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Early in January 1941 there was introduced in Congress a bill to enable the Government to furnish aid to nations whose defense was deemed by the President to be vital to the defense of the United States. Both Houses of Congress held extensive public hearings on the bill. Secretary Hull made a statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on January 15 in support of the bill. In this statement the Secretary declared that it had become increasingly apparent that mankind was faced to face with an organized, ruthless, and invincible movement of steadily-expanding conquest; that we were in the presence of forces which were not restrained by considerations of law or principles of morality; that these forces had no fixed limits for their program of conquest; that they had spread over large areas on land and were desperately struggling to seize control of the oceans as an essential means of achieving and maintaining the conquest of other continents. The Secretary stated that control of the high seas by law-abiding nations "is the key to the security of the Western Hemisphere", that should such control be gained by the Axis powers, the danger to the United States "would be multiplied manifold". The most serious question for the United States, the Secretary said, was whether the control of the high seas would pass into the hands of powers bent on a program of unlimited conquest.

The Secretary felt that on no other question of public policy were the people of the United States so nearly unanimous and so emphatic as they were on that of the imperative need, in our own most vital interest, to give Great Britain and other victims of attack the maximum of material aid in the shortest possible space of time. This was so because it was clear that such assistance to those resisting attack was a vital part of our national self-defense. The bill before the Committee, he said, known as the Lend-Lease bill, provided for machinery which would enable the United States to make the most effective use of our resources for our own needs and for those whom, in our own self-defense, we were determined to aid. The Secretary expressed the



belief that this bill would make it possible for us to allocate our resources in way best calculated to provide for the security of the United States and of this continent.

The Lend-Lease bill became law with the signature of the President on March 11, 1941. Immediately thereafter the President requested an appropriation of \$7,000,000,000 to accomplish the objectives of the act, and that appropriation was speedily made.

In an address on March 15 President Roosevelt stated that the decision embodied in the Lend-Lease Act ended the urging that we get along with the dictators and ended the compromise with tyranny and the forces of oppression. When our production output was in full swing, he said, the democracies of the world would be able to prove that dictators could not win. The time element he considered of "supreme importance". Every plane, every other instrument of war, old and new, which we could spare would be sent overseas; the great task of the day, the deep duty which rested upon us, was to "move products from the assembly lines of our factories to the battle lines of democracies -- Now!"

The President said that the Nazi forces were not asking mere modifications in colonial maps or in minor European boundaries; that they openly sought the destruction of all elective systems of government on every continent -- including our own; that they sought to establish systems of government based on the regimentation of all human beings by a handful of individual rulers who had seized power by force.

The Nation, he said, was calling for the sacrifice of some privileges but not for the sacrifice of fundamental rights. Referring to the four freedoms set forth in his January address, the President said that they might not be immediately attainable throughout the world but "humanity does move towards those ideals through democratic processes". If we failed and democracy were superseded by slavery, "then those four freedoms or even the mention of them will become forbidden things".

There was no longer any doubt, he said, that our people recognized the seriousness of the international situation. That was why they had



demanded and obtained "a policy of unqualified, immediate, all-out aid for Britain, Greece, China, and for all the governments in exile whose homelands are temporarily occupied by the aggressors". Aid would be increased, he emphasized, "and yet again increased", until total victory had been won.

In instructions shortly thereafter to United States diplomatic missions in several neutral European countries, the Secretary of State said that every effort should be made to see that this authoritative statement by the President of our position was circulated as widely as possible. He said a salutary effect on public and official opinion in countries which had not been drawn directly into the war, would result from a forceful, continuous presentation of the position of the United States and of the scope of our national effort and determination to resist aggression. Such a presentation also would be of great assistance in countering totalitarian propaganda. The missions were to stress that we were absolutely convinced that the forces of aggression would be defeated. It had been made abundantly clear by our people and Government, the Secretary said, that we intended to play our part in resistance against the forces of aggression. Therefore, it was incumbent upon every representative of the United States and upon every United States citizen abroad to reflect "the absolute determination" of the United States to "see this thing through".

Excerpt from "Peace and War"  
official publication  
Department of State, U. S. ...  
Pages 96, 97 and 98