easily through the Congress with the acceptance of management and the isolationists dropping their feud with Roosevelt as it has become meaningless with their theory of American immunity to attack disproven; Lawrence also suggests that the war production so far had been accomplished in spite of disunity in the past two years, and that the unity brought on by the attack will result in a war effort intensified to an unprecedented degree, and reminds his readers that a war with Japan also means one with Italy and Germany as well since the latter two are obliged by a treaty, noting that Japan's justification for the attack will likely be the United States' federal government's aid to the Chinese in the recent months, with the United States seeing the matter as an obligation to assist the victim of Japan's violation of its promise in the nine-powers treaty to respect China's territorial integrity, and concluding that "international law has resolved itself into a program of protective neutrality for democracies which see their treaties ignored as the forces of aggression break loose throughout the world,"<sup>527</sup> likening the isolationist doctrine of being protected by the

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<sup>527</sup> David Lawrence, "Washington," *Monrovia Daily News-Post*, December 10, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

Pacific and Atlantic oceans to the French overdependence on the Maginot line in that both were approaches that were doomed to failure, describing the Congress' mood as "militant" and suggesting that the United States may act with more "offensive spirit" than in the previous war, but warning that underestimating enemies is a "poor policy;"<sup>528</sup> he later notes that Roosevelt's prediction that Hitler would declare war on his own time has come true, as did the assumption held by many in Washington since the Tripartite Pact that the United States would eventually be attacked by the Axis, though he points out that most had not expected that it would be Japan who dealt the first blow, pointing out that the nation's production capacity and military readiness is nonetheless far better than it was during the entry into the prior war, and suggests that what needs to be guarded against at this stage is a drop in morale that may come with a "hysterical stage" among the populace should the enemy send long-range aircraft on suicide missions to attack civilians in order to demoralize the United States, counseling a measured confidence and arguing that while there is reason for concern and gravity, there is no reason for self-doubt.<sup>529</sup> Lawrence does not hesitate to carry on criticizing Roosevelt's labor policy of continuing to attempt to gain the voluntary cooperation of the unions, stating it has failed before and will fail again, especially since the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations have admitted to an inability to control their local branches, accusing the administration of placing "social gains" above national security and "coddling pressure groups,"<sup>530</sup> railing against the President for trusting labor to

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<sup>528</sup> David Lawrence, "Washington," *Monrovia Daily News-Post*, December 11, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>529</sup> David Lawrence, "Washington," *Monrovia Daily News-Post*, December 16, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>530</sup> David Lawrence, "Washington," *Monrovia Daily News-Post*, December 12, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

voluntarily handle labor disputes but refusing to extend the same trust to management by supporting the repeal of the legislation which allows the government to seize plants where management refuses to follow the rulings of the Mediation Board, arguing for the necessity of criticism in times where mistakes can cause great losses of life.<sup>531</sup>

Walter Lippmann notes that the attack on Pearl Harbor has indeed united the American people, but remarks that this is not enough, that the people must “wake up” for victory to be possible, he points out that the isolationist “delusion” almost kept the United States from preparing enough and already resulted in a defeat at Pearl Harbor and argues that to fight an “isolationist war” against Japan would be to play into the Axis’ hands as they surely hope that rage will blind the United States in war just as complacency had blinded it until a few days ago, suggesting that this is typical of Hitler who hoped “to separate his Russian campaign from Britain and America” “by raising the specter of Bolshevism” and now hopes to separate America from her natural allies in this shared struggle, and that without a unified strategy an eventual defeat is impossible even if Japan itself is defeated, concluding that this war must be fought as a coalition against the Axis coalition;<sup>532</sup> he also points out that the illusions which led to being caught unprepared at Pearl Harbor, the illusions that the oceans were a sufficient defense and that none would attack the United States unless the United States chose to intervene elsewhere were almost never challenged after the First World War until they began to be intensely debated in 1940, suggesting that this failing, and thus culpability in failing to prevent the

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<sup>531</sup> David Lawrence, “National Affairs,” *Pasadena Star-News*, December 16, 1941.  
<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>532</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, December 10, 1941.  
<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

attack on Pearl Harbor, on the part of the nation as a whole needs to be admitted to reunite the United States “solidly and profoundly in bonds of truth and affection.”<sup>533</sup> Lippmann paints a grim picture, pointing out that the public will need to live austere, as though martial law is in effect even when it is not, “...subordinating absolutely everything, as far as possible voluntarily, to the gigantic effort we must make to survive;” he warns that the war cannot be fought effectively if admirals and generals are forced to reveal military information to congressional committees to defend their conducts, thus revealing the same information to any enemy spies or their unwitting sources, as was the case during the Civil War, and that public opinion cannot control the details of how a war is conducted, pointing out that Pearl Harbor was an example of what happens when one side prepares and conceals its strategy while the other openly publishes its plans with accompanying statistics; he argues that imposing immediate and substantial sacrifices will see the public rise to the occasion as they understand their individual importance to the war effort, the war’s concrete effect on their individual lives and just how much is at stake.<sup>534</sup>

Mark Sullivan recounts that he was at dinner with journalists, radio commentators and public officials, several of whom were highly knowledgeable on the latest information on the state of affairs with Japan, when the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor had arrived and that the reaction to it had been one of disbelief, since Japan had been soliciting talks for some time at that point, suggesting that this mistake of believing

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<sup>533</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Berkshire Eagle*, December 18, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>534</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, December 15, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

in the good intentions of a potential enemy was morally to the credit of the United States in spite of being a mistake, since Japan turned out to be engaged in “calculated treachery,”<sup>535</sup> and points out that while an isolated war against Japan could be won without an excess of difficulty, such an isolated war is merely an academic idea as Japan has certainly attacked Pearl Harbor to force the United States into active combat and reduce the lend-lease supplies received by Britain and Russia, both of whom are actively fighting Hitler, arguing that to concentrate fully on Japan would satisfy the rage felt by the American people but ran the risk of both Britain and Russia being defeated leaving the United States alone and that the wiser course is to keep a stalemate against Japan while continuing to supply Britain and Russia, and notes that both the Dutch East Indies and Britain have joined the war on Japan in support of the United States and China has joined Russia and Britain against Germany, counseling that the United States should pool resources, including manpower, with its allies wherever advantageous.<sup>536</sup>

Westbrook Pegler remarks that while he may very well be the one American who has most “angrily detested” the application of the New Deal, “. . .no American more admires now the tenacious bravery of Pres. Roosevelt in his war policy than this author of many criticisms of the Roosevelt administration.,” and praises Roosevelt for seeing the evidence others averted their eyes from and setting out to psychologically preparing the public for the coming war; he recounts the challenges and criticisms the President faced from the moment of his quarantine speech in Chicago, how he was accused of attempting

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<sup>535</sup> Mark Sullivan, “U.S. Action in Pacific Seen Credit to America,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, December 13, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>536</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Need Arises For Troops To Serve Anywhere,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, December 11, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

to distract from internal matters and wanting to sacrifice "...our whole American way of life to rescue and avenge the European Jews.," how he was charged with wanting to sacrifice his country to save the British and with warmongering, and how his attempts to mend bridges with Russia were "pounced upon and torn to tatters," remarking that a weaker man would have given ground rather than stand by his conviction as Roosevelt did,<sup>537</sup> and that the United States has Roosevelt to thank for seeing through Hitler before other leaders, and not allowing his country to be caught unprepared in the way the French and the British were in terms of military readiness, and Hitler's aggression to thank for the unity enjoyed this day.<sup>538</sup>

As 1941 ended and 1942 began, the United States and its allies were suffering continuous defeats.<sup>539</sup> Former isolationists now urged focusing all military efforts on fighting Japan on the Pacific front,<sup>540</sup> a sentiment shared by many Americans, with Hearst-McCormick newspapers almost charging Roosevelt with treason for not immediately sending all possible forces to liberate the Philippines and defeat Japan.<sup>541</sup> The American people had become accustomed to having the confidence to face any nation in battle with ease, and now they were facing rapid defeats against Japan in the Pacific, a country which had been viewed as a significantly lesser military force for quite some time.<sup>542</sup> The sense of unity felt after Pearl Harbor was slowly giving way to

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<sup>537</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "Even Pegler Admits FDR Was Right," *The Capital Times*, December 11, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>538</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "We Should Thank Hitler for Unity of the People of U.S.," *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, December 14, 1941. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>539</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 206.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>541</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 326.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

defeatism,<sup>543</sup> a sentiment that Roosevelt feared may grip the nation.<sup>544</sup> It was in this “atmosphere of black defeat” that he decided on Washington’s Birthday of February 23 for his first Fireside Chat in the year 1942.<sup>545</sup> Rosenman views this Fireside Chat as perhaps even more effective than the very first Fireside Chat broadcast from the White House in 1933; and points out that it essentially had the same purpose of explaining complicated facts to a frightened public and of reassuring them of their government’s willingness and ability to defend their interests.<sup>546</sup> President Roosevelt’s intention for this Fireside Chat, written with assistance from Rosenman, Harry Hopkins and Robert Sherwood, was to explain as much of the grand strategy employed by the United States and its allies as possible without arming the enemy with useful information, and to reassure the public of victory; for this he decided to ask the newspapers to print world maps so that the radio audiences could follow as he asked them to look at their maps and spoke of places they had never heard of; Roosevelt had faith in the American people, he believed, in his words quoted by Rosenman that “...if they understand the problem and what we are driving at, I am sure that they can take any king of bad news right on the chin.”<sup>547</sup>

The President opens this Fireside Chat by taking advantage of airing it on Washington’s Birthday, and drawing parallels between the current war and the American Revolution; noting that General Washington and his army faced consecutive defeats and bleak odds, just as the United States does now, and that Washington presented “a model

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<sup>543</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 206.

<sup>544</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 329.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>546</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*, 329-30.

of moral stamina,” staying the course and fighting on for eight long years because he and his army knew there could be no security of life or property without freedom and free institutions to safeguard it, just as the United States now will remain undaunted because they know there can be no safety of personal freedoms or property anywhere in the world unless liberty and justice is secure everywhere in the world,<sup>548</sup> casting the Second World War as a larger, newer repetition of the Revolutionary War as far as the position of the United States as the defender of liberty and as the underdog facing formidable odds was concerned, with the implication that victory in such circumstances is not only possible but likely. Then he begins his explanation of the grand strategy employed by the United States and its allies and asks his listeners to follow on their maps; prefacing his explanation with the assertion that the war fought now is unprecedented in its methods and scope, with battle-lines encircling the globe, that “The broad oceans which have been heralded as our protection from attack have become endless battlefields on which we are constantly being challenged by our enemies.”<sup>549</sup> He emphasizes the importance of the United States defending its supply lines and lines of communication with its allies, of not allowing the Axis to enact their strategy of dividing and conquering the United States, Great Britain, Russia and China; from there, he responds to some critics’ “foolish advice” to focus solely on defense, pointing out that if such a strategy of defense alone was followed, China that has been fighting Japan for 5 years and costing them troops and war materials, and who would be instrumental in defeating Japan, couldn’t be supported; that the loss of communications with the Southwest Pacific would see them fall to Japan and divert forces against the United States; that stopping the flow of munitions to British and

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<sup>548</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fighting Defeatism – February 23, 1942," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 207.

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.*, 207-08.

Russian forces fighting the Axis, it would make it easier for Germany to conquer the Middle East as well as North Africa, and the coast of West Africa, which would enable them to strike South America with ease; that a cessation of the North Atlantic supply line would cripple the Russian counter attack on Germany and starve Britain of food and munitions; having outlined these various problems with what he calls “turtle policy,” he derides the former isolationists with the accusation that they once wanted the American eagle to act like an ostrich and now want it to become a turtle instead, and asserts that most Americans disagree with them, instead wanting the policy of “carrying the war to the enemy” as far away as possible,<sup>550</sup> implying that his opposition’s goal of preventing further attacks on the continental United States is better served by his methods than it would be by the methods they suggest. Roosevelt also makes it a point to praise the allies that the United States would be letting down by following the “turtle policy,” placing particular emphasis the Chinese for their bravery in their “magnificent defense” against the Japanese, and the Russians for their “splendid counteroffensive” against Germany,<sup>551</sup> possibly in a preemptive response to any allegations of the supplies and arms sent to allied forces being wasted. He then outlines four main lines of communication in the North Atlantic, the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, through which troops and supplies are sent and raw materials are received; lines which require great determination and greater production of materials and ships to carry them to maintain as well as the holding of many strategic bases by “the United Nations” to keep both the sea and air routes that make up these lines secure.<sup>552</sup> This is the first of many times Roosevelt

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<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*, 208-09.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*, 209-10.

refers to the Allies as the United Nations in one of his Fireside Chats; according to Rosenman, Roosevelt was proud of having coined the term “United Nations” to express the unity of purpose possessed by the Allies, which had seen its first official use on the first of January with the signing of the Declaration of the United Nations<sup>553</sup> less than two months before this Fireside Chat. Afterwards, Roosevelt goes into greater detail, explaining that controlling the air, requires the heavy bombers and smaller planes ranging from light bombers to dive bombers, torpedo planes and short-range pursuit planes to cooperate, with the smaller planes providing essential protection not only to the bombers but also to the strategic bases charged with defending the lines of communication; he continues that while the heavy bombers possess ranges long enough to fly to the Southwest Pacific, the smaller planes do not, and must be sent as cargo carried by ships instead, which, he notes while indicating the map, requires traveling a long route across either the South Atlantic, or the South Pacific, which takes around four months for a round trip.<sup>554</sup> He contrasts this logistical situation to that of Japan in the Southwest Pacific, pointing out that, due to having bases in the Pacific Islands, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaya, Japan is able to launch even short-range aircraft, granting them a significant initial advantage; he then outlines how Japan was able to encircle and cut the Philippines off from support as soon as they attacked Pearl Harbor, thanks to having the Philippines surrounded on three sides already due to controlling the Coast of China and the coast of Indochina to the west, Japan itself to the north, and the mandated islands, which they occupied and fortified in direct violation of their treaty obligations, to the

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<sup>553</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 315-17.

<sup>554</sup> Roosevelt, "Fighting Defeatism – February 23, 1942," 209-10.

east.<sup>555</sup> He then explains that while there is an American outpost between Hawaii and Philippines in Guam, it was never fortified as the United States had agreed not to further fortify the Philippines under the Washington Treaty of 1921 thus depriving the Navy of a secure base, and elaborates on the American “strategy born of necessity,” which, having been decided as a response to a hypothetical Japanese invasion of the Philippines four decades ago, is engaging a delaying action and slowly withdrawing towards the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor, and fighting war of attrition; though he makes sure to mention that in spite of the logistical difficulty presented by this distance, the past two and a half months have been enough to transport large numbers of American bombers, pursuit planes and troops to the Southwest Pacific where they currently engage in operations against the enemy on both the air and the ground; noting that the plan against Japan always was to leverage the United States’ ability to outproduce and overwhelm it in the long term while minimizing its gains in the short term; he emphasizes that nothing in that strategy of buying time to build has failed, and in fact, “the defense put up by General MacArthur has magnificently exceeded the previous estimates of endurance;” that the task for both “ Mac Arthur’s army of Filipinos and Americans” and the forces of the rest of the United Nations in the Pacific front remains as making Japan pay for every conquest.<sup>556</sup> By first establishing the logistical difficulty of transporting planes and troops across the Pacific and contrasting it to the positioning of Japanese forces prior to the beginning of hostilities, Roosevelt is able to paint an effective picture of why the United States is struggling against a foe who should have lesser resources, that it is due to not being able to bring its full might to the battlefield, just as Japan intended; and while

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<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, 210-11.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*, 210-12.

providing one of the reasons why the American military presence in the Philippines required reinforcements from the mainland in the first place, that the United States abided the agreement not to further fortify the Philippines, he also makes use of the opportunity to contrast the United States' conscientious approach to diplomacy to the Japanese willingness to violate their written word. All of these combine to make a narrative of well-planned and executed treachery on the part of Japan, which granted it a temporary advantage over the honorable United States, and of American determination and calm, rational action slowly turning the tide. The President then addresses rumors of the devastation suffered at Pearl Harbor directly enabling Japanese successes, dismissing them as Axis propaganda; he includes his listeners by using "you and I" while expressing contempt for Americans who echo these ideas, and make baseless claims of a destroyed Pacific Fleet, a thousand planes lost and twelve thousand soldiers dead; baseless claims which, he posits, are quoted by almost every Axis broadcast.<sup>557</sup> He points out that the public is aware that military information cannot be shared until the government is certain that it is already known by the enemy; and suggests that the American people need to have confidence that the government would not hide more than what is demanded by military security, just as their government has confidence that the American public can learn the worst without being demoralized; arguing that while a "pact of truth" between the government and the people is essential to democracy, there is a clear need for discretion even if one is critical of the government.<sup>558</sup> "To pass from the realm of rumor and poison to the field of facts," he cites the facts the government is able to share without compromising military security, saying that the death toll of Pearl Harbor reached 2340

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<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-13.

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.*

and the number of wounded 946, with only three of the ships based at Pearl Harbor being permanently disabled in the attack and the rest either being currently repaired or already on the way to rejoining the Pacific Fleet, many ships of which weren't even at Pearl Harbor at the time of the attack; while he dismisses the claims of a thousand destroyed planes as baseless rumors, he refuses to cite a factual number due to military security, but asserts that the number of Japanese planes destroyed by the United States exceeds the number of American planes destroyed by Japan even when taking Pearl Harbor into account.<sup>559</sup> He admits to taking losses in both the Pacific and the Atlantic, and that there will be more, that ground has been yielded; he asserts that it will be regained, that it will soon be time for the United States to go on the offensive, that “we, not they, will win the final battles; and we, not they, will make the final peace.”<sup>560</sup> He states that all conquered nations in Asia and Europe know that the future can only be “honorable and decent” for any of them or any of the Allies if the United Nations can overcome the “forces of Axis enslavement,” remarking that this goal can only be met in any capacity as long as the public at home can keep fulfilling the production goals without interruption, enabling the United Nations to attain and maintain an overwhelming superiority in the seas and in the air; he assures his listeners that based on the progress made since the beginning of the year, the yearly production goals set then will be fulfilled despite what Axis propaganda may claim.<sup>561</sup> He calls for further expansion of military production, pointing out that while the Axis powers approach their production capacity, the United Nations, especially the United States, can do so much more; and praises the national unity displayed and

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<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*, 213-14.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, 214-15.

selfless combined efforts made by capital, labor and farming thus far, painting an inspiring picture of men and women across the country willingly facing down difficulties and making sacrifices to save the lives of the soldiers and sailors on the battlefield and democracy as a whole; announcing that "...we can lose this war only if we slow up our effort or if we waste our ammunition sniping at each other."<sup>562</sup> He outlines "three high purposes for every American" to be kept in mind through the war; that the work can never stop, with disputes to be resolved via negotiation while work continues "until the war is won;" that no one is to demand special treatment for any group or occupation; and that conveniences are to be given up and day-to-day life is to be modified when the nation requires it; he asserts that, as the current generation of Americans have realized, there are things more important than the well-being and desires of individuals, and that people will sacrifice for the country gladly because they know the future of the nation to be at stake.<sup>563</sup> Axis propaganda, he says, having tried and failed to undermine the resolve of the American people in various ways, now attempt to damage the United States' confidence in its allies with "absurdities" that the British, the Russians and the Chinese are close to surrendering; rather than immediately arguing against these claims, Roosevelt instead chooses to first paint a picture of the untrustworthiness of Axis propaganda by bringing up pre-Pearl Harbor claims of the Americans being a "soft and decadent" nation that would hire other nations to fight for them, lacking the will to work and fight themselves, claims he dismisses by reminding the public of the hard fighting the United States is engaged in, concluding with a triumphant "Let them tell that to the marines!"<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 215-16.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

This last sentence, Rosenman attributes to Sherwood and describes as a “ten-strike” for how it combines a common colloquialism with praise for the courage of the United States Marines, and an appeal to national pride.<sup>565</sup> Having established the unreliability of enemy propaganda as a source of accurate information, he declares that the independent peoples making up the United Nations by coming together in united purpose are of equal dignity and importance, and equally share the suffering brought by war with equal zeal, each of them having several essential parts to play in the unified plan of action to defeat the Axis.<sup>566</sup> Having expounded on the virtue of international cooperation for a common goal, the President then takes a moment to provide an example to the principle explained and reiterate the importance of the part United States needs to play in this enterprise and once more stresses unity, as the production that the American people need to contribute “...means a national unity that can know no limitations of race or creed or selfish politics;” expressing confidence that the American public can and will prove their determination both to themselves and to their foes.<sup>567</sup> Returning to the matter of America’s allies, he announces that on the topic of the terms of peace, the United Nations agree on principles such as disarming aggressors, nations’ right to self-determinate and the four freedoms, as outlined by the Atlantic Charter apply to all nations of the world.<sup>568</sup> The Atlantic Charter had been pronounced in August 1941, and it had incorporated two of the four freedoms Roosevelt had first outlined in his annual message to the Congress on January 7, 1941, freedom from want and freedom from fear;<sup>569</sup> but Roosevelt refers to

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<sup>565</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 332.

<sup>566</sup> Roosevelt, "Fighting Defeatism – February 23, 1942," 216.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>569</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 217.

each of the four freedoms, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear,<sup>570</sup> this may be because the Declaration of the United Nations, signed on January 1, 1942 might have been the agreement on principles by the United Nations Roosevelt was referring to; which did include a provision for “religious freedom” which Roosevelt had reworded in hopes of convincing Maxim Litvinov of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to sign the document, arguing that the term “religious freedom” included freedom not to have or to oppose religion unlike the term “freedom of religion,” though Rosenman expresses a belief that Moscow must have had another reason for allowing Litvinov to sign it, Litvinov had signed it after the change had been made, and Roosevelt had considered the resolution of this dispute his accomplishment, and taken pride in his part in it;<sup>571</sup> the Declaration by the United Nations does not, however, make any mention of freedom of speech, despite including a broader acceptance of the Atlantic Charter, and thus, the freedoms included within, but does include a more general resolution to defend “liberty” and “human rights,”<sup>572</sup> which may have been enough for Roosevelt to consider freedom of speech to be present in spirit if not in letter. The Declaration by the United Nations also includes an agreement by signatories to refuse to sign separate peace and armistice agreements with the Axis powers,<sup>573</sup> which supports Roosevelt’s desire to emphasize the unity of purpose among the United Nations, which continues in the next section of his Fireside Chat, where he asserts that while the British and the Russians suffered the full might of the Nazis and

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<sup>570</sup> Roosevelt, "Fighting Defeatism – February 23, 1942," 217.

<sup>571</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 316.

<sup>572</sup> "Declaration by United Nations." *Library of Congress*. <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000003-0697.pdf?loclr=bloglaw> (accessed December 31, 2019).

