

Still another danger is the danger of thinking the free nations can make themselves secure through military strength alone. Don't mistake me. It is indispensable to create sufficient military strength to remove the prospects of successful aggression. But we are not merely facing a test of material strength. We are also engaged in a struggle for men's minds, and, in that struggle, military strength is only one of the elements. We must re-arm, but we must also find the means to maintain and develop the measure of social justice we have already achieved in our own countries, and we must continue to work for the extension beyond our countries of that basic human equality which is the hallmark of a genuinely free society.

All thoughtful people recognize the potential value to our partnership of the vast industrial capital and the skilled manpower of Western Europe which might well be decisive in turning the balance if war came. But we cannot afford to overlook, either, those vast areas in Asia and in Africa, and even in parts of this hemisphere, where under existing economic conditions mass poverty prevails and where it is quite useless to preach the abstract advantages of freedom to men and women who are starving or half-starved.

To these unfortunate peoples, Communism has an obvious appeal. The Communist doctrine of an economic and social revolution for the benefit of the masses has been just as potent a weapon in this so-called cold war as the subversive fifth column or the shadow of the Red Army. A defensive effort designed only to safeguard the material and moral advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of this continent and of Western Europe will not give us the security we want. It is the essential first step. But if we hope to provide enduring safeguards of those moral and material advantages we must, in a true spirit of equality and co-operation, join with the less favoured areas of the world in a concerted effort to give their inhabitants greater material advantages and greater hopes for the future.

To strive to do all these things I have been suggesting, and to keep on striving to do them over even a generation or two, may seem to many of us a grim and uninviting prospect. Some of you are probably asking yourself: When can we hope to get back to normal? When can we return to living decent American lives without having to worry about the problems of the rest of the human race? Well, I am afraid the answer to those questions is: Not in my day nor in yours.

The United States today, the whole North American continent today, is directly concerned about what is happening in the rest of the world. What is even more important, the United States is, I repeat, inevitably the dominant factor in the free world. On your course as a nation, the fate of all mankind largely depends. That is true whether we like it or not.

I am sure there are many Americans who would cheerfully sacrifice this new position of leadership in world affairs for the comfortable isolation of the years between your Civil War and the First World War. But, as a nation you have no such choice. The only choice before you and before us is a choice between wise, patient and intelligent leadership of the free world by the United States, or a rapid shrinkage of the circumferences of free peoples, as your own and our lights of freedom grow dimmer and dimmer.