

WORLD ALLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP

Address delivered by Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, P.C., K. C.,  
before the World Alliance for International Friendship  
at Washington, D. C., November 10, 1930.

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In the simplest words, but with the deepest earnestness, permit me to thank you for the exceeding honour of being admitted to address such an assembly as is gathered here. May I express also, on behalf of all taking part tonight, our sense of the compliment done us by the presence of distinguished representatives of so many distant lands.

This is an age not of organization but of organizations--societies, clubs, boards, leagues, commissions--and one gets bewildered in the endless maze. But with it all the world is not well organized. It is not well organized for the purpose of distributing among its population the fruits of their toil by brain and hand in accordance with the contribution of each, and it is certainly not as yet well organized for the greatest of all consummations, the establishment of permanent peace.

But though there may be too many heterogeneous institutions, there is one certainly which has a right to live, one which can demand loyal service and enthusiasm from every lover of his race. It is the World Alliance for International Friendship.

This Alliance has a responsibility whose very immensity must stagger its officers and challenge its adherents in every Nation. Its responsibility is to see that the people of this world do not forget what war really is; that they continue to hate war and resolve to get rid of it forever. For if the people don't so resolve and stay resolved and mightily resolved, there is going to be war again.

Is it worth while to get rid of war? Is it worth while to make the biggest effort united humanity ever made? Is it possible? There are many who think it is not. Certainly it is the most difficult task mankind has ever attempted, but the first thing we must decide is that it has to be possible and has to be done. It is infinitely important for us to get to understand that war has to be ended, and why; and one of the objects of this Alliance is to drive home that truth and the reason behind it into all corners of the world.

I will tell you the reason as I understand it. Civilization has to end war or war will end civilization. Do we believe that to be true or do we not? If we do not, it surely is time we did, and if we do, then this generation of human beings has to adjust itself to new facts--that is, facts which never existed before; it has to adjust itself to new tremendous facts or pass out.

What are these facts? The chief one is this--Science has given us so great a command over the elements of nature that millions can be snuffed out in this day in a mere matter of moments. Where hundreds fell before in manly contests arm to arm, great cities now, a whole countryside, can be eaten up by the insatiate maw of chemistry. As soon as war got into three dimensions--that is, got into the upper air and under sea, as well as on the surface--vast possibilities were opened up. When you get in three dimensions, weapons come into play which cannot be matched with other weapons and the issue decided as it has been decided in the past by a test of strength and skill. Let me repeat, such a test cannot be made in three-dimension war. Take the submarine; the Germans had only some thirty in use at any time in the last great struggle. These required ten thousand men. Against those thirty submarines were arrayed four thousand surface vessels great and