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.*

there have been times when their fates were in peril, there never was a point when their determination wasn't beyond question; he also acknowledges that the Dutch continue to fight "powerfully" despite being occupied, and "unbeatable" China's determination even after its capital of Chungking was almost destroyed as he argues for the "conquering spirit" of the United Nations.<sup>574</sup> He concludes this Fireside Chat against despair by tying it back to Washington, by quoting the opening words of *The Crisis* by Thomas Paine,<sup>575</sup> saying "'Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the sacrifice, the more glorious the triumph.' So spoke Americans in the year 1776. So speak Americans today!"<sup>576</sup>

Walter Lippmann criticizes President Roosevelt's slowness when it comes to "divesting himself of authority and of detaching himself from friends who are not equal to their task," describing him as "the bottleneck of all bottlenecks," and advising that he should rapidly reconstruct his administration following Churchill's example and especially make changes to his cabinet, which he views as a whole to be currently "too weak" to both advise the President on policy and to enforce policy on bureaucrats and pressure groups in spite of several cabinet members he remarks to be highly qualified or at least adequate, specifically objecting to lack of leadership on the part of the Secretary of Labor Perkins, lack of understanding of wartime needs by the Secretary of Commerce Jones, and the Secretary of State Hull and the Under Secretary of State Welles for their failure to find sufficiently competent subordinates for important foreign and domestic

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<sup>574</sup> Roosevelt, "Fighting Defeatism – February 23, 1942," 217.

<sup>575</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 218.

<sup>576</sup> Roosevelt, "Fighting Defeatism – February 23, 1942," 218.

posts;<sup>577</sup> he later praises Roosevelt's Fireside Chat, remarking that while the President has many failings as an administrator, he possesses keen insight as well as more information concerning the war than any other man in the country, crediting him for having "understood this war long years before his countrymen" and seeing it more objectively now, and suggests that Roosevelt's radio address must be read with an understanding of not only what he says but also of what he cannot say; he points out how the President refrains from making it clear that if he had been heeded and supported rather than hindered by others in his efforts to take "preventive measures" against this situation since his quarantine speech in 1937, the United States would undoubtedly be in a better situation now, remarking that Roosevelt is similar to Churchill in being called upon by his country "to remedy disasters which his countrymen refuse to let him prevent," and that the difficulty of maintaining communication lines with the nation's allies is due to the nation's failure to heed its President's warnings until Pearl Harbor, reminding his readers that while Roosevelt was only able to speak of the present situation and not at liberty to discuss plans for future offensives, this does not mean he has no clear understanding of how to proceed, and that while the speech may have created the impression that the American war effort consists of "nothing more than a series of last-ditch stands all over the world," this impression cannot be correct given the current scale of mobilization and the offensive power being built up in the United States, arguing that the war seems to have been going in the Axis' favor because they've had little to defend and plenty to attack, and that they are currently at a disadvantage as they have come to a halt before the "citadels" that are Britain, Russia, China and the United States; Lippmann

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<sup>577</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, February 25, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

remarks that a major disadvantage that the United States suffers from is having a public that is bad at keeping secrets, pushing the President and his advisors to silence to avoid leaks, and recommends that, should the need arise, Roosevelt may need to make use of Hitler's tactic of providing many different plausible explanations for that which cannot be fully hidden.<sup>578</sup>

David Lawrence expresses concern over a secrecy bill in consideration which would make it illegal to divulge information declared secret by statute or by the head of any executive department, taking issue with it giving department heads this authority and not including a stipulation of this law being limited to war time, calling it a "cloak of secrecy that can cover up incompetence and scandal" that was either incompetently written or, if it is indeed deliberately written, corroborates "the fears so frequently expressed by critics that the war is being used to convert the American democracy into a totalitarian system."<sup>579</sup> Lawrence remarks on the positive public reception of Roosevelt's latest Fireside Chat, noting that it appears that the President's "optimistic assurances" and "empathic repudiation" of pessimism are what the American people like to hear, pointing out that Roosevelt refrained from disclosing how long it would take to repair the ships damaged at Pearl harbor as it is important military information but that "the tenor of his address" implied they would return to service soon, praising the "superb job" the President did in undermining Axis propaganda and in explaining the importance of long distances and shipping to a war of this scale, but pointing out that Roosevelt's remarks on

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<sup>578</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *Oakland Tribune*, February 26, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>579</sup> David Lawrence, "Washington," *Monrovia Daily News-Post*, February 24, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

naval strategy will lead to debate among naval experts, some of whom already criticize basing the battle fleet at Pearl Harbor, the lack of a scouting fleet in the Far East to guard against such an attack and the prior policy of being passive in response to the Japanese fortification of mandated islands,<sup>580</sup> and predicts that a favorable end to the war by 1944, suggesting that “there is no justified reason for either defeatism or undue pessimism;”<sup>581</sup> he further expounds on the duty of the government’s critics in wartime, quoting the President’s remarks on the “solemn pact of truth between government and the people” and adding to them a “solemn pact of truth” between the public and “those who endeavor to tell them the truth as they see it,” remarking that in such times it would be easier to remain silent than it would be to criticize, suggesting that in times of war it is even more important than usual to ensure that leaders are reminded of their shortcomings so that they can make corrections, citing Walter Lippmann’s latest criticisms of the Roosevelt administration mentioned above and the administrative shortcomings of President Roosevelt discussed therein as an example.<sup>582</sup>

In the two months since the Fireside Chat on February 23, 1942, the military situation had not visibly improved, and had even gotten worse; with the United States forces in the Philippines under siege at Corregidor in Manila Bay.<sup>583</sup> Debate between British and American officials on where to attack Germany to relieve the pressure on the Soviet Union was slow, with Secretary of War Stimson along with Generals George C.

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<sup>580</sup> David Lawrence, “Washington Slant of David Lawrence,” *The Evening News*, February 25, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>581</sup> David Lawrence, “Over-Pessimism Possible, Too,” *The Knoxville Journal*, February 25, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>582</sup> David Lawrence, “Today in Washington,” *The Kokomo Tribune*, February 27, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>583</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 219.

Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower recommending an invasion of continental Europe and Winston Churchill objecting to the plan.<sup>584</sup> In this context of military uncertainty, it might be viewed as strange to place such emphasis on a domestic matter such as inflation. For President Roosevelt, however, inflation was not a purely domestic matter; according to Rosenman, the President viewed inflation as “inseparably bound up with winning or losing the war” and always stressed this whenever he spoke of inflation in public or private; Roosevelt considered not just the financial consequences of inflation but also the impact it could have on the morale and determination of the public when it came to how inflation could affect the war; he was concerned how inflation could demoralize the American people and divert their energies from war production to a struggle with making ends meet, and how it could seriously increase the chances of strikes in vital industries; Rosenman asserts that nothing worried Franklin Roosevelt more than inflation, and on no other non-military matter did he spend so much of his time and effort.<sup>585</sup> The Fireside Chat of April 28, 1942 was written, for the most part, alongside the message to the Congress that Roosevelt intended to send on April 27 of which it included several parts, while the President was still in the process of deciding policy, and he’d only made up his mind on some issues when the final draft of the message to Congress was concluded.<sup>586</sup> On April 10, a conference of the heads of several agencies with a part in stabilizing the economy was scheduled, and the Bureau of Budget had put together a report and suggested some measures before the end of March; disputes were particularly pronounced on the matter of whether or not wages should be frozen and whether there

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<sup>584</sup> Ibid.

<sup>585</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 333.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid., 333-34.

should be compulsory pay-deductions to buy war bonds; Rosenman prepared an early first draft of the message on April 11; after which Rosenman and Sherwood had put together a draft on April 22 after consulting Bernard Baruch on the matter, who sent Rosenman a few paragraphs for the speech and advised that both wages and farm prices needed to be frozen in order to effectively control inflation; but Roosevelt was reluctant to add the fixing of the farm prices to the initial draft he dictated on April 23 based on the earlier draft by Rosenman and Sherwood, because he was certain that the Congress wouldn't accept it, and feared that the Congress' rejection may provoke labor leaders into protesting the freezing of wages; Leon Henderson, administrator of the Office of Price Administration, objected to the President's first draft as he felt that a refusal to fix farm prices at parity would inevitably result in higher wages becoming necessary; eventually, Rosenman, Sherwood and Harry Hopkins managed to convince the President to include fixing farm prices at parity in his final draft, by arguing that if the Congress refused the measure after being explained its necessity, then it would be their fault and not Roosevelt's.<sup>587</sup> The final draft of the speech wouldn't be concluded until 6 PM on April 28, only a few hours before it was broadcast.<sup>588</sup>

Roosevelt opens this Fireside Chat with an overview of the global situation. He notes that five months have passed since the United States officially entered the war after Pearl Harbor, and that preparations for war production had been ongoing for the two years before then in a way that did not affect the daily lives of most Americans; now, he says, as the United States' Army and Navy fight abroad all over the world, war

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<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*, 334-40.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.*

production is being expanded in a way that tested the industrial, economic and engineering abilities of the nation, acknowledging that the work at hand is both difficult and lengthy; he lists several locations around the world where American forces are located, emphasizing the sheer size of the struggle, and turns to specific portions of the war; on the European front, he praises “the great armies of Russia” for their “crushing counteroffensive” against the Germans that is “destroying more armed power of our enemies... than all the other United Nations put together,” and condemns the collaborators of Vichy France and assures his listeners that “the overwhelming majority of the French people,” know that the United Nations are on their side, mentioning the United Nations’ current efforts to prevent the Axis from utilizing French colonies and their eventual goal of liberating the “darkened continent” of Europe itself.<sup>589</sup> He reminds his listeners that like France, many occupied nations still fight and resist the Axis in any way they can, and suggests that German and Italian peoples, in contrast, increasingly despair of Fascism and Nazism, citing the frantic speeches of Hitler and Mussolini, and how different they are from the “arrogant boastings of a year ago;” it’s only after these points that he acknowledges that the United Nations “have passed through a phase of serious losses” in the Far East, that the Japanese have “inevitably” taken most of the Philippines, the Malayan Peninsula and Singapore, as well as most of the Dutch East Indies, that Japan continues its northward advance despite being “bravely” resisted by small British and Chinese forces and American planes, and that Japanese forces are advancing enough in Burma that they may cut the Burma Road,<sup>590</sup> the main supply line to

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<sup>589</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A Call for Sacrifice – April 28, 1942," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 220.

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*, 220-22.

the Chinese forces.<sup>591</sup> He promises that supplies and munitions will always be delivered to Chiang Kai-shek's forces, regardless of how much Japan manages to advance, and acknowledges that China has fought the Axis the longest, and posits that "...in the future a still unconquerable China will play its proper role in maintaining peace and prosperity, not only in eastern Asia but in the whole world,"<sup>592</sup> the latter remark being one of Roosevelt's "most fervent hopes" according to Rosenman.<sup>593</sup> He points out that these advances on the part of Japan have been paid for in a large number of vehicles and men that they have lost, citing bombs dropped on Tokyo for the first time in its history as an example of Japanese defeats; he argues that while the United States was ultimately drawn into the war by the attack on Pearl Harbor, the American people were "spiritually prepared" for the war when it came, and ready to fight the "total war" Hitler proclaimed.<sup>594</sup> He suggests that while not everyone can contribute to the war directly by fighting or working in war industries, every American can contribute on the home front, where they can "have the privilege of making whatever self-denial is necessary," to help the war effort both by aiding the armed forces and by keeping the economy functioning; he dismisses any claims of the American public being complacent, citing letters he receives from Americans who all ask what more they can do to help; he then further emphasizes the importance of the economic portion of the war, asserting that it will cost more than any nation has ever spent in history, citing the present war spending figure of \$100 million per day and stating that this amount will be doubled within the year; but, he says, continued spending of this magnitude is dangerous to the economy since all this

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<sup>591</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 222.

<sup>592</sup> Roosevelt, "A Call for Sacrifice – April 28, 1942," 222.

<sup>593</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 342.

<sup>594</sup> Roosevelt, "A Call for Sacrifice – April 28, 1942," 222-23.

money flows into consumers' pockets, and increasing demand for civilian goods the supply of which grows smaller as the nation becomes more and more geared towards war production, which "you don't have to be a professor of mathematics or economics to see," would drive prices for these goods higher.<sup>595</sup> Thus, he bridges the state of the war effort to the economic measures he'd proposed the day before, preparing his audience for the sacrifices he's about to suggest by granting them a glimpse of the difficult military situation, by maintaining the importance of what can be contributed on the home front and by explaining the problems that the ongoing wartime production can lead to.

Roosevelt then outlines his seven point plan to control inflation; advising the reduction of corporate and personal profits by greater taxation including by limiting the yearly income of every citizen to 25,000\$ after taxes, imposition of ceilings on prices and rents, the stabilization of both wages and farm prices, increased spending on war bonds, the rationing of scarce but essential commodities, and discouragement for installment buying and encouragement for the paying off of debts and mortgages; he posits that these points all need to be applied in a "simultaneous attack" on all factors that can lead to inflation for the desired result, and paints potential critics as perfectly willing to approve of self-denial on behalf of others while objecting only to what inconveniences them, while emphasizing that every American from businessmen, retailers and landlords to workers, with the implication that no one group will be unfairly persecuted or privileged under the program; he remarks that the rationing of goods and the need for all Americans to forego non-essential spending shouldn't be called a "sacrifice," as it is the price for civilization.<sup>596</sup> He declares that this is not a price too high for civilization, and points

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<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*, 223-24.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, 224-25.

towards the millions living under the “tyranny of Hitlerism,” to paint a vivid picture of what his listeners stand to lose; he cites French, Norwegian and Dutch workers “whipped to labor by the lash” to contrast this loss to that of freezing wages; he cites Polish, Danish, Czechoslovakian and French farmers robbed of their own crops as they starve to defend fixing prices at parity; he cites European businessmen whose enterprises have been stolen to defend the limitation of personal and corporate profits; and he casts “women and children whom Hitler is starving” against the smaller cost that is the rationing of sugar and gasoline.<sup>597</sup> Repetition is used for emphasis in this portion of the Fireside Chat, with each point being phrased as direction for the audience to ask the victims mentioned whether the corresponding measure is too great a “sacrifice” to avoid their fate; with the clear implication being that these greater woes can be avoided by accepting the smaller limitations, and thus the latter should not be viewed as sacrifices, since the result of said sacrifices will be to the long-term benefit of those making them. The President follows up with a few lines that similarly use repetition for emphasis as he attacks critics, asserting that “this great war effort... must not be impeded by” the selfish, “the faint of heart,” those who “pervert honest criticism into falsification of fact,” “self-styled” experts with no real knowledge of the fields they judge, or “bogus patriots” who echo enemy propaganda and hide behind the “sacred” freedom of press; he uses these smaller offenses to build up to the greatest one, the true villain of the piece, concluding with the assertion that the war effort must not be imperiled by “the handful of noisy traitors” who, betraying America and Christianity, accept “Hitlerism” and want the nation to follow suit.<sup>598</sup> He expresses confidence that the American people will gladly embrace

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<sup>597</sup> Ibid., 225-26.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid., 225-26.

the “equality of sacrifice” to attain victory in the war; the first war, he asserts, in which the bravery and determination of civilians played such an important role; crediting the courage of British civilians for preventing Hitler’s victory since 1940, and reminding his listeners that American civilians are currently safe from incidents that would leave their cities as ruins, with the armed forces continually fighting to keep them that way.<sup>599</sup>

Rosenman recounts how Roosevelt, when faced with the difficulty of dramatizing the rear-guard action the armed forces were engaged in at the time and needing a way to bolster the American public’s morale, decided to feature specific examples of individual heroics and asked for official documents to be brought, from among which the three most compelling were selected.<sup>600</sup> The stories eventually chosen to be featured in the Fireside Chat, were the story of Dr. Corydon M. Wassel risking his life to stay behind with the wounded men he was charged with caring for when the armed forces needed to retreat before the Japanese advance and transporting them fifty miles to the coast on improvised stretchers so that they could be evacuated, being awarded the Navy Cross afterwards; the return to service of the submarine USS Squalus which, after being sunk off the coast of New England in 1939, was raised from the seafloor repaired and joined the Southwest Pacific Navy as USS Sailfish, having sunk a Japanese destroyer and torpedoed a Japanese cruiser once and an aircraft carrier twice, a story which Roosevelt describes as “heartening” as he summarizes it as the lost submarine rising from the depths to fight for the United States in its time of need; and the daring escape of the crew of the “Army Flying Fortress,” as Roosevelt often refers to heavy bomber planes, piloted by Captain Hewitt T. Wheelless, who, after losing contact with the four other bombers on the same

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<sup>599</sup> Ibid., 226-27.

<sup>600</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 340-41.

mission due to a temporary engine failure, completed their mission to bomb Japanese troop ships en route to the Philippines in spite of facing heavy resistance by the Japanese fighters who had scrambled in response to the bombing run by the four planes that had arrived earlier, and escaped after a seventy-five mile-long pursuit battle despite taking heavy damage and losing a member of the crew, Captain Wheelless having been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross afterwards.<sup>601</sup> Mentioning that Captain Wheelless hails from a small town in Texas with a population of 2375, the President stresses that these stories are not exceptional, but “typical examples of individual heroism;” calling his audience to think of the example set by the armed forces when considering their own contributions, and reminding his listeners that for all their training and discipline, both the Army and the Navy are made up of free individuals from all walks of life; individuals whom, along with the civilian individuals make up the United States of America; these many individuals are for whom the soldiers fight and the civilians work and sacrifice “It is for them. It is for us. It is for victory.”<sup>602</sup> He thus concludes the Fireside Chat forming links between the sacrifice he rallies his listeners to and the heroism shown by the armed forces, positioning self-denial as the civilian equivalent of the feats of martial heroism he narrates.

Westbrook Pegler objects to Roosevelt’s tax proposal, specifically the limitation of personal incomes to \$25,000 per year after taxes, attacking “the revolutionary suggestion of a top limit on the price of every American’s ability and ingenuity” as actually a product of the United Auto Workers under the Congress of Industrial

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<sup>601</sup> Roosevelt, “A Call for Sacrifice – April 28, 1942,” 227-29.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

Organizations, whom he accuses of engaging in a strike at North American Aviation out of loyalty to “Mother Russia” while it was allied to Germany with the intention of preventing the production of planes for Britain and the United States, a strike the President himself had denounced as “communistic;” as evidence, he cites Eleanor Roosevelt’s mention of an offer by the UAW for the workers to accept non-negotiable bonds in lieu of overtime pay exceeding 40 hours per week in exchange for a legal limit of 25,000\$ in a column published on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, an offer he dismisses as “99 per cent fake,” pointing out that the official form of the offer itself admits that the total money paid for these bonds would be “tremendous,” that bonds would be loans and thus be subject to interest and that the difficulty of issuing bonds for small amounts money would most likely mean that these bonds would be kept in general custody by the unions from whom he finds it unlikely for the workers themselves to reclaim their money;<sup>603</sup> he further criticizes the administration for siding with the unions against business, suggesting that the large majority of unionized workers would leave unions if not for and attacks the unions “falsely referred to as labor” for using the nation to emerge as “a new internal force” governed by a small elite that will “inherit the government” after the war.<sup>604</sup>

David Lawrence remarks that the President’s seven point program outlined in his Fireside Chat was “more of an effort to stimulate a nation-wide discussion” on what changes needed to be made to win the war than a “formula for legislation,” pointing out

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<sup>603</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “America Can Thank UAW for \$25,000 Tap on Personal Incomes,” *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, April 29, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>604</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough,” *Valley Morning Star*, April 29, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

that it will be up to the Congress to write the legislation necessary for accomplishing the program, and arguing that, while the President omits the freezing of wages in his legislation proposal given to the Congress, he is aware that if the rest of the program is enacted labor will have to acquiesce anyway, since the cutting of salaries and profits will necessitate it, suggesting that allowing business to take initiative in acquiescing to such a drastic program, thus leaving labor with no room to complain, will succeed at stabilizing wages where the War Labor Board failed;<sup>605</sup> he criticizes the \$25,000 limitation on individual earnings after taxes, though with less vitriol than Pegler, remarking that the policy would be a particular strain on individuals paying for insurance and saving the money, even though these would not contribute to inflation, which the policy is aimed towards combating, suggesting that the policy would have been more positively received if the limitation was after taxes and after savings in either insurance or war bonds, and notes that charities may be hit particularly hard by the policy as may institutions that rely on philanthropy, such as hospitals, churches and schools; he also accuses the administration of failing to sufficiently concern itself with the fate of small businesses who will be affected by the new limitation on corporate profits, pointing out that, while the President urges the elimination of private debts as an insurance against post-war depression, these debts would be more difficult to pay under the taxes brought on by the proposal, and proposes that a tax deduction for debt reduction would help smaller businesses, which would otherwise be rendered unable to compete with larger, more established businesses under the new tax policy;<sup>606</sup> a few days afterwards he calls the

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<sup>605</sup> David Lawrence, "National Affairs," *Pasadena Star-News*, April 30, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>606</sup> David Lawrence, "Today in Washington," *The Kokomo Tribune*, April 29, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

resulting flat 90 per cent tax on excess corporate profits agreed upon by the House Ways and Means Committee and the Treasury a “death sentence on competitive enterprise,” pointing out that it applies to all businesses large and small with no distinction, despite the fact that the resulting tax rates are ones large and established companies can absorb without difficulty but are nearly prohibitive for small and indebted companies.<sup>607</sup>

Walter Lippmann criticizes the President’s seven point program on the grounds that it will be insufficient to control inflation, remarking that even if the program is completely accepted and enacted, then there will still be far too much excess purchasing power left in the nation for inflation to be effectively checked, and proposes that, while the taxation of the rich and the moderately-well-to-do is a step in the right direction, the new income taxes will need to reach all the way down to the lowest income earners to allow the problems presented by the rest of the program to be far more manageable; he responds to some of Roosevelt’s critics, suggesting that the President’s approach to problems is “wiser than many of his critics are willing to admit,” especially in the field of labor, where he remarks that Roosevelt’s insistence on voluntary cooperation by labor will yield far surer and more satisfactory result if what is required is accomplished with the active assistance of labor leaders and union than it would be if the workers’ will to work was impaired by laws forbidding strikes, freezing industrial relations and wages without the voluntary cooperation of labor, causing the impression that the war is being

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<sup>607</sup> David Lawrence, “90 Pct. Flat Tax on Corporation Profits Marks Beginning of End for Small Business Firms in America,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, May 2, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

used as an excuse to break up unions and destroy collective bargaining, leaving the workforce feeling oppressed, listless and ready to listen to agitators.<sup>608</sup>

Mark Sullivan explains the President's seven point program through expounding on how much money war bonds are worth, giving examples of what could be bought with the money one spends on a low denomination war bond and explaining that the program is meant to keep the value of war bonds at roughly the same, by keeping the prices of goods from rising by law, while wages are to be kept from rising by the administration, which he notes will be the deciding factor as rising wages will mean rising prices for everything else "with the sky the limit," but, he remarks, "the end would be, not the sky, but hell – economic and social hell," and advises his readers to buy war bonds to help the President avert this inflationary scenario;<sup>609</sup> though he remains critical of Roosevelt's labor policies, suggesting that that the War Labor Board, having labor disproportionately represented, is circumventing the democratic system as it makes rulings that the Congress would not agree with.<sup>610</sup>

The next Fireside Chat was broadcast only a little more than four months after the prior, and was concerned with some of the same issues. President Roosevelt's prediction April that the Congress would refuse to fix farm prices at parity, and that labor would object to the stabilization of wages without similarly stabilized food prices<sup>611</sup> had turned out to be accurate and the discussion on what should be done about it had lasted

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<sup>608</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Walter Lippmann," *The Ottawa Journal*, April 30, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>609</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Mark Sullivan says: Buy war bonds – and help preserve their value," *The Ottawa Journal*, May 2, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>610</sup> Mark Sullivan, "WLB Rule on Unions Held Class Government," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, May 2, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>611</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 339.

throughout the summer.<sup>612</sup> Stabilization measures had been passed in May, but due to lobbying by the farm bloc, farm prices had been set at over 100% of parity, which had resulted in an increase of around 3 percent per month for food products that weren't being controlled; this, along with the approaching elections within the year, had led to wages being allowed to increase alongside the food prices.<sup>613</sup> Rosenman points out how short the time between the messages to the Congress on April 27 and on September 7 on the same topic were, and remarks that this should help clarify the magnitude of Roosevelt's worries on the matter, which the President had privately often spoken of with "genuine fear and concern," thinking on it as much as war production.<sup>614</sup> With his advisors split between urging the President to bypass the Congress and use his wartime powers to stabilize prices and wages via executive orders and urging him to renew his appeal to the Congress and the public with a new message and Fireside Chat, Roosevelt chose a compromise between the two and made use of his message to the Congress and Fireside Chat on September 7, 1942 to issue an ultimatum that he intended to use war powers if the Congress couldn't pass the necessary legislation within the month; this proved successful and the Congress passed the stabilization legislation, with the President establishing the Office of Economic Stabilization via executive order on October 3, 1942.<sup>615</sup>

Though the United States had attained victories in the war that Roosevelt could speak of to bolster morale, he wanted continue including stories of personal heroism, a

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<sup>612</sup> Ibid., 356-57.

