

September 4, the United States destroyer *Greer* was attacked by a submarine. The day following, the president ordered the United States fleet to "eliminate" the submarine if possible. By the middle of the month, further American ships having meanwhile been sunk, a "shoot first" order went into effect. About the same time, it was disclosed that convoys had been included in the defence pattern of the United States. In mid-September the president asked congress to make a second huge appropriation for the lend-lease programme. A bill was signed by the president on Tuesday last, thereby bringing to a total of nearly thirteen billions of dollars the amount voted for lend-lease purposes.

At the end of September the joint meeting of Britain, the United States and Russia was held in Moscow, and agreement reached on joint United States-United Kingdom assistance to Russia.

On the 9th of October the president asked congress to permit the arming of American merchant vessels. The House of Representatives has already voted to amend that part of the neutrality act which previously prevented such a course.

The removal of the ban on sending American vessels into belligerent ports, or so-called combat zones, has become another immediate object of American policy.

These facts, in their cumulative effect, serve to show how rapidly the mirage of isolation has been disappearing, and how completely the appreciation of the interdependence of free peoples has grown in the minds of all but a small minority.

The position of the United States in the matter of neutrality could not have been more clearly set forth than it was in the formal statement presented by Mr. Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, before the foreign affairs committee of the House of Representatives at Washington on October the 13th. The following were Mr. Knox's words:

As a matter of simple truth and realism, from the outset of this war, or at least from the time when we began to thoroughly understand what the war was all about, we have never been neutral. . . . We have been entirely unneutral, vigorously and actively supporting one side and contributing in many ways to the defeat of the other side. . . . We neither think nor act neutral in the present war. It is only honest to make our laws consistent with our actions.

The American official view as to what the war is all about was set forth with equal frankness by Mr. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, who said:

The blunt truth is that the world is steadily being dragged downward and backward by the mightiest movement of conquest ever attempted in all history.

The significance of Britain and the British fleet to the security of the United States was stressed by Mr. Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of State for War, in the following unequivocal words:

The chief hope of defeating Hitler is by preserving the safety of the British isles, and the existence of the British fleet. This fleet for many years has been engaged in protecting the freedom of the seas upon which our own safety and welfare also depend.

No statements describing the position of the United States could, however, be more graphic or emphatic than those which the president himself has used in his recent public utterances. In his message to congress on the revision of the United States neutrality law, delivered on October 9, the president said:

We know now that Hitler recognizes no limitation of any zone of combat in any part of the seven seas. He has struck at our ships and at the lives of our sailors within the waters of the western hemisphere. Determined as he is to gain domination of the entire world, he considers the entire world his own battlefield. . . .

We will not let Hitler prescribe the waters of the world on which our ships may travel. The American flag is not going to be driven from the seas either by his submarines, his aeroplanes, or his threats. . . .

We intend to maintain the policy of protecting the freedom of the seas against domination by any foreign power which has become crazed with a desire to control the world. We shall do so with all our strength and all our heart and all our mind.

A further statement of United States policy and its practical enforcement was set forth in no uncertain terms in the president's navy day address to the American people, delivered as recently as October 27:

Very simply and very bluntly—

Said the president.

—we are pledged to pull our own oar in the destruction of Hitlerism.

Remarking that it was the nation's will that America should deliver vital arms and supplies, and that, in open defiance of that will, American ships had been sunk and American sailors killed, Mr. Roosevelt added: "We do not propose to take this lying down."

Our American merchant ships—

Said the president.

—must be armed to defend themselves against the rattlesnakes of the sea. Our American merchant ships must be free to carry our American goods into the harbours of our friends. Our merchant ships must be protected by our American navy.