<sup>613</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 230.

<sup>614</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 357-58.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid., 357-60.

few which Sherwood and Rosenman had gathered, and one of which Roosevelt opens his Fireside Chat with to establish the theme of sacrifice.<sup>616</sup> The story of individual heroics the President opens his chat with is the story of Lieutenant John James Powers, a Navy pilot flying a dive bomber, who destroyed two enemy gunboats, severely damaged an aircraft-tender and transport and helped sink an aircraft carrier, before being caught in the blast of his own bomb while attempting recovery from the low altitude he had dived to in order to guarantee a direct hit on the carrier; Roosevelt announces that the now missing in action Lieutenant Powers is awarded the Medal of Honor and quotes some of Powers' words to his squadron in the morning of the battle, saying "Remember, the folks back home are counting on us. I am going to get a hit if I have to lay it on their flight deck."<sup>617</sup> "You and I are 'the folks back home'" Roosevelt explains his point, arguing that just as the civilians count on the soldiers and sailors to sacrifice for them, the soldiers and sailors also count on the civilians to do their part; he points out that between January 1, 1941 and May 1, 1942, the "cost of living," his preferred term when speaking of inflation, rose by 15%, and that it kept rising despite government efforts to freeze it due to the Congress' insistence on maintaining exemptions from price controls for a significant portion of farm products.<sup>618</sup> At this point the President interrupts his argument to describe "parity" as a standard for farm prices which would grant farmers relatively equivalent purchasing power to that of city workers, as has been accepted by farmers, based on the prices of the relatively prosperous times three decades prior to the adoption of parity prices as a part of

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<sup>616</sup> Ibid., 358-59.

<sup>617</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Stabilization of the Price of Food – September 7, 1942," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 231.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid., 232.

national policy in 1933,<sup>619</sup> referring to the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 which included provisions to ensure farmers received parity prices.<sup>620</sup> He then returns to criticizing the Congress, noting that their passing of a law forbidding prices ceilings on farm prices below 110% of parity, alongside the existing exceptions which granted even higher ceilings to some commodities, increased food prices for everyone, from the workers in the cities to the farmers themselves, as a result of the Congress' "act of favoritism."<sup>621</sup> The prices for nearly all commodities have been controlled via price ceilings with the exception of some farm products, Roosevelt states, and notes that while wages in some key war industries have been stabilized, they will need to be raised if food prices continue to increase as they do as a matter of both "essential justice" and "practical necessity;" he emphasizes that the cost of living can be controlled only as long as everything that factors into it can be controlled as well; and warns that while the current rise to the cost of living is small, a "vicious spiral of inflation" could endanger the production program, lead to the dollar losing twenty percent of its value, and an increase in the cost of the war beyond existing calculations alongside the demoralizing effect of such uncontrollable inflation could make it harder to win the war.<sup>622</sup> Roosevelt then refers to his message to the Congress delivered earlier in the day, announcing his ultimatum that should the Congress fail to authorize the president to stabilize both wages and farm prices by the first of October, he will accept responsibility and utilize his office's wartime powers to take measures on matters that would interfere with the war effort.<sup>623</sup> He notes

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 232.

<sup>621</sup> Roosevelt, "Stabilization of the Price of Food – September 7, 1942," 232-33.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid., 233-34.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid.

that while the option to act without Congressional approval was considered, he decided that the Congress needed to be consulted first; casting his ultimatum as the only course that would satisfy both his presidential responsibility and his commitment to democratic processes.<sup>624</sup> He expounds on the necessity of wartime powers and the importance of executive power in a war of this scale, promising to use them responsibly but without hesitation when necessary to ensure victory and that these powers will “automatically” revert to the public.<sup>625</sup> Roosevelt then returns to the matter of farm prices, expressing his belief that farmers are as patriotic as any other group within the nation, reminding his listeners that farmers have suffered a great deal from price fluctuations and that they are as much victims of the inflation as the rest of the country; outlining his proposal to pair price ceilings for the duration of the war with price floors extending beyond the war to avoid the perils of both inflation and a post-war crash in farm prices similar to what happened after the end of the previous war,<sup>626</sup> referring to his farm support program, which Rosenman credits as “...one of the most important causes for the unbelievably immense production of farm products during the war.”<sup>627</sup> The President then reiterates the importance of taxation to keep personal and corporate profits below a certain amount in order to both control inflation and to help fund the war, which, he reminds his audience, is a global war that is expected to cost up to \$100 billion in 1943.<sup>628</sup> Now armed with American victories in the Pacific, such as the Coral Sea, Midway and Guadalcanal, to speak about,<sup>629</sup> Roosevelt’s discussions on the state of the war sound

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<sup>624</sup> Ibid., 234-35.

<sup>625</sup> Ibid.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid., 235-36.

<sup>627</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 358.

<sup>628</sup> Roosevelt, "Stabilization of the Price of Food – September 7, 1942," 236.

<sup>629</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 358-59.

markedly brighter than in his prior chats since Pearl Harbor, but he is still careful not to be overly optimistic. He opens his report on how the war is proceeding by expanding his prior statement concerning the global nature of the war and its expected cost, and dividing the war into “four main areas,” but not without reminding his listeners that each of these areas are both “vital” and “interrelated;” the Russian front, where he acknowledges that Germany gained territory, but argues that they failed in their real task of destroying Russian armies, praising the Russians for their “brilliant” performance in outdoing all other fronts in both destroying German planes and tanks and in killing Nazis; the Pacific Ocean, where he announces that the United States, has stopped a major Japanese offensive and dealt heavy losses to the Imperial Japanese Navy at Midway, but warns that the foe is still strong and will certainly attack again; the Mediterranean and the Middle East, where Roosevelt paints a picture the combined forces of many of the United Nations in a desperate struggle against German and Italian forces seeking to take control of the area, acknowledging the danger of an Axis victory in taking control of the area, but expressing hope in the outcome; and finally Europe, where the President suggests that the objective of an offensive against Germany can begin at “at least a dozen different points,” but refrains from divulging further information beyond an assurance that preparations to face Germany on Europe are underway at both the United States and Britain;<sup>630</sup> according to Rosenman, the plan to invade Europe had been subordinated to the African front, but Roosevelt chose to mention plans for it both to keep the enemy guessing and to clarify to the public that he did not think that Germany could be defeated without ground forces in Europe.<sup>631</sup> He responds to critics suggesting that one front should be focused on, stressing

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<sup>630</sup> Roosevelt, "Stabilization of the Price of Food – September 7, 1942," 236-37.

<sup>631</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 359-60.

that no theater of war will be neglected, and that decisions that cannot be shared with the public yet for taking the offensive are being made.<sup>632</sup> He favorably compares the American efforts in the past nine months since Pearl Harbor to the first nine months of American involvement in the First World War, pointing out that three times more American troops have been sent overseas this time in spite of greater danger and fewer ships, with the number of men in combat areas increasing constantly, and stresses that the United States and the rest of the United Nations have now attained superiority in weapons with which to arm already superior men and that the coordinated efforts of these forces will be what wins the war.<sup>633</sup> Roosevelt concludes this Fireside Chat by reminding his audience of the stakes, the thousands of Americans who have already died defending the nation and of the millions ready to replace them, tying it to the home front by arguing that just as self-sacrifice by soldiers placing their duty before their safety is necessary to win the war, so is self-sacrifice by civilians placing their duty before their own “comfort,” “convenience” and “pocketbooks;” describing the war as “the toughest war of all time,” and asserting that “We need not leave it to historians of the future to answer the question whether we are tough enough to meet this unprecedented challenge. We can give that answer now. The answer is yes.”<sup>634</sup>

David Lawrence remarks that Roosevelt’s message to the Congress has caused a great deal of resentment in both the supporters and opponents of the administration, as has “not only set himself up as an economic czar but as a monarch of everything else;” he notes that the President’s insistence for legislation to freeze farm prices and that it does

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<sup>632</sup> Roosevelt, "Stabilization of the Price of Food – September 7, 1942," 237.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*, 237-38.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*

not need to freeze wages as well is regarded by many as nothing more than a way for him to avoid clashing with the unions, with some asserting that the 110 per cent of parity part of the farm law was allowed by the administration, who only made an attempt to eliminate it once it reached the Senate,<sup>635</sup> though he points out that as resentful of the President's handling of the issue and how it deprives them of the opportunity to campaign for the upcoming elections as the Congress may be, they will most likely pass the legislation he seeks for the executive to set up a system similar to the War Labor Board for controlling farm prices;<sup>636</sup> and he describes the President's speech itself as an "unnecessary confirmation" of the suspicion held by the opposition since the beginning of the war that war powers would be used to develop "a virtual dictatorship over the economic system"<sup>637</sup> but "a masterpiece of economic reasoning," remarking that the importance of preventing runaway inflation is not in question, expressing disappointment that "the legislative branch has to be bludgeoned by the executive and given a time ultimatum to do that which it logically ought to do anyway," suggesting that the President's words will be remembered as "marking an epochal change" in the relations between the executive and legislative branches of government, as Lawrence does not find it likely that a president ever spoke as bluntly and threateningly to the Congress before; he argues that, while critics will not hesitate to remark that Roosevelt's ultimatum implies nothing less than dictatorship, many will find the President's words to "manifest a sense of despair on the part of the President" concerning the Congress' willingness to do what

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<sup>635</sup> David Lawrence, "Roosevelt Is the Economic Czar," *The Daily Telegram*, September 10, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>636</sup> David Lawrence, "National Affairs," *Pasadena Star-News*, September 12, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>637</sup> David Lawrence, "Roosevelt Is the Economic Czar," *The Daily Telegram*, September 10, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

is required, and that the public will side with the President as the Congress has undermined its prestige by blatantly placing farm bloc politics before the national interest, concluding that this situation serves to highlight an actual weakness of the current way in which the government operates, as there is no procedure in place to prevent the exercise of arbitrary authority by a president in advance, with only impeachment making it possible to constitutionally remove a president from power.<sup>638</sup>

Mark Sullivan states that while the President giving the Congress an ultimatum of this sort is as dictatorial as it sounds, he reads the message as a whole as an admission of fault and a promise to remedy it, pointing at Roosevelt's promise to stabilize wages simultaneously with the Congress stabilizing farm prices, reading it as a solemn and perhaps "sheepish" pledge, remarking that the wording of the President's promise "seems to admit" that the Congress blames him for failing to do something in the past; Sullivan explains the history of the conflict between the Congress and the President, with the administration having ensured that wages would not be controlled by legislation but by the War Labor Board, leading to a stalemate between the executive and legislative branches of government waiting for the other to act, with the farm leaders in Congress increasingly convinced that Roosevelt was politically fearful or protective of labor based on his interventions to keep the Congress from passing legislation meant to restrain labor, this stalemate resulting in escalating wages and prices which led to the President's current step.<sup>639</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> David Lawrence, "Blunt Talk Makes History," *Nashville Banner*, September 11, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>639</sup> Mark Sullivan, "As Sullivan Sees It," *Johnson City Chronicle*, September 15, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

Westbrook Pegler suggests that the United States needs to face the fact that it has developed a habit of allowing the national government more power than it constitutionally should have whenever some kind of crisis occurs and that as a result of the successful handling of the crises represented by the First World War and the Great Depression were resolved by granting increased authority to the government, the nation “got into an easy habit of expecting Washington to mow the lawn, wind the clock and change the baby;” he notes that this war is no different, saying it is “silly” to pretend that the current state of things is the American system of government, and that to win the war, all are willing to acquiesce to allowing the government authority to do all that it deems necessary to that end, from union bosses to the “red-hot anti-New Dealers,” all agreeing to trust “the people to reassert themselves after victory,” because, while it is not possible to have price and wage controls in a strictly constitutional government, “. . .but if you don’t have controls Hitler stands a better chance to lick us and, licked or not, we surely would have inflation.”<sup>640</sup>

While the stabilization bill President Roosevelt had asked for was being debated in Congress, the President left Washington on the presidential train on September 17,<sup>641</sup> on what Rosenman calls “one of his ‘secret’ inspection trips” throughout the country.<sup>642</sup> Roosevelt’s trip of over 8750 miles first took him to a tank factory in Detroit, which he visited via his car driving through the assembly line, then to Chicago, Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Texas and New Orleans before

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<sup>640</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough,” *Rutland Daily Herald*, September 12, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>641</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 239.

<sup>642</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 360.

returning to Washington; throughout the trip many stops were made to visit various war production facilities.<sup>643</sup> Upon returning, he decided to deliver another Fireside Chat, the first draft of which he dictated before it was worked on by Rosenman, Sherwood and Harry Hopkins.<sup>644</sup> According to Rosenman, his trip had convinced Roosevelt that the United States had taken the lead in war production, which had, combined with the Allies finally taking the offensive for the first time since Pearl Harbor and with the Russian success of stopping the German offensive at Stalingrad making the long-sought second front a possibility in the near future, filled him with a surging confidence that could be felt in his voice as he sought to share his impression of what he had seen with the public.<sup>645</sup>

President Roosevelt begins his Fireside Chat on October 12, 1942 by mentioning his recent trip, and ties the unity of purpose and “unbeatable spirit” he saw in citizens to a portrait of the war as a unified effort with every citizen fighting in their own way from the miners deep underground to the pilots soaring in the sky in spite of any difference in individual circumstances and opportunities; and jokes that German and Japanese leaders would agree with him if only they could have joined his trip.<sup>646</sup> The Axis, he suggests, has already reached the peak of its strength, while the United Nations continues to rise, and enemy leaders know their defeat is now inevitable; he applauds “the common sense of the common people” in continuing to prevail against the enemy’s favored tactic of a “war of nerves” and states that the enemy propagandists are now on the defensive; and he

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<sup>643</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 239.

<sup>644</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 360-61.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>646</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A Trip across the Country – October 12, 1942," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 240.

assures his listeners that while atrocities by the Axis powers increase as their defense grows frantic, there will be no mass reprisals by the United Nations against the populations of Germany, Italy or Japan, and that evidence is being collected and that only the guilty will be tried for these crimes when the war ends.<sup>647</sup> He explains the need for this trip, saying that he needed to understand the perspective of the millions of Americans in industry and military camps, and couldn't attain this information in Washington, standing by his decision to travel with minimal publicity and politics, as it yielded him what he calls "a good cross-section" of the war production effort; his account of the war production facilities is full of glowing praise, though there is a note of vindication in his mention of this current production being possible thanks to the government having begun the building of factories more than a year before Pearl Harbor; he saves particular praise for the increasing proportion of women in the workforce who, he stresses, work just as hard and skillfully as their male peers, if not more so, and the courage of the men in the expanding merchant marine, mentioning Edward F. Cheney of Yeadon, Pennsylvania who received the first Maritime Distinguished Service Medal for rescuing his fellow sailors from the water when their ship was sunk; tying his words on the performance of the workers in war production facilities to reports of the performance of the weapons produced and announcing that the United States was now getting ahead of the enemy in war production.<sup>648</sup> He then refers to the Congress' response to his ultimatum a month prior, applauding them for the quick and effective way in which they took measures to control inflation, as well as the rapid manner in which Congress' decision was implemented, describing it as "a splendid example of the operation of democratic

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<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-42.

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.*, 242-44.

processes in wartime;”<sup>649</sup> possibly adding the specification of “in wartime” to further assure his audience that this was a special circumstance, and as he’d said a month prior, that the powers that enabled the office president to present the ultimatum he had would revert to the public at the end of the war.<sup>650</sup> According to Rosenman, the important difficulty of the hour was manpower, both in industry and in the military, and the decision was made to reduce the age for selective service while relying on voluntary participation for other labor.<sup>651</sup> Roosevelt leads into this new difficulty from his announcement of success in battling inflation, pointing out that the nation has the means to meet the problem, in that it has enough people to fill the gaps in manpower, but that it will be “putting the right numbers of the right people in the right places at the right time” to fix the deficits in manpower that will present a challenge; he suggests that manpower will need to be rationed as materials are being rationed, with the priorities being the selection and training of “men of the highest fighting efficiency” for the armed forces and the manning of war industries and farms to supply the United States and its allies.<sup>652</sup> Beyond measures for preventing unexpected shortages of labor in war industries by restraining employees and employers, and measures to gradually replace able-bodied young men with older, handicapped men or women whenever practical, Roosevelt also recommends that school authorities should make plans to allow high school students to take time off from school and their summer vacations to assist in harvesting crops or in war industries; he argues that just like the nation cannot afford to waste manpower in non-essential industries and in transporting workers where workers living nearby are

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<sup>649</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>650</sup> Roosevelt, "Stabilization of the Price of Food – September 7, 1942," 234-35.

<sup>651</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 361.

<sup>652</sup> Roosevelt, "A Trip across the Country – October 12, 1942," 244.

available to fill their spot, indulging employers' prejudices against employing women and minorities cannot be afforded either; he advises all citizens who are uncertain where they can be most helpful to the war effort to consult their nearest United States Employment Service office to be directed to where they are most needed.<sup>653</sup> He states that the most difficult portion of the manpower problem may be the shortage of farm labor and praises existing voluntary efforts to meet the problem by the public; giving examples from his trip of a community that used the help of the entire student body of the local high school to harvest a perishable crop, and of another community of fruit growers who all took time off from their jobs to help gather the fruits in the absence of the usual Japanese labor.<sup>654</sup> The President does not comment on the reasons for the unavailability of Japanese labor, but as this Fireside Chat was delivered only seven months after he had signed the executive order that authorized the Secretary of War and any military commanders designated by the Secretary of War to prescribe military areas from which any person could be excluded for the purposes of defending against espionage and sabotage in February, 1942,<sup>655</sup> and the Exclusion Order No. 34 based on this authority had excluded citizens of Japanese descent from the West Coast war area in May, 1942,<sup>656</sup> it is possible that the community Roosevelt mentioned was located in said area and was suffering the side effects of this executive order. Having provided examples, Roosevelt encourages farmers and their communities to engage in further voluntary efforts to continue and to increase farm production even as the government continues to assist in acquiring the

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<sup>653</sup> Ibid., 244-45.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid.

<sup>655</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive Order, " Authorizing the Secretary of War to Prescribe Military Areas, Executive order 9066 of February 19, 1942," *Federal Register* Vol.7, no. 38 (February 25, 1942), 1407, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1942-02-25/pdf/FR-1942-02-25.pdf>.

<sup>656</sup> *Korematsu v. United States*, 323 U.S. 214 (1944).

manpower to help, emphasizing that farm production is both a part of war production and is essential for the war effort; but, he warns, there is a chance that voluntary efforts, regardless of their magnitude, will be insufficient in resolving the manpower deficit in production, and suggests that in such a case, new legislation to use the apparatus of the Selective Service system to meet the problem may become necessary,<sup>657</sup> but he wouldn't feel compelled to recommend these mandatory measures until the needs grew worse in 1944.<sup>658</sup> He then mentions having watched the training of the armed forces in military camps during his trip, and from there leads into his recommendation that the minimum age for Selective Service be lowered from twenty to eighteen, emphasizing the importance of youth in war and asserting that a younger fighting force will be more effective than an older one; he assures parents of the men in the armed forces that their sons are receiving the best possible training, equipment and medical care, and he expresses empathy for their feelings, saying that both he and his wife understand and feel the same,<sup>659</sup> referring to their four sons that were in military service at the time.<sup>660</sup> Having addressed the significant issues of the hour, Roosevelt then takes the opportunity to respond to the critics in the press who objected to the military strategy being followed at the time; according to Rosenman, the President was bitter about their criticism especially because there were facts in consideration that these critics, some of whom were accusing him of acting on his own without consulting anyone, were unaware of and couldn't be made aware of for reasons of military security.<sup>661</sup> He calls these critics "typewriter

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<sup>657</sup> Roosevelt, "A Trip across the Country – October 12, 1942," 245-46.

<sup>658</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 361.

<sup>659</sup> Roosevelt, "A Trip across the Country – October 12, 1942," 246-47.

<sup>660</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 246.

<sup>661</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 361.

strategists” and paraphrases the words of Robert E. Lee that it’s sad that all the finest generals seem to be working as journalists instead of soldiers; pointing out that the critics are not in possession of all the facts that inform the decision-making of military readers, and assuring his listeners that the joint staff of the Army and the Navy are constantly in session and routinely consult with representatives of the joint staffs of the other United Nations, whom, he stresses, are all trained professionals in military matters that are in “substantial agreement” on matters pertaining to the unity of operations underway since January; and asserts that many major decisions have been made, including the launching of new offensives on Germany and Japan to divert enemy forces from Russia and China.<sup>662</sup> According to Rosenman, the reference to Lee came from a letter, which had been set aside in the speech-material file, sent to the President by R. C. Leffingwell in March, 1942, where *Lee the American* by Gamaliel Bradford had been quoted.<sup>663</sup> Roosevelt’s conclusion to this Fireside Chat expounds on the United States’ role in the world; as the speech was being delivered on Columbus Day, the President celebrates the accomplishments of Christopher Columbus, whose discovery of the New World he casts as the creation of an asylum of liberty and tolerance for the oppressed; the American military action abroad to provide aid to the downtrodden of the world, he argues, is a logical conclusion of the ideals that flourished in the New World, and rejects the notion that the United States should leave the rest of the world to “stew in its own juice” once the Axis begins to collapse, saying “It is useless to win a war unless it stays won.” and insists that the military power of Germany, Italy and Japan needs to be dismantled to such

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<sup>662</sup> Roosevelt, "A Trip across the Country – October 12, 1942," 247-48.

<sup>663</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 362.

a degree that the threat they represent will not be revived “a generation hence;”<sup>664</sup> most likely referring to the mistakes made at the conclusion of the First World War, which had led to this war only two decades later. Rosenman notes that Roosevelt was reluctant to speak on the international role he expected the United States to assume after the war in any detail, as so little had been decided on the making of a world organization; but that the President had felt that with the prospects of the war looking brighter, it was now appropriate to speak on it, and began his attempts to build up a popular acceptance of the idea “that America henceforth had an international role to fill,” not just in conducting the war but also after its conclusion.<sup>665</sup>

Westbrook Pegler criticizes the newly passed law limiting personal incomes to \$25,000 as communistic, referring to it as “Mrs. Roosevelt’s law,” and notes that the process of its passing began with being “proposed by an organization heavily infested with communists,” followed by Eleanor Roosevelt’s and the President’s advocacy, facing rejection by the Congress only to be “enacted by decree,” when the Congress responded to the President’s ultimatum by granting him greater executive powers, arguing that the mention of contribution to the war effort in the law’s phrasing of “to provide for greater equality in contributing to the war effort” is “dressing” and that the law’s purpose is to establish a precedent for the government limiting incomes “...with the unspoken provision that the maximum may be scaled down to a subsistence rate.”<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>664</sup> Roosevelt, "A Trip across the Country – October 12, 1942," 248.

<sup>665</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 362-63.

<sup>666</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "Fair Enough," *The Berkshire Eagle*, October 13, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

David Lawrence remarks that the President's Fireside Chat coincided with the news of the loss of three United States cruisers, and he suggests that, while Roosevelt made no mention of these losses, the news will strengthen rather than weaken the public impact of the President's appeal for co-operation, and notes that Roosevelt's tone on the war was one of confidence, in contrast to the recent scare "issued" by some figures in Washington; he remarks that the farm labor shortage is unlikely to be solved as simply as the President's suggestion to enlist the help of high school students implies, and that the new revisions in the draft legislation, which Roosevelt warns the public to contain provisions for the draft of males aged 18 to 20, will most likely need to contain provisions to reduce the draft's impact on farm labor, predicting that the manpower problem will soon become a principal issue affecting the country.<sup>667</sup> Lawrence also objects to the personal income limitation law, remarking that the limited number of skilled managers in such an expanded industry has meant that the most competent industrial managers have had to work increased hours and that the new law will now penalize them on top of it and leave them unmotivated, suggesting that the real reason for the law is not because the President believes that restraining the highest personal incomes is useful for conducting the war, but because he has promised this to labor in exchange for their willingness to accept a freezing of wages, essentially sacrificing the managerial minority to avoid the consequences of the inflation promoted by the administration via its policy of granting privileges to labor;<sup>668</sup> he raises questions about how the legislation will

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<sup>667</sup> David Lawrence, "President Offsets Scare About Losing War by His Note of Confidence, Expressed at Time When Events Take Turn for Better," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, October 14, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>668</sup> David Lawrence, "National Affairs," *Pasadena Star-News*, October 14, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

deal with cases such as professionals preferring to work as independent contractors to get around the income limitation and high-income earners who owe taxes left over from the prior year, stating that only labor unions, who have already begun negotiating for the limited wage increases permitted by the new laws will benefit from the new state of affairs;<sup>669</sup> furthermore, he points out that the income limitation tax leaves “the idle rich and the coupon clippers who live on inherited wealth” exempt and allows a partial exemption to other high income employees with “fixed obligations” such as debts, effectively penalizing the good conduct of employees who have already paid their debts, all of this, according to Lawrence, adds up to a failure to live up to the “Equal Justice Under the Law” motto of American constitutional law, and that the law amounts to the President asserting the right to confiscate incomes above any level he may arbitrarily decide.<sup>670</sup>

Mark Sullivan remarks that the context of the statement about not being able to discuss “diverting enemy forces from Russia and China” in Roosevelt’s Fireside Chat implies that the President hoped to lay the public clamor for a second front to rest, but that this was not enough and a street meeting of citizens hoping for a second front specifically in Europe materialized a short distance from the White House only a few hours after the speech was broadcast, criticizing the Wendell L. Willkie’s suggestion in a speech in Moscow that some military leaders might “need some public prodding” to open a second front and a statement to similar effect by Stalin for engendering the public

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<sup>669</sup> David Lawrence, “Salary-Wage Puzzles,” *The Daily Telegram*, October 17, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>670</sup> David Lawrence, “Is This ‘Equal Justice Under The Law?’,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, October 19, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

pressure in the United States and Britain at a time when the military leaders do not seem to consider it immediately necessary or expedient to take such an action.<sup>671</sup>

The Fireside Chat on May 2, 1943 came as a result of labor discontent that had been prevalent throughout the spring; there had been a strike among San Francisco shipyard machinists in March, 55000 Akron rubber workers union stopped work in April, and in May there would be a strike of 30000 Chrysler workers in Detroit.<sup>672</sup> Despite the December 23, 1941 agreement of labor and management representatives that no strikes or lockouts would take place during the war, there were complaints that the modest 15% increase in wages since January, 1941 failed to make up for the greater increase in clothing, food and housing costs, leading to a sentiment among labor that this state of affairs unfairly favored management over labor.<sup>673</sup> The other strikes during spring were not as significant as the strikes by the 400000 miners of the United Mine Workers led by John L. Lewis, who pointed out that the control of prices in mining towns in the United States hadn't been effective and called for a general strike across the industry in April, demanding higher wages, vacation pay, better safety equipment; the situation wasn't helped by the feud between Lewis and Roosevelt, with the former's support of Wendell Willkie in 1940 presidential elections having engendered a grudge in the latter, which had escalated over the years until the President despised Lewis enough to allegedly offer to resign from his post if the latter would agree to kill himself;<sup>674</sup> the call for a general strike had come after the President's repeated urgings for the United Mine Workers to take their

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<sup>671</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Second Front Delay Called Wisest Course For Study," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, October 15, 1942. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>672</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 249.

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.*, 249-50.

dispute to the National War Labor Board had been ignored throughout the spring,<sup>675</sup> which may have been partly caused by this feud. Rosenman was out of commission during the preparation of the Fireside Chat meant to rally public opinion against the miners' strike and induce them to return to work, having been hospitalized with temporary blindness in one eye stemming from overwork and nervous strain in April, but notes that it was Robert Sherwood that had worked with the President on this speech; Roosevelt had called upon the Secretary of the Interior to seize the coal mines on behalf of the United States on the first of May, as soon as the strike had begun, and the speech was meant to explain this drastic action to the public while bringing the miners and labor leaders face to face with the force of public opinion; according to Rosenman, word had arrived only minutes before the Fireside Chat was to be delivered that Lewis had agreed that the miners should return to work in two days, prompting a brief discussion on whether to cancel the speech, but in the end it was agreed that the speech would be delivered.<sup>676</sup> While the Fireside Chat of May 2, 1943 may have helped Roosevelt further secure his public support over Lewis, it wouldn't be enough to put an end to discontent among miners; the government would have to take control of the coal mines again later that year when stoppages were repeated after the mines were returned to their owners.<sup>677</sup>

President Roosevelt opens this Fireside Chat with specifying that he's addressing not just the populace in general but that he's speaking to the coal miners in particular,<sup>678</sup> the relatively small and specific target audience making this speech of the President

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<sup>675</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 380.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, 378-80.

<sup>677</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 250, 256.

<sup>678</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Dealing with Striking Coal Miners – May 2, 1943," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 250.

unique in Rosenman's view.<sup>679</sup> He first reminds his audience of the stakes involved in the war, asserting that the future of the nation depends on the outcome of the battle and thus the nation as a whole pours all it has into it; he mentions another tour of inspection across the country, and delivers glowing praise of the men and women facing difficult conditions producing war materials on the assembly lines, the farmers planting countless acres of crops to feed the United States and its allies, and the soldiers whose diligent training turned them from green recruits into hardened fighters all of whom he witnessed in his trip; these observations he summarizes by stating "The American people have accomplished a miracle."; but, he reminds his audience, that none of these accomplishments shared by the nation as a whole is surplus to the requirements of the war against the Nazis, the Fascists, and the Japanese.<sup>680</sup> He then asserts that just as the enemy cannot stop the United States and its allies' momentum towards victory, it cannot be allowed to be hobbled by any individual or the leaders of any group in the country itself, arguing that the coal miners who have stopped working are obstructing the war effort regardless of how sincere their intentions and how legitimate their grievances may be; he reminds his audience that the war is not yet won, and that "unrelenting, uninterrupted effort" at home is necessary for winning it, suggesting that this interruption in the flow of coal not only risks the lives of the men in the armed forces, but also the nation's chances of victory, and appealing to the patriotism of the miners and their families.<sup>681</sup> He cites the pledge by the labor organizations, including United Mine Workers, that there would be no strikes as long as the war continued, calling it a means of

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<sup>679</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 380.

<sup>680</sup> Roosevelt, "Dealing with Striking Coal Miners – May 2, 1943," 250-51.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*

telling the world of the American people resolve to fight a total war; he brings up that the creation of the War Labor Board to arbitrate disputes was at the joint request of employers and organized labor, the agency that, in accordance with the law, took on the case after mediation had failed and began a fact-finding mission, which the United Mine Workers declined to cooperate with on the grounds that the War Labor Board was prejudiced, eventually refusing to take part in the hearing for the case, which Roosevelt assures his listeners, would have been impartial; with stoppages occurring in the coal mines through the past week as the hearing continued and a general strike across the industry beginning at Friday night in spite of appeals by the President, followed by the government taking over the mines on Saturday; he concludes his overview with the judgement that the government did its part, and that it was the leadership of the United Mine Workers that were responsible for the current crisis.<sup>682</sup> He appeals to the miners to return to work, saying their services are just as required as that of the workers making munitions and the armed forces fighting abroad; he reminds the miners that many of their sons and brothers are in the armed forces, that some of them may even be in combat during this speech and that some of them have been wounded and are being treated in Washington, giving specific examples of the latter; he mentions a former Pennsylvania coal miner whose father is a coal miner, who was wounded by a German machine gun while on a bombing mission over Europe, the son of a Kentucky coal miner who was wounded landing on North Africa, the son of an Illinois coal miner whose two brothers also work in the mines, who was wounded saving comrades from the wreckage of a jeep blown up by a Nazi mine in Tunisia; he doesn't mention the names of the wounded,

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<sup>682</sup> Ibid., 251-52.

saying they don't consider themselves heroes and would be embarrassed to be named on national broadcast, but asserts that these young men know the importance of receiving the best possible arms and equipment quickly.<sup>683</sup> He argues that just like these soldiers wounded in the line of duty, the rest of the nation on the production line also serves on the line of duty, where any failure to produce may be reflected on the battlefield, and that no one faction can be allowed to interrupt the war effort; he reminds the miners that they know the importance of the basic rights that their sons and brothers fight abroad to protect, acknowledging their contributions from their generous support in the form of war bonds and funds for the relief of war victims to the great increase in the volume of annual production of coal, and praising their toughness; he acknowledges their troubles with the cost of living, and assures them that though the government failed to keep prices as low as it hoped to, the issue is being worked on and promises that the government will continually take measures to lower prices whenever they are found to be too high; he reiterates that war production has to continue and coal has to be mined, appealing to the miners' patriotism, while promising that soldiers will police mining towns and mines to prevent any violence, continually reminding his audience that these efforts are for the sake of all the sons of the nation, including those of miners, in the armed forces; he expresses understanding of the coal miners' commitment to their unions and assures them that their hard won and legitimate right to unionize will not be weakened by the government, asserting his support for the improvement of the conditions of the coal miners, but reminding them of his obligations to the nation as a whole; he concludes his appeal to coal miners by providing an assurance that while the Secretary of the Interior,

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<sup>683</sup> Ibid., 252-53.

who is currently in charge of the mines, will be following the old contract for the time being, that any wage increases decided upon by the War Labor Board will be made retroactive to April 1.<sup>684</sup> He concludes this Fireside Chat by repeating his assurance that “the spirit of this nation is good,” that he had expressed in earlier Fireside Chats as well as other speeches, and expressing faith that coal miners will “heed the call of duty” towards their nation and will return to work.<sup>685</sup>

Walter Lippmann suggests that the most significant position in the clash between the United Mine Workers and the government is the one taken by other labor leaders, such as Philip Murray and William Green, who are aware that Lewis will be defeated on the fundamental issue of defying the government during wartime, but also understand that the wages can be held at the same spot only if workers can receive the guarantee that they will be able to purchase their rations of necessities at the officially promised prices, which the current stabilization “method of overall ceilings on everything and a general freezing of everything, backed by rhetoric and threats of prosecution” fails to provide,<sup>686</sup> and points out that the best result that can be expected of issuing a general freeing of prices and wages is a stasis where conditions remain unchanged for all, and that this is neither desirable nor possible in wartime when multitudes are needed to leave their jobs to join the armed forces or to seek employment in war industries, describing a general freezing of prices and wages as the abolition of the “steering wheel” of a capitalist economy;<sup>687</sup> he criticizes the government for refusing to take “economic measures” to

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<sup>684</sup> Ibid., 253-55.

<sup>685</sup> Ibid., 255-56.

<sup>686</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Price Control Operating Successfully in England,” *The Pantagraph*, May 4, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>687</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Facing Price Fallacy,” *The Decatur Daily Review*, May 8, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

meet an economic problem “relying on lawyers, on public relations experts and policemen to do what can be done only by practical economic administrators,” insisting that the only way to resolve the root problem of the coal miners’ strike is to make government food stamps as reliable as government bonds,<sup>688</sup> and proposing a system of separate prices for wholesale and consumer markets to ensure that the producers’ prices can rise when necessary and the consumers prices can simultaneously fall when necessary with the government absorbing the difference, citing the success of this system in Britain.<sup>689</sup>

Westbrook Pegler names President Roosevelt as “the one man who is solely to blame” for the coal miners’ strike and any damage caused by the strike, accusing him of raising John L. Lewis to power, despite spite of being aware of the union leader’s “dictatorial, ruthless and selfish character” by granting him favors, including aiding Lewis’ repudiation of his agreement to abide by the ruling of a mediation board in the captive coal mine case of November 1941 by appoint a new board to revise the case that had been decided against Lewis, this time stacked in Lewis’ favor with a member of the federal conciliation service as the tie-breaker between the employer’s and union representatives and, while “it was perfectly plain he was acting for President Roosevelt,” voted in favor of granting Lewis’ demand for a closed shop, something the President had previously vowed that the government would never order and the Congress would never legislate to order, he denounces all union leaders, not just Lewis, as “political creatures of

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<sup>688</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, May 7, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>689</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Price Control Operating Successfully in England,” *The Pantagraph*, May 4, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

the President's creation;"<sup>690</sup> he notes that the promises not to strike made by the leaders of large union associations are essentially pointless as they are made by people unable to enforce these promises as admitted by William Green of the American Federation of Labor, and contrasts the President's "devious trick" of referring to expressions of men wounded in battle and returned home for recovery with the angry letters he has been receiving from fighting men and their families for over a year "...some of whom are so bitter against all unionism now that they would endorse capital punishment for unioners who order strikes in war industries," suggesting that anti-labor bills may be all that can save the unions from the folly of their leaders.<sup>691</sup>

Mark Sullivan suggests on May 6 that, now that the government has taken over the coal mines and fifteen days of truce has been announced with Lewis himself conceding that the miners now have a "new employer" that is the government, the step that President Roosevelt needs to take to resolve this issue is to maintain the "fundamental principle" that government employees cannot strike, arguing that this is the only way to deny Lewis victory in the clash, an outcome which would be followed by similar demands by other labor leaders, leading to farmers demanding price increases, and to spiraling inflation.<sup>692</sup>

David Lawrence reads the situation as what is likely to be a "sensational victory" by Lewis, who has outsmarted the administration and revealed the defects in the

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<sup>690</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "Westbrook Pegler," *The North Adams Transcript*, May 3, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>691</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "Unions' Pledge Not To Strike Is Worthless," *El Paso Herald-Post*, May 5, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>692</sup> Mark Sullivan, "FDR Could End Coal Crisis By Placing Ban on Strike," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, May 6, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

President's labor policies to secure a likely wage increase for the workers he represents,<sup>693</sup> suggesting that while "it has become the fashion to heap criticism on the head of Mr. Lewis," but that the blame for the current problem lies with the President and his "clumsy and contradictory labor policy," arguing that the administration, not having punished or even condemned the leaders of other strikes since Pearl Harbor, is now condemning Lewis with the intent of using him as a "smokescreen" to distract from its own "blunders" in its handling of wartime production, he praises Lewis for standing by his convictions and "revealing to the public the absurdity of the April 8 'hold-the-line' order," and criticizes the administration for preventing the passing of a "no-strike" law, and for relying on a labor policy based on executive orders rather than laws;<sup>694</sup> he reports that a number of "wildcat strikes," as well as friction and discontent in the mines, now taken over by the government, due to operators imposing fines upon the miners for the walkout that took place before the takeover, criticizing the President for "complicating" the issue with a statement calling the miners "government employees," while the administration's official stance is that they are the "custodians" of seized property and that they thus cannot negotiate with the workers, as well as the operators for imposing fines in such a critical moment, whom he describes as "chiselers" and implores the government agencies to expose and punish them.<sup>695</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> David Lawrence, "Lewis Again Outsmarts President," *The Knoxville Journal*, May 10, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>694</sup> David Lawrence, "Wage Control Order Revised," *The La Crosse Tribune*, May 8, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>695</sup> David Lawrence, "Who Is The Miners' Employer?," *The La Crosse Tribune*, May 10, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

## CHAPTER 5

### WINNING THE PEACE AND THE RETURN OF THE NEW DEAL

As the end of the war approached, the question of the post-war world saw increasing discussion of ideals in President Roosevelt's Fireside Chats. Roosevelt had ambitious designs on the shape of the world after the war, and on the role the United States needed to assume on the world stage to ensure the lasting peace he had been speaking of since the American entry into the war, which, according to Rosenman, was the "most cherished objective of his eventful life."<sup>696</sup> In the President's view, the sacrifices made by both the American people and their allies warranted something better than "another interim which leads to new disaster," and this would not be won through repeating the error that was "ostrich isolationism."<sup>697</sup> It was most likely to this end that Roosevelt continued to remind his listeners of the courage and righteousness of their allies in every war time Fireside Chat that warranted a mention of any allied nation, more and more frequently returning to the theme of international cooperation being not only possible but likely as the war approached a favorable conclusion. By the time Mussolini had fallen, Roosevelt was already saying that the United States and its allies were

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<sup>696</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 509.

<sup>697</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 284.

“substantially agreed” on the broad strokes of how the post-war world should be;<sup>698</sup> in the aftermath of the Cairo conference he’d expressed confidence that no “insoluble differences” would arise between the United States, Russia, China and Britain;<sup>699</sup> and by 1945, he had begun to argue that “permanent machinery for the maintenance of peace” should not be delayed while solving the immediate problems of sovereignty and provisional governments, for international peace could only be maintained by “institutions that are capable of life and growth.”<sup>700</sup>

As the method for accomplishing this goal of all nations joining together in “a just and durable system of peace” in the aftermath of the war, he proposed that the “unquestioned military control” of aggressors needed to be ensured, as well as the assurance of “a decent standard of living” for the entire populations of all nations, referring to his January 7, 1941 speech concerning the “four freedoms” by suggesting that “Freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want,”<sup>701</sup> and united action by the four great military powers of the United States, Russia, Britain and China working together to apply “international force” in the event that it becomes necessary in order to “keep international peace.”<sup>702</sup>

As sincere as President Roosevelt’s designs for a better, more peaceful world may have been, they beg the question whether a democratically elected leader was in a position to care for the interests of peoples other than his own. As Westbrook Pegler had

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<sup>698</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Fall of Mussolini – July 28, 1943," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 264-65.

<sup>699</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Report on the Cairo and Teheran Conferences – December 24, 1943," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 277.

<sup>700</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Work or Fight – January 6, 1945," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 311-13.

<sup>701</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 285.

<sup>702</sup> Roosevelt, "Report on the Cairo and Teheran Conferences – December 24, 1943," 277.

stressed as early as 1942, when the President's idea of ensuring the "four freedoms" for the entire world had begun to face criticism, the American people had an obligation to their nation alone and to no other, and that many Americans saw this war to be one for survival as a sovereign state rather than one for a new world;<sup>703</sup> Pegler had also expressed doubts that a "great brotherhood of peoples" enforced by the United States and its allies was possible or even desirable, particularly with an ally such as Russia.<sup>704</sup> Though it could be argued that Roosevelt considered his plan to spread the four freedoms to the world and collaborate with the other allies to do so, to be the means through which a permanent peace would be achieved and that he viewed this permanent peace as what the American people both wanted and would benefit from. The President had also argued that an improvement of the living standards around the world would mean greater prosperity for the United States as well.<sup>705</sup>

Another question raised by this new, organized world peace envisioned by President Roosevelt would be that of sovereignty. Mark Sullivan, in a column published on June 8, 1944, acknowledged that it had been established by the President that the United States would not sacrifice its independence as a sovereign state in the world organization Roosevelt viewed as necessary for continued world peace,<sup>706</sup> but it was not solely the sovereignty of the United States that was in question, but that of all states, particularly the smaller states whose sovereignty was less secure than that of the four

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<sup>703</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "Many Patriotic Americans, Foes of New Deal, Held Up To Contempt By FDR.," *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, The Evening News*, September 10, 1942.

<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>704</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "Fair enough," *Santa Ana Register*, May 1, 1942.

<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 24, 2020).

<sup>705</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 285.

<sup>706</sup> Mark Sullivan, "As Sullivan Sees It," *Johnson City Press-Chronicle*, June 8, 1944.

<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

great powers allied against the Axis. An argument could be made that the vision of world peace enforced by the four great military powers of the United Nations risked the disenfranchisement of the smaller states around them. It was this concern Walter Lippmann was responding to when he raised the issue of the sovereignty of smaller states in a column published on January 12, 1944, where he pointed towards a radio address made by the Netherlands' foreign minister Eelco van Kleffens who had expressed a fear that the disarmament of Britain after the war would leave the Netherlands defenseless against a revival of German military power, as it had happened after the prior war; arguing that the smaller states needed protection from the larger ones to keep their sovereignty in an arrangement of international "neighborhoods," which the smaller states themselves recognized and were not opposed to it as an intermediate step that would lead to a larger world organization to make their voices heard, proposing that a universal international society could not be a substitute for "the concert of the great powers," and that to think otherwise would mean to repeat the errors of the League of Nations;<sup>707</sup> Lippmann also suggested in a column published in support of Roosevelt's final Fireside Chat that the Atlantic Charter's provisions for respecting the sovereignty of all nations, was only sensible when applied to nations governed by the government they wanted, being designed to keep them from being deprived of said government, and pointed out that it had no provisions for nations such as Greece which had been in "a state of chronic

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<sup>707</sup> Walter Lippmann, "False Universalism Harmful," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, January 12, 1944. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

civil war for 25 years,” and provisional governments were an immediate necessity in such cases where the rightful sovereignty was undetermined.<sup>708</sup>

Throughout this period, it is also notable that Roosevelt began, once again, to speak of reforms within the United States. The first among these was what would come to be known as “the G.I. Bill” meant to ease the transitioning to civilian life of the members of the armed services. It was first outlined in any detail on July 28, 1943,<sup>709</sup> it included provisions such as mustering-out pay, unemployment insurance, government funding for further education or trade training, improved provisions for the allowance of credit medical care and rehabilitation, as well as pensions for the disabled veterans.<sup>710</sup> And it would be followed by the proposal of an economic bill of rights on January 11, 1944, which included the rights to a remunerative job, a living wage, an adequate return on farm products, decent housing, medical care, protection from economic ills, a good education and the right to trade without unfair competition and domination by monopolies; the basis for these rights, according to Roosevelt, was that the political rights enshrined in the constitution were insufficient to protect individual freedom as they could not guarantee the economic security necessary for it.<sup>711</sup> Both of these proposals indicated a desire to restructure society itself along more egalitarian lines, with the former intending to reduce the disadvantage suffered by demobilized soldiers, and the latter meant to reduce the disadvantages of less wealthy citizens as a whole. Though not critical of their goals, David Lawrence criticized the manner in which the former proposal was

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<sup>708</sup> Walter Lippmann, “A Change Of Policy?,” *The Evening Review*, January 10, 1945. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>709</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 384.

<sup>710</sup> Roosevelt, “The Fall of Mussolini – July 28, 1943,” 264-65.

<sup>711</sup> Roosevelt, “A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944,” 292.

delivered as he felt it seemed like an attempt by Roosevelt to drum up votes in the election later that year,<sup>712</sup> and the latter due to the omission of the right to a fair return on investment, arguing that none of the economic rights outlined by Roosevelt were possible without it.<sup>713</sup>

The next Fireside Chat of 1943 came with a triumph. Since the beginning of 1943, successes by the United Nations against the Axis had been wearing down the Fascist regime in Italy; anti-Fascist strikes had taken place and had had to be placated with concessions to strikers as early as March, and a committee of anti-Fascist parties intent on overthrowing the government had formed afterwards; Allied victory in North Africa had been followed by the United Nations landing troops on Sicily on July 10, which was followed by the rapid defeat of Italy on the island, leading to the Fascist Grand Council voting to denounce Mussolini on July 24, who was then dismissed by King Victor Emmanuel III on July 25 and arrested by the police.<sup>714</sup> The news, broadcast by radio stations in Rome had reached President Roosevelt the same day, though it couldn't be officially confirmed until that night; Rosenman recounts attempting to receive an official confirmation of the automatically suspect news coming from radio stations controlled by the Italian government, in spite of there being no conceivable reason for the Italians to lie about *Il Duce's* resignation, with Sherwood and Rosenman on separate telephones, since they had been away from Washington in Shangri-La with the President working on the Fireside Chat when the news arrived.<sup>715</sup> President Roosevelt had been intending to

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<sup>712</sup> David Lawrence, "The Pattern of Campaigning Appears," *The Daily Telegram*, August 3, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>713</sup> David Lawrence, "FDR Dealt in Abstract Phases With Nation's Major Issues," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, January 13, 1944. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>714</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 257.

<sup>715</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 383.

address the nation in a Fireside Chat since the middle of July due to the developments in the war, with his earliest dictated notes for it dating back to July 11; he had departed to Shangri-La with Rosenman and Sherwood to work on the speech, with the first draft being built out of the President's notes as well as notes delivered by General Thomas T. Handy, Chief of the Operations Division of the War Department and Colonel William T. Sexton, Secretary of the General Staff, which had provided a number of "interesting facts" concerning the then-ongoing efforts in Sicily.<sup>716</sup> According to Rosenman, the speech had mostly taken shape when the news of Mussolini's resignation arrived, and needed only "a little" adjustment to include this information, as well as accommodate Roosevelt's desire to capitalize on it to convince the Italian public to surrender unconditionally, having already broadcast an appeal calling the Italian people to overthrow the Fascists on July 16.<sup>717</sup> Another major point that the President wanted to focus on was a fairly detailed announcement of the plans for reintegrating those serving in the armed forces into civilian life after the war ended, which Rosenman states were in the notes Roosevelt had been dictating before the first draft of the speech.<sup>718</sup>

The Fireside Chat of July 28, 1943 begins with a reference to a message to the Congress delivered a year and a half before, where President Roosevelt had asserted that the war started by the Axis militarists would be finished by the "massed, angered forces of common humanity;" he cites success by the United Nations on all fronts before announcing the "first crack in the Axis;" saying that "The criminal, corrupt Fascist

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<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.*, 382-83.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, 383-84.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*

regime in Italy is going to pieces.”<sup>719</sup> He casts the relatively rapid buckling beneath the strain of facing the military superiority of the United Nations as the result of a fundamental inability to deal with adversity within “the pirate philosophy of the Fascists and the Nazis;” accusing Hitler of refusing to send sufficient help to Mussolini, the German troops of stealing Italian motor equipment in Sicily, the Nazis as a whole of betraying their allies on every front they fought together;<sup>720</sup> these accusations, according to Rosenman, were intended to “split the Italian people from their ally Hitler.”<sup>721</sup> He announces Mussolini’s resignation and posits that unconditional surrender is still the terms being offered to Italy, and that the Allies will “permit no vestige of Fascism to remain,” with Mussolini and “his Fascist gang” to be brought to justice for their war crimes.<sup>722</sup> Throughout this Fireside Chat, as he had done more sparingly in prior ones, he places criminal titles upon Axis governments, repeatedly calling them “gangs” to emphasize their lack of legitimacy. He then states that, in time, the Italian people will reconstitute their nation based on the principles of democracy and equality, and promises that the United Nations will not follow “the pattern of pillage and starvation” applied by Hitler and Mussolini in occupied territories; to lend credence to this promise, he cites the relief efforts in the now-occupied Sicily, and argues that Sicilians are now better off than they were under “Fascist tyranny,” as they are now able to eat the food they grow rather than “having it stolen from them by the Fascists and the Nazis;”<sup>723</sup> Rosenman states that this portion of the speech was written to encourage the Italian public to force their

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<sup>719</sup> Roosevelt, "The Fall of Mussolini – July 28, 1943," 258.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid.

<sup>721</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 384.

<sup>722</sup> Roosevelt, "The Fall of Mussolini – July 28, 1943," 258.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid., 259.

government to surrender, and that Roosevelt believed that it had helped accomplish this goal.<sup>724</sup> From there he further expounds on the United Nations policy in countries liberated from Axis occupation, expressing a determination to restore human dignity and human rights to these conquered peoples that had been reduced to “slaves or chattels” under Axis rule; he expresses this by using the four freedoms of speech and worship and from want and fear<sup>725</sup> that he had articulated in January, 1941, almost a full year before the United States had entered the war. He punctuates this comparison between the Allies and the Axis and their treatment of occupied territories with a dig at Americans who criticize this foreign policy as “crazy altruism,” accusing them of “playing at party politics.”<sup>726</sup> He then begins contrasting military successes against the individual inconveniences of wartime rationing and war production conditions to call for greater and continued sacrifice on the home front; expounding on the sheer scope of and the logistics involved in a military campaign, explaining the kind of massive organized effort that went into establishing the supply lines that made the campaign in North Africa possible, and noting that all of that effort had needed to be repeated for the invasion of Sicily; he emphasizes the importance of the effort on the home front by pointing out that the 1110 gallons of gasoline a single heavy bomber plane attacking Naples from a base in North Africa requires for a single trip is enough gasoline to drive a civilian car five times across the continental United States and how necessary the rationing of gasoline is for the operation of thousands of such planes and that of many more smaller vehicles; he argues that the individual inconveniences suffered at home were more than worth it in the face

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<sup>724</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 384.

<sup>725</sup> Roosevelt, "The Fall of Mussolini – July 28, 1943," 259.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*

of how much in the way casualties have been avoided thanks to these long, costly, and meticulously planned operation in Sicily; he makes sure to praise the British officers and troops as well as the American in their accomplishments in taking Sicily before moving onto the news from other fronts, praising the Russian people and their armies for displaying what he describes as the greatest “devotion, determination, and self-sacrifice” that the world has ever seen in their fight against the Nazis, the “heroic armies” of Chiang Kai-shek, and the United States’ own successes against Japan on the Pacific front, as well as its supplying of the Chinese.<sup>727</sup> He then responds to the “false slogan” that success on the fighting front is accompanied by failure on the home front, insisting that the two are “inexorably tied together,” implying that success in the former would have been impossible without success in the latter.<sup>728</sup> On the matter of the peace to come, Roosevelt suggests that the United States and its allies are “substantially agreed” on the broad strokes of how the world after the war should be, but that they also agree that this is not yet the time to come to a detailed decision; he instead focuses on how the peace will be at home, particularly “the return to civilian life of our gallant men and women in the armed services,” which he assures his listeners will not be “into an environment of inflation and unemployment,” but will be properly planned process of demobilization instead of hasty and inefficient one as was the case with the demobilization of the veterans of the prior war; he argues that while the demobilization of the armed forces is only a part of the larger issue of converting the entirety of the United States from a wartime to a peacetime basis, for which plans are also being drawn up to be submitted to the Congress, since the members of the armed forces have had to make greater sacrifices,

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<sup>727</sup> *Ibid.*, 259-63.

<sup>728</sup> *Ibid.*

economic and otherwise, than the civilian population, they are entitled to “definite action” to help them through the problems brought about by their circumstances; he then lists several measures to ease the transitioning to civilian life of the members of the armed services, such as mustering-out pay, unemployment insurance should they be unable to find work and register with the United States Employment Service, government funding should they choose to pursue further education or trade training, allowance of credit under unemployment compensation and federal old-age and survivors’ insurance with their period of service being treated as private employment under these systems, “improved and liberalized” provisions for their medical care and rehabilitation, and pensions for the disabled members of the armed services;<sup>729</sup> according to Rosenman, this was the first time that the President provided a detailed announcement on a program for the demobilization of the armed services, most of which would be enacted by the time of Roosevelt’s death,<sup>730</sup> being passed by the Congress and signed into law by Roosevelt in 1944.<sup>731</sup> The President concludes this Fireside Chat by warning his listeners against overconfidence, asserting that all these calculations and plans for the future he spoke of need to be based on a clear understanding of the problems faced, denying both the extremely optimistic and extremely pessimistic estimates of how long the war will take in the press and insisting that “the length of the war will depend on the uninterrupted continuance of all-out effort” in the battlefields and in war production; he argues that if at any point a soldier or worker lets up, they endanger their fellows and the nation as a whole and suggests that citizens ask anyone claiming that the war is already won whether

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<sup>729</sup> Ibid. 264-65.

<sup>730</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 384.

<sup>731</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 265.

they are doing all they can, from giving their all at work to buying war bonds and cooperating with government efforts against profiteering and inflation, and add that if they are not, the war will take longer than they claim; he argues that while Mussolini “and his gang” have been mostly defeated, Hitler and Tojo and their “gangs” still need to be defeated at their home grounds, a difficult task, Roosevelt asserts, that will take all that the United States has to offer, as he reiterates his belief that the United States should settle for no less than total victory.<sup>732</sup> Rosenman points out that the President had increasingly felt the need to warn the public against the dangers of overconfidence as the year 1943 progressed, setting a contrast to how he had spent much of 1942 striving to keep the public from giving in to “total despair.”<sup>733</sup> It is also notable that this is the first Fireside Chat in which Roosevelt puts a name and face on the enemy in Japan as he had previously done with Mussolini and more frequently with Hitler, naming Hideki Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan since 1941, as the leader of the “gang” in charge of Japan.

Westbrook Pegler remarks that some of those that will “rejoice the loudest” at the fall of Mussolini “have been fighting for some of the elements of fascism here” while calling them “reforms,” and accuses Roosevelt and some of his more radical supporters of attempting the same methods as the fascists, such as government-backed mobs, attempting to pack the courts, establishing “complex and tricky” controls over business to ensure jobs for their followers, and the pretense of “a deep and juicy sympathy” with the people in their conflicts against their employers;<sup>734</sup> he expresses agreement that it is

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<sup>732</sup> Roosevelt, “The Fall of Mussolini – July 28, 1943,” 265-66.

<sup>733</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 385.

<sup>734</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Pegler’s Fair Enough,” *The Ogden Standard-Examiner*, July 29, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

necessary for a free country to temporarily adopt the methods of totalitarian powers when at war against them, but argues that some methods of the enemy were adopted by the Roosevelt administration before military conflict and during “the war on want,” citing Otto D. Tolischus’ observations of the Nazi government in Berlin in his 1940 book titled *They Wanted War* to draw parallels between the recent German and American approaches to industry and labor,<sup>735</sup> and, citing Frank Knox’s remarks on the New Deal’s publicly-funded propaganda machine in his book titled *We Planned It That Way*, accuses Vice-President Henry A. Wallace and other allegedly hidden communists in the administration of “...taking advantage of the patriotic preoccupation of the whole American people to establish in this land the equivalent, their American adaptation, of the very vices the nation is fighting to destroy abroad.”<sup>736</sup>

David Lawrence suggests that the President had been planning for some time to address the public in a Fireside Chat to “bolster up his political stock on the domestic side” when the fall of Mussolini provided him with an excellent opportunity to speak on international affairs, leading him to choose to address people overseas rather than to enhance his domestic prestige while making use of the guarantee of a large audience provided by an important event or crisis, as originally planned; he points out that the radio provides Roosevelt with an unprecedented ability to speak directly to the citizens of Italy and Germany, as well as the peoples of the areas they occupy, and argues that the time to live up to the principles of the Atlantic Charter approaches, remarking that “The

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<sup>735</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 31, 1943.  
<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>736</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Westbrook Pegler,” *The North Adams Transcript*, August 2, 1943.  
<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

sincerity of the United Nations will be tested by what is offered to Italy.”<sup>737</sup> He criticizes the President for the use of “bluster and threats” in his Fireside Chat, as he feels that Roosevelt failed to “express toward Italy the constructive purpose which befits the role of America, the liberator rather than the conqueror,” suggesting that, while the Allied demand for “unconditional surrender” is a military necessity, it would have been less humiliating for the Italian people if it had come from military commanders rather than heads of state like Roosevelt and Churchill, calling their pronouncements “a disappointing and disheartening example of the lack of vision in the statesmanship of the Allied side” if there is any intention of winning the Italian people over instead of merely occupying Italy, concluding that if all that the United Nations has to offer the world crying out for peace is “Churchill-Roosevelt chauvinism,” then the era of peace Roosevelt speaks of may be “indefinitely postponed.”<sup>738</sup> Lawrence also expresses a suspicion that Roosevelt’s words concerning the demobilization and support of returning veterans were intended to be a prelude to the President’s next presidential campaign, suggesting that his decision to speak on it in an allegedly non-partisan Fireside Chat “which the nation expected to be devoted to the critical international situation,” rather than waiting for the Congress to reconvene to submit his recommendations, was a display of insincerity and political self-interest stemming from an error in judgement caused by Roosevelt’s failure to listen to constructive criticism.<sup>739</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> David Lawrence, “FDR Awaits Crisis To Talk,” *The Knoxville Journal*, July 31, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>738</sup> David Lawrence, “FDR Failed To Express Italian Policy,” *The Knoxville Journal*, August 3, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>739</sup> David Lawrence, “The Pattern of Campaigning Appears,” *The Daily Telegram*, August 3, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

Mark Sullivan suggests that Italy's surrender to the United Nations may take the form of not its removal from the war but of it switching sides, citing the example of how the official French government started the war fighting against Germany before collaborating once occupied and now seems likely to switch to the Allies again as well as how Britain and the United States started out sympathetic to Finland in its war against Russia but now consider the latter their ally.<sup>740</sup>

The following Fireside Chat on September 8, 1943 was one of the shortest; it announced the armistice between Italy and the United Nations, as well as the launching of the third war loan drive.<sup>741</sup> Italy had made its intentions to end its alliance with Germany and join the Allies when General Giuseppe Castellano had contacted American and British representatives in Portugal in late August, hoping to receive Allied protection against the German forces that had been entering the country since the Fascist regime had fallen apart; as a result seven divisions of the Italian army managed to join Allied forces while the rest dispersed, with the Italian navy joining the Allies as well.<sup>742</sup> Both to ensure funds for conducting to war, and to prevent inflation, the government had been promoting the sale of Treasury bonds in low denominations starting with the first war loan drive in December 1942, using extensive advertising ranging from presidential appeals to celebrity endorsements to raise money, with each drive taking roughly a month; the one announced in this Fireside Chat would be the third of such drives.<sup>743</sup>

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<sup>740</sup> Mark Sullivan, "Italians May Be Fighting on Our Side To Oust The Nazis, Sullivan Says," *The Cumberland News*, August 3, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>741</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 267.

<sup>742</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*

The President opens this Fireside Chat with an inspiring anecdote about a city in the American Midwest, the citizens of which came together to fortify their hometown against a flood, and succeeded through days of uninterrupted, united, desperate effort; he likens this event to the joint struggle of the people of the United Nations, who have been working tirelessly to raise “the levees of civilization” in order to “prevent the floods of aggression and barbarism and wholesale murder from engulfing us all” for four years now, an effort that cannot abate yet, since in spite of all the success that has been had, the flood has yet to end; he casts the war bond campaign as the of filling of the metaphorical sandbags that need to be piled up to hold “the ugly torrent which is still trying to sweep us all away” back.<sup>744</sup> While Rosenman makes no mention of this short Fireside Chat, he does note that, by the time the message to the Congress delivered only nine days afterwards was being written, President Roosevelt was genuinely worried that complacency about victory could prolong the war and even endanger said victory, and that he often voiced these worries in private conversations;<sup>745</sup> a worry that comes across clearly not only in his warning about the “flood” not being over just yet, but serves as a main theme throughout the speech. He then echoes the earlier announcement in the same day by General Eisenhower that an armistice with Italy has been agreed upon, which he describes as a “great victory” not just for the United Nations but also for the people of Italy, as they will soon be free of their “real enemies, the Nazis;” Roosevelt notes that he and Churchill have been “in constant conference” with the joint chiefs of staff and constantly communicating with Russia and China, whose success against Germany and Japan he makes sure to acknowledge, in the past weeks, planning for the war and beyond,

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<sup>744</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Armistice in Italy – September 8, 1943," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 268.

<sup>745</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 388.

which he credits for the success in Sicily; but, he reminds his listeners, this is not the end of the war in the Mediterranean, pointing out that while the German forces have been driven out of North Africa and Sicily, they have yet to be driven out of other occupied countries and struck on their own soil, reiterating that the war's ultimate objectives are Berlin and Tokyo and that there is "a long way to go" before these objectives are attained, that even as he speaks, their fellow Americans are risking their lives, that the fighting continues "twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week," that every operation has "staggering material costs" that the United States cannot afford to skimp on; he appeals to the American people, calling them to further self-sacrifice to adequately supply the armed forces who give "a magnificent account of themselves" on the battlefields; he argues that the nation as a whole cannot be satisfied with sending troops to battle with equipment inferior, or "only equal" to that of the enemy, that the aim is to arm them with "overpowering superiority" in every conceivable field, and points out that this great power comes from and will come from the taxes, the labor and the money lent to the government by the public, asserting that "there never can be any economic justification for failing to save freedom;" he applauds the overwhelming success of the previous war loan drive, casting it as evidence of the unanimous support of the American people for their troops; and he suggests that the enemy watches this war loan drive closely, because the foe knows that the drive's success means a shorter war in favor of the United States, and that voluntarily raising the \$ 15 billion aimed for would take "a united and determined America," telling the public that while how much they invest in war bonds is up to them and their conscience, every dollar they invest is their "personal message of

defiance” to “the ruthless savages of Germany and Japan,” and their personal message of “faith and good cheer” to the armed forces and their allies.<sup>746</sup>

David Lawrence remarks on the importance of the financial aid being given to Italy, suggesting that not only will it help impress the war-weary European people with the nature of the Allies’ program for rehabilitation but also provide an industrial base in the continent to help supply the war against Germany and noting that the “proper” treatment of Italy will also improve the Allies’ chances of winning over the Balkan states and chipping away at Hitler’s power base, he remarks that Germany’s provocations against Italy, such as the puppet government they have set up in the north, may motivate Italy to do all that it can to help drive out the Germans to regain its honor;<sup>747</sup> he points out that not just Europe but also Latin America is aware that the war is going in favor of the United Nations, and remarks that the handling of the armistice in Italy has yielded “incalculable” international prestige, with the news themselves serving as “the most effective propaganda that could have been written,” and that the Nazis’ claims that the Allies plan on the “dismemberment of the German nation and the enslavement of the people” can be laid to rest with the fair treatment of Italy serving as evidence against them, if the people of Central Europe can be reached.<sup>748</sup>

Walter Lippmann adds his voice to the President’s requests for the citizens to buy war bonds, asserting that “The man who understands the war bonds will certainly buy them.” and describes the purchase of war bonds as putting the citizens’ money into “cold

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<sup>746</sup> Roosevelt, “Armistice in Italy – September 8, 1943,” 268-71.

<sup>747</sup> David Lawrence, “Value To Allies,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, September 10, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>748</sup> David Lawrence, “Effective Propaganda,” *The Morning Herald*, September 11, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

storage” so that it will preserve its value while it cannot be spent without contributing to inflation due to the sheer volume of the production of war materials which are not for sale, suggesting that, the satisfaction of having done one’s part to ensure that the soldiers have “a country fit to live in” to return to aside, the money is currently useless and that with so many ways to lose it to increases in taxation or cost of living the only safe place to keep it until it is useful is by putting it into war bonds, and remarks that “...we do not really deserve medals for war bonds. We are entitled to a dunce-cap if we do not buy them.”<sup>749</sup>

President Roosevelt boarded the USS Iowa, a battleship anchored outside the mouth of the Potomac River, on November 12, 1943 to sail to Cairo, where he would have a conference with Winston Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek before flying to Teheran for a conference with Churchill and Joseph Stalin.<sup>750</sup> Roosevelt had been trying arrange a conference between himself, Churchill and Stalin since the meetings leading up to the Casablanca conference in 1942, as he was confident that he could convince Stalin to declare war on Japan if they could speak in person, but had failed to do so until Stalin finally agreed to meet at Teheran in late 1943; the location was problematic for the President because the mountainous region made it difficult to reach by plane, putting his ability to sign legislation sent by the Congress and send it back within the ten days required by law, but Stalin refused to change locations unless the meeting was postponed.<sup>751</sup> In Cairo, it was agreed that Japan would be stripped of the territories it had

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<sup>749</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The North Adams Transcript*, September 10, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>750</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 272.

<sup>751</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 401-03.

taken from China and that Korea would become independent, that China would be one of the major powers of the post-war world and that an offensive in Burma would take place to further support China,<sup>752</sup> the military portions of which, according to Rosenman, needed to be cancelled as the military commitments made in Teheran meant that the troops needed to carry them out couldn't be spared in the foreseeable future.<sup>753</sup> In Teheran Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that Operation Overlord's date would be set as May 1, 1944, and Stalin agreed that the Soviet Union would declare war on Japan soon after Germany was defeated; the future peace was also discussed alongside military concerns, as Roosevelt and Stalin spoke at length about the United Nations as a post-war organization and agreed that such an organization would need to be able to enforce peace by force of arms, while Churchill's suggestion of arranging a warm-water port for Russia led to Roosevelt's suggestion of using Dairen in Manchuria for this purpose, and a preliminary agreement among the three major allies on the borders of Poland was reached.<sup>754</sup> On the return trip, a second conference took place in Cairo, where, aside from an inconclusive meeting with President İnönü of Turkey concerning Turkey joining the war,<sup>755</sup> military discussions between Roosevelt, Churchill and their chiefs of staff took place.<sup>756</sup> Rosenman recalls that it was during an impromptu speech at Cairo that Roosevelt mentioned keeping the peace by force if necessary, which many of the accompanying staff wanted released to the public as soon as possible due to its importance, but that Roosevelt insisted on keeping it for his report to the people as he felt

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<sup>752</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 273.

<sup>753</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 405-06.

<sup>754</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 406-08.

<sup>755</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.

<sup>756</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 273.

it was too important a topic to be announced in such an offhand way and instead handed a copy to Rosenman so that it could be incorporated into the later speech; upon returning to Washington on December 17, Roosevelt rejected the suggestion that he deliver said report on Capitol Hill, instead electing to deliver it in a Fireside Chat on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1943.<sup>757</sup>

The President opens this Fireside Chat with a brief mention of his trip and meetings with the leaders of allied countries, followed by musing on the sheer scope of the war, as demonstrated by the challenges of arranging for a broadcast that could be listened to by the members of the armed forces in any part of the world; he mentions that there are currently ten million people in the armed services, 3.8 million of which serve overseas, more than twice the 1.7 million a year ago, that the time of the broadcast had to be based on the consideration of time zones all over the world, with the Fireside Chat being broadcast in the afternoon at the United States, in the morning at the mid-Pacific, in the evening at North Africa and Great Britain, and on Christmas Day at the Southwest Pacific and the Far East.<sup>758</sup> He then ties the timing of the Fireside Chat to “the Christmas spirit of ‘peace on earth, goodwill towards men,’” asserting that while worries of the future have dampened Christmas celebrations in the past few years, and that at last he can tell his audience that they can have confidence that “peace on earth, goodwill towards men” can and will be achieved, whereas he could do no more than express hope until now; this, he assures, he suggests, is based on the progress made in the past few weeks starting with the Moscow conference between Vyacheslav Molotov, Sir Anthony Eden

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<sup>757</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 409-12.

<sup>758</sup> Roosevelt, "The Cairo and Teheran Conferences – December 24, 1943," 273-74.

and Cordell Hull, the Soviet and British foreign ministers and the American secretary of state, which have paved the way for the conferences in Cairo and Teheran, where the first face to face meetings between himself, Chiang Kai-shek and Joseph Stalin occurred; he describes the conclusion of the meetings by saying “We had planned to talk to each other across the table at Cairo and Teheran; but we soon found that we were all on the same side of the table,” as they had found that they agreed not only on the major objectives not just of the war but also of the kind of world that would have to be built to “justify all the sacrifices of this war,” as well as “the military means of obtaining” these goals.<sup>759</sup> This tying of Christmas spirit to the conclusion conferences, according to Rosenman, was one of the reasons Roosevelt had waited a week after his return to deliver this Fireside Chat.<sup>760</sup> The President paints the Cairo conference as a great success, stating that not only were the principles of returning stolen property, the people’s right to self-govern and the elimination of the Empire of Japan’s potential for aggression were agreed on for maintaining peace on the long term with Chiang Kai-shek, who is described as “a man of great vision,” so was a “definite military strategy;” with Generals Marshall and MacArthur conferring following these military decisions “which will spell plenty of bad news for the Japs in the not-too-far-distant future,” and an “increasingly powerful” force mustered by the United Nations, ranging from the Americans and the British to Australians and New Zealanders as well as the Chinese, surrounding the territories held by Japan.<sup>761</sup> Roosevelt’s picture of an agreement on the “definite military strategy” of the Pacific front with Chiang Kai-shek seem to conflict with Rosenman’s account, which

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<sup>759</sup> Ibid., 274-75.

<sup>760</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 412.

<sup>761</sup> Roosevelt, "The Cairo and Teheran Conferences – December 24, 1943," 275-76.

suggests that the first Cairo conference with Chiang Kai-shek was not particularly productive on the grounds that the military decisions made there had to be cancelled due to the commitments made in Teheran concerning a cross-channel invasion of mainland Europe,<sup>762</sup> which most likely meant that Roosevelt wished to mislead the enemy as much as possible. The Teheran conference, Roosevelt notes, saw discussion on “every conceivable subject connected with the winning of the war and the establishment of a durable peace after the war” between Churchill, Stalin and himself, and reached an agreement on the entirety of a plan to launch a “gigantic” assault on Germany; he suggests that, while the Russians continue their offensive on the eastern front and the Allied forces in North Africa and Italy attack from the south, “the encirclement will be complete as great American and British forces attack from other points of the compass.”<sup>763</sup> He then begins to speak of the specifics of the Operation Overlord, though he does not name it, announcing that General Dwight D. Eisenhower, whom he praises for his “brilliant” performance in Africa, Sicily and Italy, will lead the attack “from other points of the compass,” being replaced in his position in command of the Mediterranean by a British officer, while Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz commands the American strategic bombing force in Europe.<sup>764</sup> According to Rosenman, Stalin’s attempts to determine who would be commanding Operation Overlord during the Teheran conference were unsuccessful, as Roosevelt had refused to make that commitment even though he had, at the time, felt it would be the Chief of Staff, General Marshall; Rosenman states that it is unclear when the President changed his mind and decided upon Eisenhower; he

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<sup>762</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 405-06.

<sup>763</sup> Roosevelt, "The Cairo and Teheran Conferences – December 24, 1943," 276.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*, 276-77.

also notes that the widely-rumored Marshall-appointment to the position of supreme field commander had led to protests by “the anti-Roosevelt newspapers,” one of whom had come up with the conspiracy theory that Rosenman was in league with Harry Hopkins and Justice Frankfurter to have Marshall replaced as Chief of Staff by having him appointed supreme field commander, a story which, Rosenman states, had greatly amused the President who would occasionally jokingly apologize to him for foiling his plot by keeping General Marshall as Chief of Staff.<sup>765</sup> The President then speaks of the post-war situation as discussed with Stalin and Churchill, stating that they were all agreed that Germany needed to be disarmed and kept unarmed, and that while the United Nations had no plans to “enslave” the German populace, they would be sure to stamp out any remnant of Nazism or Prussian militarism, as well as “the fantastic and disastrous notion that they constitute the ‘master race;’” his tone is optimistic as he suggests that the United States, Great Britain and Russia were in enough of an agreement in the broader principles of international relationships that he is confident in saying no “insoluble differences” will arise between them, though he acknowledges that this topic was not discussed in detail.<sup>766</sup> According to Rosenman, Roosevelt felt that personal contact had enabled him to get past the obstacles presented by distance and the language barrier and that he had truly come to know Stalin,<sup>767</sup> with whom he asserts that he “got along fine,” and who he describes as possessing “a tremendous, relentless determination” and “stalwart good humor,” and expressing faith that the United States would have a good relationship with Stalin and Russia in the future.<sup>768</sup> The President then points out that the United Nations make up

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<sup>765</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 407-08.

<sup>766</sup> Roosevelt, “The Cairo and Teheran Conferences – December 24, 1943,” 277.

<sup>767</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 413.

<sup>768</sup> Roosevelt, “The Cairo and Teheran Conferences – December 24, 1943,” 277-78.

more than three-quarters of the human population on the planet, and argues that as long as the four militarily powerful nations of Britain, Russia, China and the United States remain joint in their goal to preserve peace, there will be “no possibility of an aggressor nation arising to start another world war;” but, he asserts, these four powers need to cooperate with “the freedom-loving people of Europe and Asia and Africa and the Americas,” and that the rights of every nation need to be respected and protected; he rejects “the doctrine that the strong shall dominate the weak” as the philosophy of the enemy, but acknowledges that the United Nations have agreed that “if force is necessary to keep international peace, international force will be applied.”<sup>769</sup> He takes a moment to hail the underground resistance groups in occupied countries, and promise that they will soon “provide potent forces against our enemies” when the “counterinvasion” proceeds, before clarifying that the march of time and scientific progress have made “the geographical yardsticks of the past” obsolete and that experience has shown that warlike states such as Germany would not simply accept “the doctrine of purely voluntary peace,” and that all of this means an end to “the well-intentioned but ill-fated experiments” of isolationism and of leaving the peace to the voluntary acceptance of aggressors; he promises to do everything in his power “as president and commander in chief to see to it that these tragic mistakes shall not be made again,” describing the most stalwart of the isolationists as “cheerful idiots” who are unwilling to face reality; he argues that if the United States is willing to fight for peace now, then it is only “good logic” to use force if it is necessary to keep the peace in the future, expressing his conviction that Great Britain, Russia and China agree with this and are prepared to do

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<sup>769</sup> Ibid.

their part to keep the peace by force, and his hope that if Germany and Japan are made to realize they will not be allowed to “break out again,” they will abandon the aggressive “...belief that they can gain the whole world even at the risk of losing their own souls.”<sup>770</sup> Roosevelt then assures the members of the armed forces and their families of the abilities and “military genius” of General Marshall and Admiral King, who are charged with the strategic planning of the war, that the government is determined to win the war and return overseas soldiers and sailors home as early as possible, acknowledging that some of them are spending their third Christmas away from home, and briefly echoes his prior Fireside Chat in July to appeal to the public for supporting his plans to ensure the granting of “full opportunities for education and rehabilitation and social security and employment and enterprise under the free American system” to returning veterans; he then returns to the theme of warning the public against overconfidence as he had taken to doing by this time and uses the conversations he had during his trip abroad with members of the armed forces that had seen combat as a framing device to address “a tendency in some of our people here to assume a quick ending of the war,” saying that the “hardheaded realists” who have seen combat speak of the “strengths and skill and resourcefulness” of the enemy and arguing that there is bound to be great casualties as the war continues as the “...end is not yet in sight;” he objects to an outbreak in partisan thinking that he suggests may be a threat on the grounds that all the energy of the nation should be focused on “winning the war and winning a just peace that will last for generations,” and that the “massive offensives” being planned will require all that the united States and its allies have to give.<sup>771</sup> While a great majority of President Roosevelt’s Fireside Chats end with a

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<sup>770</sup> *Ibid.*, 278-79.

<sup>771</sup> *Ibid.*, 279-81.

short prayer or appeal to faith, on this Christmas Eve the religious theme is more prominent and tied more closely to his closing statements, as he ties having flown over Bethlehem to the current struggle, and returns to the theme of “peace on earth, goodwill towards men” he had opened this Fireside Chat with, saying that “the message that came out of Bethlehem” best symbolizes what the war is being fought for and offering a prayer for the armed forces “who fight to rid the world of evil,” on behalf of the American people, and asks for God’s blessing not just for them but for all who “...fight for a better day for humankind – here and everywhere.”<sup>772</sup>

David Lawrence speculates, judging by his words on succeeding where the League of Nations failed in the post-war world in his Fireside Chat and his phraseology, that President Roosevelt expects to not only be reelected for a fourth term, but also to retain the position of the Commander-in-Chief after the war, which would enable him to continue the style of military cooperation shared with Britain throughout the war for peacekeeping purposes, suggesting that Roosevelt intends for a post-war extension of the Lend-Lease legislation to ensure that both the United States and Britain can continue to maintain “huge” standing armies at the expense of the “taxpayers of the world,” and implies that said taxpayers will not be easily convinced to fund such massive armed forces in the absence of enemy armies, criticizing the President for accepting “the Churchill doctrine of force, and force alone,” ridiculing the “moral force” that he suggests is a natural companion to military force and for belittling the efforts of the League of Nations to maintain a voluntary peace; he reads the Fireside Chat as having omitted “altogether the possibility that a new League of Nations, with a contributed

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<sup>772</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

military force, could maintain peace;”<sup>773</sup> Lawrence suggests that the President’s Fireside Chat on Christmas eve failed to elaborate on the fundamentals of what it would take to prevent a third world war and has remained superficial in his criticisms of the interwar period, being particularly critical of Roosevelt’s omission of the United States’ own shortcomings and culpability in failing to prevent the Second World War by joining forces with other nations or building up military power sooner, and the lack of a confession that the money wasted on “pump-priming” until 1939 could have been better spent in preparing for a war, accusing the President of attempting to eliminate all blame for his part in allowing the Axis’ armament and in ignoring the warnings of diplomatic representatives between 1933 and 1937; he concludes that Roosevelt, as well as the leaders of Britain and France knew what was coming and chose not to act on that information because they feared the domestic political repercussions of doing so, and dismisses all grand promises of enforcing peace as useless unless leaders learn from the past and become willing to sacrifice their political lives to save human lives.<sup>774</sup>

The first Fireside Chat of 1944 came on the evening of the day of President Roosevelt’s annual message to the Congress.<sup>775</sup> The President had reason to worry that the spirit of unity and cooperation in the face of war that had lasted for the past two years was now coming apart, with a shortage of manpower in war industries in the Pacific Northwest, strikes in important economies such as the coalfields and the railroads.<sup>776</sup>

According to Rosenman, the President’s repeated insistence that the war was not yet over

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<sup>773</sup> David Lawrence, “Washington Slant of David Lawrence,” *The Evening News*, December 28, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>774</sup> David Lawrence, “Human Lives Must Come Before Politics If The World Is to Have Peace,” *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, December 28, 1943. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>775</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 282.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*, 282-83.

had failed to convince all, and the manpower problem tied into that; with the draft already straining the manpower requirements of industry, an increasing tendency among workers in war industries to quit and seek permanent employment in civilian fields had exacerbated the issue, and caused further worry to Roosevelt.<sup>777</sup> These worries had led the President to recommend a national service law that would enable the conscription of citizens to make up for the manpower deficit in war industries, a bill that was not popular, and that Roosevelt himself had not been keen on until developments at the end of 1943 mentioned above helped convince him otherwise.<sup>778</sup> When the national service law had first come up as an option in a memorandum in November 1942 that Rosenman quotes, Roosevelt had preferred to counsel voluntary means of handling the manpower problem; but in 1943 Secretary of War Stimson had begun advocating the law, and as the war continued and the manpower problem grew worse, he had gotten more vehement and been joined by others, including the Secretary of Navy and Secretary of Land; Roosevelt had put together an informal group of his advisors early in 1943 to inquire on the magnitude of the need for such a law, who had concluded that such a law was not necessary just yet; among said group Roosevelt, according to Rosenman, had particularly wanted Bernard Baruch's support if he were to recommend a national service law, as he felt Baruch would have been important in swaying the Congress; Baruch was of the mind that the manpower problem could be adequately tackled by controlling the allocation of materials to indirectly force the issue by limiting how much work could be done in non-war industries.<sup>779</sup> The President had not acted on the issue before leaving for Teheran, but

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<sup>777</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 417.

<sup>778</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 283-83.

<sup>779</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 420-21.

had made up his mind to recommend the law once he'd returned, which Rosenman suggests was due to having seen firsthand the men in the armed forces and the hardships they faced; one of his first acts upon returning from Teheran had been to take over the railroads to prevent their stoppage by strike, and it was followed by the swearing of Rosenman and Sherwood into silence as they worked on the speeches in which he intended to recommend the national service law; as a result, many of his advisors had been taken off guard by the President's sudden decision, with James F. Byrnes, director of the Office of War Mobilization, who had also been a part of the group of advisors that had counseled against the law earlier in 1943, resigning over it before being persuaded to stay by Roosevelt.<sup>780</sup> The other major topic the President broached in this Fireside Chat was that of an economic Bill of Rights, which Roosevelt tied to the political freedoms present in the Constitution.<sup>781</sup> However, this portion of the speech, as radical as it was, was overshadowed by the fierce discussion around the controversial national service law that, according to Rosenman, "...took all the headlines and set off a long and bitter public debate."<sup>782</sup> Rosenman states that the contents of this speech were originally intended to be part of the President's annual message to the Congress which was meant to be broadcast simultaneously on the radio, as Roosevelt believed it to be one of the most important speeches he ever made and wished to highlight its importance; it was Roosevelt's sickness that caused the message to the Congress to be delivered to Capitol Hill in writing, and required Roosevelt to deliver it separately over the radio in a Fireside Chat instead.<sup>783</sup> The first draft for the speech was prepared by Rosenman and Sherwood,

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<sup>780</sup> Ibid., 423.

<sup>781</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 283.

<sup>782</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 417.

<sup>783</sup> Ibid.

who needed to sit at the President's bedside to work with him on the speech, it would be the 8<sup>th</sup> draft that was delivered.<sup>784</sup> Rosenman also notes that the message, and thus the Fireside Chat, was more "bellicose" than usual and that Roosevelt was in a fighting mood, leading him to pick various fights in the Congress, the control of which he had lost on civilian and domestic issues, and that he'd particularly lost control of the Democrats in the Congress, a "small reactionary wing" among whom were working with the Republicans to oppose Roosevelt's policies, and would oppose similar policies after Roosevelt.

President Roosevelt opens the Fireside Chat of January 11, 1944 by stating that his health kept him from delivering his message to the Congress in person; assuring the public that though his doctor refused to allow him to leave the White House yet, he has "practically recovered" from his "flu;" he explains that since only a few newspapers can publish his entire message and he is "anxious" that the people hear both his recommendations and their reasons, he decided to repeat his words to the Congress in this Fireside Chat.<sup>785</sup> Rosenman notes that the President had been suffering from a "bronchial affliction" that he had developed in Teheran; and while he points out that neither Roosevelt's doctor, nor the medical consultants called in by said doctor found anything beyond that and he did recover after a significant portion of time, Rosenman also views the Teheran conference as a turning point in the President's health which began to deteriorate afterwards; a state of affairs he suggests was due to the years of overwork

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<sup>784</sup> Ibid., 418.

<sup>785</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 283.

during the war finally catching up to him once the travel to Teheran added to the strain.<sup>786</sup> Of course, at the time, Roosevelt had no way of knowing what would come next for his health, but his misstatement of his illness and claiming to be in better health than he had been was clearly deliberate, and likely motivated by a desire to avoid worrying the public. Afterwards he begins with an overview of the international situation, saying that the United States has, in the past two years, joined with other nations to defend itself against “gangster rule” in “the world’s greatest war against human slavery;” he promises more than “mere survival,” insisting that the sacrifices made by both the American people and their allies warrant something better than “another interim which leads to new disaster,” singling out the “ostrich isolationism” as the major error that will not be repeated.<sup>787</sup> Buhite and Levy note that the line about “ostrich isolationism” is followed by a line about avoiding “the excesses of the wild twenties” which ended in tragedy in the message sent to the Congress that is not present in the Fireside Chat;<sup>788</sup> the line reminding the audience that the economic policies of the 1920s led to the Great Depression was most likely meant to support the speech’s later parts concerning an economic Bill of Rights, which Roosevelt may have felt was less necessary when addressing the general public than when addressing the Congress, particularly his opposition within it, and it is possible that the President wished to avoid distracting from the theme of this initial part of the speech concerning the international situation moving towards a positive result but not yet being resolved, which, as established earlier and as repeated in this Fireside Chat, was a major concern of his. He then carries on the theme

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<sup>786</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 411-12.

<sup>787</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 284.

<sup>788</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 284.

of avoiding past mistakes as he begins to explain how and why the peace that follows this war will differ from the one that followed the prior one; pointing out that discussions on “vital questions concerning the future peace” were conducted both during Cordell Hull’s visit to Moscow in October and during the conferences the President himself attended in Cairo and Teheran in November, and that such discussions had not even begun “until the shooting stopped” at the end of the First World War; he then takes the opportunity allay fears that “secret treaties or political or financial commitments” were made by Hull and himself in these meetings, asserting that all the commitments made were military ones concerning the war and the only major objective discussed with and agreed upon by the United Nations concerning the peace was several kinds of security, “economic security, social security, moral security” alongside security in the physical sense, at this point describing the United Nations as “a family of nations.”<sup>789</sup> Roosevelt assures his listeners that it was clear in the “plain down-to-earth” meetings with their leaders that their allies all desire the same thing they do, in that they want to resume progressing peacefully towards a better life, and that they all agree that “real development” is impossible if efforts continue to be interrupted with wars and almost-wars; he argues that it benefits all nations to join together in “a just and durable system of peace,” and that ensuring the “unquestioned military control” of aggressors as well as the assurance of “a decent standard of living” for the entire populations of all nations are necessary elements of such a system, once more referring to his earlier speech concerning the “four freedoms” by suggesting that “Freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want.”<sup>790</sup> The President then takes the opportunity to attack the critics of his statements concerning

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<sup>789</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 284-85.

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

raising the living standards around the world as a whole, describing those who suggest that higher living standards for other nations would necessitate a lowering of living standards in the United States as “unseeing moles” who “burrow through the nation” trying to spread their unfounded suspicions, and argues that it is “just plain common sense” that an increase in the living standards of a nation would instead, through a matching increase in their purchasing power, cause them to encourage a rise in the living standards of their trade partners;<sup>791</sup> according to Rosenman, the word “mole” was one of Roosevelt’s additions, and both Sherwood and Rosenman had had some difficulty convincing the President to slightly soften this attack on this particular group critics by removing “who circulate constantly in the dirty darkness” from their description that was present in Roosevelt’s original dictation.<sup>792</sup> He confesses to having felt “let down” upon his return from Teheran at finding “faulty perspectives” that are engaged in “overemphasizing lesser problems and thereby underemphasizing the first and greatest problem” in Washington; he acknowledges that an “overwhelming majority” of the public has accepted difficulties ranging from “inconveniences” and “hardships” to “tragic sacrifices” with bravery and understanding, but, he suggests, there exists a “noisy minority” engaged in a continuous state of “uproar of demands for special favors for special groups,” he calls out lobbyists of said groups as “pests who swarm the lobbies of the Congress and the cocktail bars of Washington,” accusing them of profiteering off the war, arguing that “such selfish agitation” damages the morale and war effort of the nation, leading to a longer war;<sup>793</sup> Buhite and Levy note that the message to the Congress

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<sup>791</sup> Ibid.

<sup>792</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 418.

<sup>793</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 285-86.

included a brief “history lesson” on the dissent experienced by the nation in prior wars which is not present in the Fireside Chat version,<sup>794</sup> which may have been omitted because Roosevelt felt that it was not as necessary while speaking to the general public as opposed to the Congress, particularly his opposition within the Congress, or it may have been left out because he was concerned about the length of the speech boring the general public or taxing his ability to keep speaking without betraying the state of his health and causing worry. He provides the example that the higher farm prices desired by some farmers would lead to demands for increased wages for industrial workers, which would, in turn, drive up the prices of commodities including those required by farmers themselves; he notes that any such price or wage increase would trigger such vicious cycle, threatening a period of “gross inflation” that would be “particularly disastrous” on groups with fixed-incomes such as teachers, clergy, police, firefighters, minors, widows and dependents of members of the armed forces, who make up a quarter of the population that happen to have no “high-pressure representatives at the Capitol;” he appeals to his listeners for unity at home, to “subordinate individual or group selfishness to the national good” in a time when it is most necessary to avoid demoralizing the troops.<sup>795</sup> He suggests that those responsible for much of the agitation are “laboring under the delusion” that the war is already won and that there is no longer a need for sacrifice, rather than knowingly hindering the war effort, warning his listeners against complacency in victory and argues that such an overconfident attitude can lengthen the war and cost lives;<sup>796</sup> Buhite and Levy point out that the version of the speech sent to the Congress

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<sup>794</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 286.

<sup>795</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 286-87.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*

contained a few sentences pointing out that the airplane production in the June and July of 1943 fell behind the norm by a thousand due to the overconfidence felt by the workers in the aftermath of important victories in Stalingrad and Tunisia, which the President omits in this version.<sup>797</sup> The president then provides the example of how the United States increased the intensity of its efforts by broadening the draft age and increasing pressure on the enemy when the First World War turned in its favor in the summer of 1918, leading to Germany's surrender by November as "the way to fight and win a war," rather than "with half an eye on the battlefronts abroad and the other eye and a half on personal, selfish, or political interests here at home;" this is how he leads into his recommendation for the Congress to adopt a series of economic measures meant to maintain "a fair and stable economy" while dedicating all efforts to winning the war, including a "realistic" tax law that will tax all "unreasonable profits" by individuals and corporations, a law to renegotiate war contracts in order to prevent undue profits in the war effort, a food price law to place a floor under what farmers will receive for and a ceiling on what the consumers will pay for essential foods, the extension of the stabilization law of 1942 which expires soon, and finally a national service law to prevent strikes and make every adult available for conscription in to war industries and other essential work; he acknowledges that he hesitated to recommend a national service law for three years, but argues that it has now become a necessity for ensuring an earlier victory and suggests that such a law is "the most democratic way to wage a war" as it is based on the obligation of each citizen to serve their nation in the way in which they will be most useful; he also asserts that he would not recommend a national service law

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<sup>797</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 287.

without the other laws he is recommending to keep the cost of living stable accompanying it to make the series of measures into “a just and equitable whole;”<sup>798</sup> according to Rosenman, Roosevelt felt that, by itself, the national service law’s would unfairly burden labor, and was unwilling to recommend it without including the other four measures,<sup>799</sup> it may also have been intended to appease labor to some degree by presenting a plan that would see that burden shared by other groups. The President then continues his attempts to soften the blow of the national service law, assuring his listeners that there would be no loss in wages, or of retirement and seniority benefits, or even widespread compulsory reallocation of war workers and emphasizing that national service would provide direction to the millions of Americans who do not contribute to the war effort not because of a lack of willingness but because of a lack of information on where they would be most helpful, all of whom would one day be able to tell their grandchildren of their part in the war, and arguing that the law would reassure the armed forces of their people’s wholehearted support while demoralizing the enemy by presenting a united front, ending his argument with an appeal for the Congress to see that the issue “transcends politics” and to ensure that the make-up of the machinery for carrying out the law is non-partisan;<sup>800</sup> in this portion of the speech, Buhite and Levy note that there are several sentences that are missing in this version that are present in the message delivered to the Congress, including a part where Roosevelt points out that every other democratic nation in the war has such a service law they rarely need to use the compulsory powers of, as well as a direct appeal to the Congress for them to do their part

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<sup>798</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 287-89.

<sup>799</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 424.

<sup>800</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 290-91.

for the nation's security,<sup>801</sup> the latter was most likely omitted because the change of audience meant that the speech was no longer addressed to the audience that appeal was meant for, while the reason for the exclusion of the former is less clear. Roosevelt then touches upon the absentee voting laws for the armed services, pointing out that there is no way for the Army and Navy to accommodate forty-eight different voting laws simultaneously and that there is little chance that all these states, in a timely manner, can change their voting laws to accommodate the difficulties of ensuring that the men and women overseas in the armed services during such a long war can vote; he argues that the current state of affairs is discriminatory against the armed services and effectively disenfranchises ten million citizens abroad and that the Congress has a duty to correct this via a federal voting law applying to this situation;<sup>802</sup> Buhite and Levy note that the Congress was "deeply suspicious" that the President's proposal was intended to increase the votes he would receive in the coming presidential election in November,<sup>803</sup> while Rosenman suggests that it was instead motivated by a concern that "...the men and women in the armed services would resent losing their presidential vote,"<sup>804</sup> possibly because it may have led to a loss of morale, an issue Roosevelt previously expressed worry for earlier in the speech. He then suggests that time has come to plan a way to "win a lasting peace" as well as a future with a higher American living standard than ever before, pointing out that the United States has always had inalienable political rights which helped it become what it is today, such as freedom speech, press, and worship, as well as right to a trial by jury, freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures, but

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<sup>801</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 290-91.

<sup>802</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 291.

<sup>803</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 291.

<sup>804</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 427.

argues that “true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence” and that “people who are hungry, people who are out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made;”<sup>805</sup> Buhite and Levy point out that these lines are missing some sentences arguing that no general living standard can be satisfactory as long as a fraction of the populace lives in lack, and that with an expanded economy and industry expanded, the political rights mentioned “proved inadequate” to ensure equality, that are present in the version delivered to the Congress.<sup>806</sup> These “economic truths,” Roosevelt continues, are now self-evident, and proposes that “a second Bill of Rights” to establish “a new basis of security and prosperity;” he then lists a number of economic rights which include “the right to a useful and remunerative job,” the right to earn a living wage, the right of farmers to grow and sell produce at a price that will provide them and their families with “a decent living,” the right of every businessman to trade “in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies,” the right to a decent home, the right to medical care and the opportunity to achieve good health, the right to protection from economic fears concerning old age and sickness as well as unemployment and accident, and right to a good education; the President argues that these and similar rights will be the basis of the security at home that the United States will depend on to maintain its “rightful place in the world” and that such security will be necessary for ensuring peace in the world; he then posits that “one of the great American industrialists of our day” warned him of the dangers of “rightist reaction” in the nation, and asserts that “all clear-thinking businessmen” share the concern that a return to the status-quo of the 1920s would mean winning a war against Fascism abroad

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<sup>805</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 291-92.

<sup>806</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 291-92.

only to succumb to it at home, appealing to the Congress to “explore the means” for the implementation of the economic rights meant to safeguard the nation against such a possibility.<sup>807</sup> Rosenman notes that the phrase “Economic Bill of Rights” originated in a report of the National Resources Planning Board delivered to the Congress by the President on January 14, 1942, with Rosenman being reminded of it by Louis Brownlow on December, 1943; Rosenman states that he also received a memorandum from Chester Bowles, director of the Office of Price Administration, suggesting a “Second Bill of Rights” alongside a draft for a speech on the topic; Rosenman continues that Roosevelt, when shown Bowles’ draft and the report from 1942 while discussing the annual message to the Congress that eventually formed the core of this Fireside Chat, decided to include them in his speech.<sup>808</sup> Roosevelt suggests that should the Congress fail to move in order to enact these economic rights, the public “will be conscious of the fact,” arguing that both the armed services abroad and the civilian population at home have a right to expect such a program and counseling that the government should prioritize their demands over the “whining demands of selfish pressure groups who seek to feather their nests while young Americans are dying;”<sup>809</sup> Rosenman notes that Roosevelt was practically threatening to appeal directly to the public to ensure that they would know to hold the Congress responsible if no action to enact these economic rights were taken, adding that Roosevelt’s threat would turn out to be prophetic when the 1946 Congress abandoned the program and the public made its displeasure known in the 1948 elections.<sup>810</sup> Buhite and Levy point out that this portion of the version of the speech delivered to the Congress

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<sup>807</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 292-93.

<sup>808</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 425-26.

<sup>809</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 293.

<sup>810</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 426-27.

includes a part where Roosevelt quotes Benjamin Franklin's words that "We must all hand together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately." as the "commonsense principle" that forms the basis of the foreign policy followed by the United States in Moscow, Cairo and Teheran.<sup>811</sup> The President concludes this Fireside Chat by reminding his listeners that there is only one front for the United States, and that this front is one where every single citizen is part of, and contributing to, with their efforts on the fields, factories, mines and the battlefields; tying this to a shared responsibility for all Americans to not just to "keep this nation great" by serving it in this critical time, but also to "...make this nation greater in a better world."<sup>812</sup>

David Lawrence remarks that the President's message was more a political offensive on domestic affairs than a commander-in-chief's words on the war or a statesman's speech on world problems, which he takes to imply that the President intends to subordinate all concerns to a "war at home for votes," criticizing Roosevelt for having "dealt in abstract phrases with the major issues that are pressing for attention" and for ignoring the failure of his administration to provide "a soundly balanced labor policy," also criticizing the economic bill of rights for making no mention of the citizens' right to invest their savings for a fair return, asserting that without a recognition of private capital's right to a fair return none of the economic rights spoken of by the President can come to fruition, and suggests that the national service law proposed would not work as there is no legal way for a citizen to be drafted to work as a government employee in a private business, dismissing it as a means for "camouflaging the mistakes made by the

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<sup>811</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 293.

<sup>812</sup> Roosevelt, "A National Service Law and an Economic Bill of Rights – January 11, 1944," 293.

administration in handling the coal strike” and other strikes that is unlikely to gain popular support;<sup>813</sup> he notes that the consensus in Capitol Hill is that the national service law has no hope of passing, suggesting that the proposed legislation may be political maneuvering on the President’s part to conceal the failings of his labor policy and to get around the problem posed by continuing strikes without alienating labor unions, and that if Roosevelt continues to veto anti-strike bills, he may end up losing the soldiers’ votes instead, remarking that the soldiers overseas are more concerned with anti-strike legislation than with anything else;<sup>814</sup> he proposes that if workers are to be drafted into government service then the management will have to be drafted as well and the government will need to be granted full control of the profits and that the unions will most definitely demand greater limitations upon the management’s earnings for their acquiescence to a national service law, warning the businessmen who are optimistic that a national service law may stop strikes that there are other ways to stop strikes and they should not be so eager to step into “the noose of state socialism.”<sup>815</sup>

Westbrook Pegler attacks the national service law as a “compulsion inherent in the Nazi-Fascist and Communist system,” and a proposal by the President to “punish the whole body of the people for his own obduracy and political ambition” manifested as wasted manpower resulting from strikes and a 40-hour work week which Roosevelt blocked all legislation to rectify, suggesting that there is no “genuine shortage” of manpower to justify such a measure, and speculates that, since such a law would

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<sup>813</sup> David Lawrence, “FDR Dealt in Abstract Phases With Nation’s Major Issues,” *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, January 13, 1944. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>814</sup> David Lawrence, “Service Law Request May Just Be Politics,” *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, January 16, 1944. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>815</sup> David Lawrence, “Today in Washington,” *The News*, January 17, 1944. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

eliminate the legitimate function of labor unions and the President made no mention of mandatory union membership, Roosevelt presumably intends to preserve the unions as political subsidiaries of his party to collect “political taxes” from their members as was the case in Mussolini’s Italy.<sup>816</sup>

Mark Sullivan remarks that the entire nation is agreed that it must be ensured that soldiers overseas can exercise their right to vote, but suggests that the soldiers will need to vote not just for Federal offices but for state offices as well, and handling voting by Federal action would further subordinate states to the Federal government, something which he notes to have already drawn concern, remarking that states have been spurred by the President’s demand for Federal action to ensure that soldiers can vote are taking action to make the necessary changes to their legislation to ensure that the soldiers will be able to vote, and seem like they will prove Roosevelt’s assertion that they cannot do this in time wrong.<sup>817</sup>

Walter Lippmann argues in favor of the President’s proposal to establish the principle of universal service, remarking that it would serve as an absolute and unchallenged proof of the American people’s commitment to see the war through, leaving no doubt in the minds of enemies and allies, and have the benefit of eliminating the “double standard of morals” applied to soldiers and civilians which results in strikes in industry and in “legislative raids” by pressure groups seeking to prevent or relax economic legislation necessary for the war but disadvantageous to them, suggesting that a

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<sup>816</sup> Westbrook Pegler, “Fair Enough,” *The Dothan Eagle*, January 14, 1944.  
<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>817</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Method For Soldier Vote,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, January 13, 1944.  
<https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

legislation of positive obligation such as universal service would be “a fairer and more intelligent measure” for dealing with strikes than specific negative legislation forbidding strikes and targeting unions, whom he notes not to be the “only sinners;”<sup>818</sup> Lippmann also responds to a Republican congressman who has said that the President’s message is “a campaign document,” remarking that Roosevelt’s promises of increased taxes, frozen wages and prices, limited profits and a universal service law are things that “no other politician has ever regarded as anything but straight political suicide” and that the congressman’s claim amounts to an observation that President Roosevelt believes these proposals to be “good politics in the year 1944,” which implies that the President, whom Lippmann describes as “the shrewdest and most successful practical politician of our time,” thinks that a vast majority of the American public “would wish to do any sensible thing which they believe will hasten victory and will prevent this war from ending, as all other wars have ended, in a chaos of unemployment and crazy prices and bad money,” noting that when the elections arrive voters may judge politicians by their efforts to help win the war “rather than by what they did to cater to selfishness, laziness, and self-indulgence,” recommending that politicians consider that perhaps they should begin “playing the same kind of politics” of doing their duty.<sup>819</sup>

The next Fireside Chat came halfway through the year. President Roosevelt had just spent the weekend near Charlottesville, Virginia, on a farm owned by one of his aides, General Edwin Watson, as he waited for operation Overlord, the cross-channel

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<sup>818</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, January 14, 1944. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

<sup>819</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Evening Review*, January 14, 1944. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 13, 2020).

invasion of Normandy to be launched; the invasion had been delayed by weather conditions and even as Roosevelt delivered his Fireside Chat on the fall of Rome, troops were being transported across the English Channel.<sup>820</sup> As preparations for operation Overlord were underway, another attack with the name Anvil was also being planned for in the south of France, which the British were skeptical of since it would reduce the resources that could be used in the Italian campaign; a great deal of debate concerning the merits of Anvil had taken place among the combined chiefs of staff, the tail end of which President Roosevelt was unavailable for, as he had been diagnosed with a dangerously enlarged heart and extremely high blood pressure on March 27, and been persuaded to rest starting April 8; the American chiefs of staff gave way on April 19, and General Henry M. Wilson was authorized to direct an all-out offensive in Italy even at the cost of delaying Anvil, leading to the launching of an offensive of twenty-eight Allied divisions led by General Harold R. Alexander on May 11, which resulted in the capture of Rome on June 4, 1944.<sup>821</sup> According to Rosenman, Robert Sherwood had had to leave for Great Britain in early February as his position as the head of the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information required him to be there before, during and after the cross-channel invasion, and with Harry Hopkins still convalescing from his illness, that left Rosenman to work alone with the President on messages and speeches for some time, including this one which, additionally to its role as a Fireside Chat addressing the American people, was also meant to serve as a direct appeal to the Italian people.<sup>822</sup>

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<sup>820</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 294.

<sup>821</sup> *Ibid.*, 294-95.

<sup>822</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 431.

President Roosevelt opens the Fireside Chat in the evening of June 5, 1944 by announcing that Rome has become the first of the Axis capitals to be captured by the Allies on June 3, 1944; he begins by acknowledging Rome's early history, and speaks of the time when Romans once controlled the whole then-known world, noting that the United Nations intends to ensure that "no one city and no one race will be able to control the whole of the world" ever again; he then mentions Rome's significance to Christianity, pointing out that when it comes to relics of the faith and determination of early Christian saints and martyrs, Rome is unique, and expresses satisfaction that "the freedom of the Pope and the Vatican City is assured by the armies of the United Nations;" he then makes sure to mention the forces of the nations involved in "liberating" Rome, noting that while American and British troops "bore the chief burdens of battle," they fought beside "the gallant Canadians," "the fighting New Zealanders," "the courageous French and the French Moroccans," as well as South Africans, Poles and East Indians, with Italians, having forsworn their alliance with the Axis, also sending troops to fight beside those of the United Nations against "...the German trespassers on their soil;" he suggests that Rome was spared the devastation the Germans had leveled on Naples and other Italian cities thanks to the skillful maneuvering of Allied generals, who forced the Germans to retreat immediately upon their desperate, costly defeat or risk losing their already battered armies.<sup>823</sup> He then emphasizes the symbolic value of Rome, as much as its importance as a military objective, pointing out that it has been "a symbol of authority" since before Rome was an empire, having formed the core of the republic before becoming the core of the empire, then additionally becoming the center of the Catholic

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<sup>823</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Capture of Rome – June 5, 1944," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 295-96.

Church and eventually of a united Italy; he laments that these were followed by Rome becoming a center of Fascism and an Axis capital more recently, in the past quarter-century in which the Italian people were “enslaved” and degraded by Mussolini’s rule, noting that while Rome has now been liberated, “the Nazi overlords and their Fascist puppets” still dominate northern Italy; here, Roosevelt takes a moment to mention that the timing of the victory is fortuitous, as Allied forces are “poised for another strike at Western Europe” while the “gallant” Russians continue to press from the east;<sup>824</sup> Rosenman notes that the President “knew full well that our Allied forces were not “poised for another strike” but were actually striking,”<sup>825</sup> which was most likely a last-minute effort by Roosevelt to perpetuate the confusion of the enemy for as long as possible as operation Overlord progressed towards open combat, as considering that the news for which the speech was written was received the prior day, the line was likely written while aware that the Fireside Chat would be delivered after Overlord was launched. Roosevelt then points out that, Rome’s symbolic value aside, “from a strictly military standpoint” the main objectives of the Italian campaign, from the control of the major islands and the sea lanes to the capture of the major airports, had long been accomplished and that the military importance of the capture of Rome should not be exaggerated, suggesting that the hardest fighting is yet to come, with Germany’s losses, while heavy, not having reached the point of surrender, or that of being “unable to recommence world conquest a generation hence,” but assures his listeners that, while it will be difficult and costly, that point will be reached in time.<sup>826</sup> He then notes that the

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<sup>824</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>825</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 432.

<sup>826</sup> Roosevelt, “The Capture of Rome – June 5, 1944,” 296-97.

allied troops found “starvation, malnutrition, disease, and deteriorating education” in Italy, that has been under Fascist misrule for so long, with its economy growing worse in spite of “the tinsel at the top;” explaining how the Allied occupation Italy has had to start from the bottom in helping “local governments reform along democratic lines,” providing food to the populace and making it possible for them to raise and use their own, as well as helping them “cleanse their schools of Fascist trappings,” a process he summarizes as “the salvage of human beings;” he argues that the relief provided can also be viewed as an investment that will “pay dividends” by putting an end to Fascism and any desires to start another war, justifying the expense by maintaining peace.<sup>827</sup> Afterwards, Roosevelt acknowledges Italy’s “virtues as a peace-loving nation,” pointing out they were leaders in science and culture for centuries and contributed greatly to civilization, listing a few Italian men of science and arts, as well as Christopher Columbus, “that fearless discoverer;” he argues that Italy cannot grow by militaristic expansion and that if the country cannot sustain its population, there are better ways to deal with it than conquest, pointing out that Italian immigrants in the United States and the rest of the Americas have been successful and become “good citizens, community and government leaders,” rejecting the Italian-American label in favor of calling them Americans of Italian descent; he then suggests that Italy “should go on as a great mother nation,” contributing to humanity through its “special talents” in science and culture, and that all nations opposed to Nazism and Fascism should help give Italy this chance; he contrasts how the Germans have all but starved Rome with the relief that is now being provided by American and British forces, noting that while preparations to feed the city had been made, the

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<sup>827</sup> *Ibid.*, 297-98.

implementation will have to be gradual as the need is great and the military transportation requirements are heavy;<sup>828</sup> the implication that the Allied occupation intends to and has already begun to treat the Italian people better than their former German allies and their former Fascist leaders ever had is difficult to miss. The President concludes this Fireside Chat by congratulating the American people's "magnificent energy" in industry and agriculture, the organized and efficient way in which the military puts the fruits of this industry and labor to use, and the commanders of army and navy forces that lead the Italian campaign.<sup>829</sup>

The next Fireside Chat would come only a week after the prior, and six days after the D-Day. The Normandy landings had been marked by a prayer rather than a speech by President Roosevelt on June 6, 1944, only one day after the prior Fireside Chat on the capture of Rome, the writing of which Rosenman notes was assisted by the President's daughter Anne and her husband; Rosenman suggests that it was not surprising that Roosevelt had turned religion rather than oratory for this important event, as he had always felt that the President was a religious man, though he was not a regular churchgoer.<sup>830</sup> In the Fireside Chat of June 12, 1944, Roosevelt pointed out the flurry of activity on the part of the Allies and requested additional sacrifice from the American public by announcing the fifth war loan drive; Buhite and Levy point out that while the purchase of war bonds was voluntary, the requests to do so could sometimes approach

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<sup>828</sup> Ibid., 298-99.

<sup>829</sup> Ibid.

<sup>830</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 433.

“coercion,” with the President being particularly forceful in encouraging social pressure among the citizens to push one another to participate.<sup>831</sup>

President Roosevelt opens the Fireside Chat of June 12, 1944 with a brief reminder that while pride in the members of the armed forces is in order, the civilians should not forget their part in the war effort; “it goes almost without saying” is the expression he uses as he points out that work in the war industries “to forge the weapons of victory” continues to be essential, that this is “the very worst time” for war workers to stop working or look for peacetime work, and that the government needs to gain the funds for the waging of the war, both via mandatory taxation and the voluntary purchase of war bonds; he acknowledges that almost everyone seems to be buying war bonds, an act that the President casts as the one way through which everyone can contribute to the war effort regardless of their circumstances, noting that in spite of approximately 67 million Americans who have or earn an income, 81 million people have bought more than 600 individual war bonds, raising more than \$32 billion through individual, voluntary purchases; he suggests that anyone claiming this to be possible a few years earlier would have been derided as a “starry-eyed visionary,” but that “such visions” are the “stuff of America;” then, as another example of the nation exceeding all expectations, he contrasts the pessimism of the Congress in 1940 when he had asked them for the funds to produce fifty-thousand planes a year and was “called crazy,” to the reality that the United States currently produces twice the number of planes each year.<sup>832</sup> Roosevelt posits that there exists a direct connection between the bonds bought by his listeners and

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<sup>831</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 300-01.

<sup>832</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Launching the Fifth War Loan Drive – June 12, 1944," in Buhite and Levy, eds., 301-02.

every part of the global war currently taking place, through the equipment being delivered to all Allied forces in every theater, and that an overview of how the war progresses around the world is thus relevant to the topic of the war loan drive being launched; he acknowledges that much interest is centered around the English Channel and Normandy, but argues that other battlefields around the world cannot be left out as none can be considered without the others they are intrinsically connected to, taking the opportunity to make comparisons to the past state of the war in June 1942; he paints a picture of the time when Germany controlled practically all of Europe, North Africa and the Mediterranean, threatening the Suez Canal in the south and pushing the Russians back in the north, with Italian supplies and troops strengthening it, and when Japan controlled the western Aleutian islands and much of the Central Pacific, allowing it to threaten Australia, New Zealand and India, and when the United States was firmly on the defensive, even with its allies bearing the brunt of the enemy's focus; he contrasts this past state of affairs to his present day, when the United States and its allies are on the offensive all over the world, having reduced Japan's shipping by over 3 million tons, "by relentless submarine and naval attacks, amphibious thrusts, and ever-mounting air attacks" in the Pacific where tens of thousands of Japanese troops are cut off from their supply lines and any chance of return, making it possible to force Japan to surrender unconditionally much sooner than expected, and when the Germans are being pressed northward "in ever-growing confusion" by the Allies in the south and westward by the "crushing blows" of the "gallant" Russians in the east, with the "vast" Allied air fleets bombing German war industry and destroying the Luftwaffe in the air, considerably reducing German production and the numbers of the German fighter planes, and finally

with the forces having landed on France less than a week before striking a “hammer blow” “many months of careful planning and strenuous preparation” in the making, essentially achieving “the impossible” at great cost; he casts this change as the result of the combined efforts of Americans, pointing out that with “thousands of planes and ships and tanks and heavy guns” arming the “liberation forces,” who have a “shortage of nothing,” thanks to the resources invested, and “American teamwork” between the industry and the armed forces, and with capital, labor and agriculture each doing their part; he then ties these successes back to the war bonds being pitched, noting that “every man or woman or child” that bought a war bond since the first drive in 1942 having “helped mightily,” and appeals to those who either have not bought war bonds or have not bought as many as they can, stating that the people who could stand to buy more war bonds know it and “In some cases their neighbors know too;” he reiterates that the monetary cost of all materials used in the war and sent to aid allies is great, and casts the purchase of war bonds as a way to “keep faith with those who have given, and are giving, their lives,” once more urging all Americans to do all they can as he concludes this Fireside Chat,<sup>833</sup> the addition of the sentence concerning the neighbors of those who have not bought all the war bonds that they can being the portion that borders on coercion mentioned earlier. One thing to note as an overarching theme of the Chat is of faith in the American people and their ability, as Roosevelt casts it, to perform miracles when motivated, with the money raised via the war loan drives being accompanied by the “fantastic” number of planes being produced and the “impossible” accomplishment of the Normandy landings. Placing the sale of war bonds alongside these other “miracles,”

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<sup>833</sup> Ibid., 302-05.

conjures the image of a paternal Roosevelt asking his listeners for another miracle while expressing faith in their ability to perform it.

The period at the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945 was an eventful time for Roosevelt. Military successes were piling up quickly enough to exacerbate the President's worry of public overconfidence that the war would be over soon to the extent that he'd felt the need to send letters to the heads of government agencies and departments on December 1, 1944, counseling them to refrain from making any public statements concerning an early end to the war;<sup>834</sup> his appeals that the war was not over yet seemed to be vindicated with the Battle of the Bulge, when a large-scale German counteroffensive was repelled in Belgium, but not without pushing a bulge into Allied lines, and the President would be convinced by the advice of Secretary of War Stimson and Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal to once again recommend a national service law as well as a measure to mobilize four million men that had been deemed unfit for military service in war industries on January 6, 1945 in both his annual message to the congress and in the Fireside Chat that accompanied it;<sup>835</sup> this time, the "work or fight" bill introduced alongside the speeches would pass the House of Representatives in less than a month, on February 1, with 246 against 167 votes, and it would be passed by the Senate as well on March 27, 1945.<sup>836</sup> The progress made in the war motivated international efforts by the Allies as well. After extensive negotiations amidst increasing anxiety as Russian and western forces converged on central Germany, since there was no agreement in place on several major topics including what was to be done with a defeated

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<sup>834</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 507.

<sup>835</sup> Buhite and Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 306.

<sup>836</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 516.

Germany, Yalta had been determined as the location of the next conference between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin; the negotiations for determining the location of the next conference had begun as early as the September of 1944, with Roosevelt working to ensure that the meeting happened even as he campaigned for reelection, but these negotiations had not concluded until after the elections; many of his advisors had counseled the President to refuse Yalta as a location, but, according to Rosenman, Roosevelt was determined to go almost anywhere to chase after the chance for permanent world peace, the “most cherished objective of his eventful life.”<sup>837</sup> President Roosevelt’s annual message to the Congress, delivered in writing to the Congress and shortened for delivery via radio in the form of a Fireside Chat, on January 6, 1945, was written as preparations for the Yalta Conference were underway; Roosevelt had asked Rosenman to begin gathering materials for the message as early as December 12, 1944 and Rosenman had worked with Sherwood on the first draft using suggestions and information provided by various departments, including suggestions and drafts provided by Benjamin Cohen, Archibald MacLeish and Harold D. Smith; in conversations concerning the speech, the President had expressed that he wanted to cover the status of the war, the future peace, the United Nations as a post-war organization, and the future of the United States, and that he wanted the speech to be one that people around the world could draw hope from; eventually, the message to the Congress took its final form as the longest one Roosevelt had ever delivered, despite his earlier request that Rosenman limit the length to three-thousand words, and a copy with parts marked for omission from the Fireside Chat version was presented to Roosevelt’s approval by Rosenman, and some new sentences

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<sup>837</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 509.

were added to assist the flow of the shortened version and to make parts of it, especially parts with a great deal of statistical information, more interesting.<sup>838</sup>

President Roosevelt opens the Fireside Chat of January 6, 1945, the last one he would ever deliver, with a mention of the message to the Congress delivered in writing on the same day and an overview of the war; he begins by once again establishing the significance of the struggle, saying “Everything we are, everything we have is at stake.” and summarizes the situation as “We have no question of the ultimate victory. We have no question of the cost. Our losses will be heavy.”<sup>839</sup> The past year as a whole, he notes, was a successful one in the achieving of war objectives even though its end was marked by the setback caused by a “ferocious counterattack” by the Germans meant to split the Allied forces in two that reached its “high tide” two days after Christmas, which was since pushed back thanks to the “indescribable and unforgettable gallantry” of the Allied forces as well as the “admirable calm and resolution” of General Eisenhower who is the supreme commander of Allied armies in France; he warns that this will not be the last “desperate attempt” to slow the progress of the Allies, and that Germans should not be assumed beaten “...until the last Nazi has surrendered.”<sup>840</sup> Roosevelt then makes another of his appeals to reject “the poisonous effects of enemy propaganda,” arguing that this “wedge that the Germans attempted to drive in Western Europe” was less dangerous than the “wedges” they continue to attempt to drive between the United States and its allies by spreading rumors against allied nations as well as Allied commanders, rumors which, he

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<sup>838</sup> Ibid., 510-14.

<sup>839</sup> Roosevelt, "Work or Fight – January 6, 1945," 307.

<sup>840</sup> Ibid., 307-08.

suggests, all bear the trademark “Made in Germany.” when examined.<sup>841</sup> The President then repeats the recommendation he had made for a national service law the previous year, arguing that while the successful prosecution of the war thus far was made possible thanks to “unprecedented production figures,” the only way for the war production to meet the increased demands of the war for “more weapons and new weapons” is for Americans employed in war industries to keep these war jobs and for additional civilians employed in non-essential fields to switch to essential industries, and that a national service act would be “the most efficient and democratic way” of ensuring that war production objectives are met, once more calling the Congress to mobilize all human resources the United States can muster, emphasizing that with “this kind of mechanized warfare” where new weapons are continually created and fielded by both sides, sustained war production becomes even more important so that the final blow can be delivered as soon as possible;<sup>842</sup> Rosenman suggests that while the President avoided hinting at the existence of the atom bomb in any capacity beyond mentioning “new weapons,” he “certainly” had it in mind while speaking of the costs of staying ahead of the enemy;<sup>843</sup> Roosevelt’s words that both sides build and field new weapons take on an additional urgency with the implication that Germany and Japan may also build nuclear weapons, which, even if left unused, would jeopardize the United States’ ability to secure their unconditional surrender, a condition he had previously argued as essential to any lasting peace. The President appeals to the public to support the national service law not in terms of grandiose national goals, but in terms of how it would help support the ordinary

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<sup>841</sup> Ibid.

<sup>842</sup> Ibid., 308-10.

<sup>843</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 512.

soldier, “the average, easygoing, hard-fighting, young American” who faces the toughest fighting and shoulders the burdens of war, arguing that the cost of those who leave “essential jobs for nonessential reasons” would be paid in the blood of these Americans, “our own sons;”<sup>844</sup> according to Rosenman, Roosevelt’s request of support being delivered in terms of supporting individuals within the armed services was natural for him, and not a mere oratorical flourish, as he suggests that Roosevelt thought of every weapon by visualizing it in the “hands of an American boy,” rather than in the abstract.<sup>845</sup> President Roosevelt then assures his listeners that the legislation would provide against loss of wages, retirement and seniority rights, and that it would only be used to “the extent absolutely required by military necessities,” pointing out that other allied nations such as Great Britain who have such laws very rarely have a need to make use of its compulsory powers, further recommending that the four million men classified by the Selective Service as unfit for active duty be utilized in any capacity where they would be most useful to the war effort, while the Congress’ action on the national service law is pending, and that the Selective Service Act be amended to include the assignment of registered nurses as the volunteering has provided an inadequate enough number of nurses that nurses in army hospitals are finding themselves bedridden due to overwork;<sup>846</sup> Rosenman acknowledges that all of these measures were quite drastic, and posits that the President was moved to such drastic action by the expectation of a long war against Japan, which his military advisors told him likely lay in the future.<sup>847</sup> Roosevelt then speaks on foreign affairs, proposing that the United States should stand “together with the

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<sup>844</sup> Roosevelt, "Work or Fight – January 6, 1945," 308-09.

<sup>845</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 511.

<sup>846</sup> Roosevelt, "Work or Fight – January 6, 1945," 310-11.

<sup>847</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 512.

United Nations not for the war alone but for the victory for which the war is fought,” suggesting that the United States and its allies are brought together not just by common danger but also common hope for a durable and secure peace, acknowledging that this peace will not be easily created, as seen in the difficulties experienced in areas liberated from “the Nazi and the Fascist tyranny,” but arguing that a strong foundation for it can and will be built, even though its continuance will be the work of the people, as only “the united determination of free and peace-loving peoples” willing to cooperate and coexist can keep peace; he compares “the difficult processes of liberation and adjustment” at hand to those experienced by the United States in the aftermath of the Revolutionary War, and how the many separatist movements and insurrections following the war eventually gave way to the current state of the nation as these complex difficulties were worked out over time, and suggests that “the people of the liberated areas of Europe” will work theirs out with time as well;<sup>848</sup> Rosenman notes that while he himself found the analogy oversimplified and misleading, Roosevelt spoke often of the similarities he saw between the post-war world and the post-Revolution United States in private conversation and found it apt.<sup>849</sup> He then asserts that in the future “‘power politics’ must not be a controlling factor in international relations,” that power needs to be paired with responsibility and be obliged to justify itself on the grounds of the general good; he argues that the disillusionment of the First World War made the United States give up on building a better peace due to a lack of courage to fulfill its responsibilities in an imperfect world, and that this mistake must not be repeated if a third world war is to be avoided, that only by working towards the principles for which it has fought can the

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<sup>848</sup> Roosevelt, "Work or Fight – January 6, 1945," 311.

<sup>849</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 512

United States fulfill its responsibilities and maintain its own security; he acknowledges that the principles in the Atlantic Charter are not easily applied to every complex problem that will be found, but argues that it is essential to have principles that can be worked towards, and that the United States should and will use its influence to secure these principles, and that it will not shrink from its political responsibilities in peace any more than it has from its military responsibilities in war; he warns that it is important to avoid exploiting and exaggerating the differences among the Allies, particularly in the case of peoples liberated from Fascism, such as the Greek and the Polish, even though there exists a cause for concern in many of these situations, reminding his listeners that the United States has obligations to exiled governments and underground leaders as well as its major allies, suggesting that while the Allies have declared that they will respect the liberated peoples' right to self-govern in a manner of their own choosing, it is difficult to determine the kind of self-government these peoples want due to the many citizens of these countries held as prisoners of war or forced labor in Germany, and that until "conditions permit a genuine expression of the peoples' will," the United Nations will need to prevent any temporary authorities from getting in the way of said expression, with the long term aim being to ensure the coexistence of European states as "good neighbors" who will deal with one another in terms of their common interests and not their "traditional grievances;" but, he argues, the establishing of "permanent machinery for the maintenance of peace" should not be delayed while dealing with these specific and immediate problems, as international peace can only be maintained by "institutions that are capable of life and growth," suggesting that United Nations must join together to secure the independence of all peaceful states, "...so that never again shall tyranny be

able to divide and conquer.”<sup>850</sup> Roosevelt then makes note of the “renaissance of the French people” and the return of their nation to the ranks of the United Nations, praising them for their faith in the soundness of the democratic ideals they contributed so greatly to which has only grown as they emerged from under Nazi occupation, acknowledging that their forces now fighting beside those of the United States and noting that the United States has armed French forces since landing in Africa and will continue to arm them in the future;<sup>851</sup> while the President’s words may read like they were meant to foreshadow France’s place among the five permanent members of the United Nations security council to those of us reading of them today, Rosenman notes that France’s place in the new world order being built in 1945 was unclear as the speech was being written, as it was one of the matters meant to be discussed at Yalta, and though the President had been discussing the matter with the State Department and wished to mention the topic in his message to the Congress and his Fireside Chat, Roosevelt’s friendly lines on France were added by Harry Hopkins, who would soon be leaving for Europe to meet Charles de Gaulle, and was hoping that some kind words by the President on the French would help “defrost” the General.<sup>852</sup> Roosevelt then makes a recommendation that universal military training be adopted after the war, arguing that the United States requires strength socially, economically and militarily if an enduring peace is to be gained; he brings up the economic Bill of Rights he had suggested before, stating that the most fundamental of the rights he outlined is the “right to a useful and remunerative job,” which the implementation of each of the other rights mentioned therein would make major

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<sup>850</sup> Roosevelt, "Work or Fight – January 6, 1945," 311-13.

<sup>851</sup> *Ibid.*, 313-14.

<sup>852</sup> Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 514.

contributions to achieving, noting that he has outlined an approach for a program meant to create nearly 60 million jobs, and acknowledging that such a program will have to be delayed until the end of the war as no measures that may slow war production can be risked yet.<sup>853</sup> Roosevelt concludes his very last Fireside Chat making an appeal for international cooperation, arguing that the “magnificent fight” of the armed forces would be wasted if the United Nations falls apart at the end of the war, that “1945 can be the greatest year of achievement in human history,” by being not just the year when “the Nazi-Fascist reign of terror in Europe” finally ends and when “the malignant power of imperialistic Japan” faces retribution, but also by marking the “beginning of the organization of world peace” that will safeguard security, human rights and religious freedom.<sup>854</sup>

Walter Lippmann points out that, however cautious, the President’s words on the use of the United States’ influence to fulfill its political responsibilities marks a departure from the established American international policy where the main use of influence has been for postponement of dealing with political until after the war, which he notes has meant that Britain and Russia have needed to act unilaterally on the matter of provisional governments of liberated territories over which they had military responsibility, and that it resulted in the encouragement of extremist factions, concluding that “Thus the more we preached high principles and postponed settlements the greater became the gap between our principles and what happened,”<sup>855</sup> because provisional governments were

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<sup>853</sup> Roosevelt, "Work or Fight – January 6, 1945," 314.

<sup>854</sup> *Ibid.*, 314-15.

<sup>855</sup> Walter Lippmann, “A Change Of Policy?,” *The Evening Review*, January 10, 1945. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

“indispensable immediately” and not even the soundest of the State Department’s principles on the establishment of permanent and legitimate governments were useful in handling them.<sup>856</sup> He remarks that the Atlantic Charter, which serves as the moral code of the United States foreign policy, only applies to nations governed by the government they want and is designed to keep them from being deprived of said government, pointing out that it has no provisions for nations such as Greece which has been in “a state of chronic civil war for 25 years,” and suggests that, while it has been “useless” to propose a United Nations council and postponing political issues for this hypothetical council’s decision, there may be hope for actually establishing a United Nations council if the President intends to “face the concrete issues” as his speech seems to imply.<sup>857</sup>

David Lawrence calls the President’s “state of the union” message which is the unabridged version of the final Fireside Chat “...the best of the entire series he has delivered since 1933.”<sup>858</sup> He praises the message’s conciliatory tone, constructive spirit and clear purpose of curing discord at home and abroad, noting that recent events required exactly the tactful approach of refusing to offend allied nations and making extravagant promises to the public displayed by Roosevelt, but objects to the President’s “cardinal error” in his assumption that the reason the prior peace faced outcry due to “an ill-fated drive for perfectionism,” remarking that it was not a minority of perfectionists but a large majority of Americans who cried out against the power politics lulling “peace-loving peoples” to sleep, which was what eventually led to the Nazi totalitarians’

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<sup>856</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Blank Space in Our Thinking,” *The Nebraska State Journal*, January 7, 1945. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>857</sup> Walter Lippmann, “A Change Of Policy?,” *The Evening Review*, January 10, 1945. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

<sup>858</sup> David Lawrence, “The Best Message,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, January 8, 1945. <https://newspaperslibrary.proquest.com/> (accessed April 25, 2020).

exploitation of the weakness and “unvarnished immorality” of the democracies, suggesting that, while it is “tactful diplomacy” not to assume less-worthy motives of the rest of the United Nations, liberals in all democracies should continue to hope for principle to be placed before expediency in future conferences between powers.<sup>859</sup>

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<sup>859</sup> *Ibid.*

## CONCLUSION

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was in a unique position among his contemporaries in the United States. His great skill as an orator and gift for simplifying complex problems and persuading the mass public had combined with his mastery over the newly matured medium of the radio had combined to grant his Fireside Chats direct access to the hearts and minds of a massive audience, a significant portion of whom often would not even be exposed to the arguments of his most skilled critics on account of not reading the newspapers where a vast majority of these critics wrote. Being among the pioneers of the political use of this emerging medium had granted him with a drought of competition for his propaganda.

The President did not hesitate to make use of this advantage, rallying the mass public to exert social pressure on the opponents of his policies both in government and in general. Though after witnessing the unintended consequences of doing so in one evidently ill-thought event, he seemed to do so more responsibly in order to avoid causing strife at least against unwilling opponents. In any case, Roosevelt seemed to default to relying on his ability to rally the public through his Fireside Chats when confronted by any significant obstacle, even when it was far from the most optimal solution, such as his clash with his own party, when this approach served only to exacerbate the split it was meant to address, and the Court fight when engaging in such a

battle of public opinion not only proved unnecessary but actively caused him further problems for no gain.

This flaw in Roosevelt's methods would be at its most visible during his battle with the Supreme Court, where his frustration with the cumbersomeness of the democratic process overcame his respect for democratic institutions and drove him to attempt to rally public support for a costly conflict that led to his defeat and turned out to be wholly unnecessary in hindsight. It would also lead to an exacerbation of the emerging split within his party and, alongside a belief that part of his constituency was being misrepresented in the Congress, cause him to accelerate his plans to push for a realignment of the party system along the lines of liberalism and conservatism, through the same method of rallying public support, which would further exacerbate the split it was meant to remedy.

Both of these conflicts would highlight the President's fears that the inefficiencies of American democratic system would lead to it failing its people at a critical time, and lead to a worse loss of faith in the system than had emerged during the Great Depression. They would also draw parallels between him and the European dictators, the conditions of whose rise to power he was attempting to prevent in hopes of preserving the spirit if not the body of American democracy.

These fears would be muted in favor of more immediate threats to the nation itself as war broke out in Europe, but they would remain active in the background as Roosevelt faced harsh criticism for his unwillingness to let go of the reforms made before the war for what some of his critics saw as immediate wartime efficiency, and would return to the forefront as the war drew to a close. And the President would speak on the importance of

resisting reactionary movement at home to avoid losing to fascism at home after having defeated it abroad, as well as the necessity of further reform to further democratize the distribution of power within the nation.

During the war, President Roosevelt would find himself compelled to slowly erode the sentiment of isolationism by convincing the public to support greater and greater involvement in the war through escalating support of the nations arrayed against the forces of Fascism. He accomplished this by stoking the fire of the public desire for the defeat of Germany and its allies while placating the public desire to remain out of the war to ensure that the latter could not overcome the former, at times circumventing the latter by inventing entirely new procedures to increase support to the democracies in the war. By all accounts, his desire to keep the United States out of the war was genuine, but his hope of doing so seems limited in hindsight. A steady escalation of support for democracies and hostility against the forces of tyranny, until it a clear proxy war was underway. Arguably, it was his way of choosing between two equally important, but incompatible, public desires.

In its censorship efforts, the Roosevelt administration exercised restraint, only escalating to legally mandated censorship once the American participation in the war became official, and even then, only in the form of censoring overseas communications and increasing the government's ability to act in secrecy. The public would be asked to trust that the government would not hide any more information than necessary, and legitimate information from abroad and from the bureaucracy would be monopolized by government approved channels. The press would not labor under censorship legislation, but apply voluntary self-censorship on matters concerning the war while it would remain

as critical as ever on domestic matters, and while Roosevelt's responses to his harsher critics would be acerbic, they would not escalate beyond the peace time norms outside of condemnations directed at rumormongering. The situation would grant the government effective monopoly of propaganda on matters concerning the war.

As the end of the war approached, Roosevelt increasingly expounded on the necessity of a worldwide system of peaceful nations led by the four great powers of America, Britain, Russia and China who would keep the peace by force if necessary. The sovereignty of all other nations was to be entrusted to the great powers and efforts would be made to improve living standards and economic security across the world in hopes of achieving a permanent peace. His approach seemed to be less about solving long term problems themselves, and more about resolving immediate problems while laying the groundwork for long term solutions.

Overall, Franklin Delano Roosevelt can be argued to have been more interested in the spirit of democracy than in the practical aspects of it, as he demonstrated a willingness to circumvent democratic institutions and to suspend democratic processes when they obstructed what he considered to be an immediate need while speaking of his adoration for the system and the Fireside Chats were his central tool for these efforts, but he also was quite active in using his Fireside Chats to push both the stimulation of public interest and participation in the democratic process and in the enactment of a variety of programs that would later lead to a more democratized distribution of power within American society, by bringing greater equality of opportunity to citizens.

One thing that can be said with little to challenge it is that he was a pivotal figure not only to the changes to the role of the presidents in American democracy in the 20<sup>th</sup>

century, but also to how political leaders in the United States would engage their public for the rest of the century, with many political figures facing unfavorable press following his lead in direct appeals to the public.

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