

Exhibit 2843

7

VIII EUROPEAN CRISIS 1938

United States Rearmament

As 1937 drew to a close the situation in the world became increasingly threatening. The hostilities between China and Japan raged with growing intensity; in Europe, Spain was torn by a civil struggle which threatened to turn into a general continental war. In November 1937 Italy joined Germany and Japan in the Anti-Comintern Pact. Meanwhile, Germany, arming at a feverish pace, was causing grave apprehension as to its intentions toward the European political structure.

During this period there developed considerable public support in the United States for the adoption of a constitutional amendment requiring a popular vote as prerequisite to a declaration of war by the Congress. Both President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull at various times expressed their strong opposition to this proposal. On January 6, 1938 the President wrote to the Speaker of the House of Representatives that such an amendment "would cripple any President in his conduct of our foreign relations" and "would encourage other nations to believe that they could violate American rights with impunity". Secretary Hull on January 8 warned that the proposal would impair the ability of the Government to safeguard the peace of the people of the United States. On January 10 the proposal was voted on by the House of Representatives but was rejected by the close vote of 209 to 188.

President Roosevelt recommended to Congress, in a special message of January 28, 1938, the strengthening of our national defense. The President reported with deep regret that armaments were increasing "at an unprecedented and alarming rate". He called attention to the ominous fact that at least one fourth of the world's population was involved in "merciless devastating conflict" in spite of the fact that most people in most countries wished to live at peace. As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, the President deemed it his constitutional duty to report to the Congress that the national defense of the United States was, in the light of the increasing armaments of other nations, inadequate for purposes of national security and

therefore required increase. The President said that "adequate defense" meant that for the protection not only of our coasts but also of our communities far removed from the coasts, we must keep any potential enemy many hundreds of miles away from our continental limits. We could not assume, he stated, that our defense would be limited to one ocean and one coast and that the others would certainly be safe. "Specifically and solely because of the piling up of additional land and sea armaments in other countries" the President recommended to Congress that authorizations be granted for substantial increases in military and naval armament. Included were recommendations for increasing by 20 percent the existing naval building program and for appropriations to lay down two additional battleships and two additional cruisers during 1938.

The President's proposals for military and naval rearmament were debated in Congress during the spring of 1938. Doubt was expressed in some quarters that the proposed naval increases were really necessary for the defense of the United States, and several Senators and Representatives voiced the suspicion that the contemplated naval increases were based on an agreement for naval cooperation with some other power, such as Great Britain. Secretary of State Hull took cognizance of these ideas in a letter to a member of Congress on February 10, 1938. He stated categorically his opinion that the proposed naval program was needed for the defense of the United States. Referring to the desire of the people and Government of the United States to keep out of war, he said that those who, with a full sense of responsibility, were advocating this program, were doing so in the belief that its adoption would contribute to achieving this desire. Secretary Hull pointed out that the Navy, even with the proposed increases, would not be able to embark upon offensive or aggressive operations overseas.

The Secretary also declared that the proposed program did not contemplate naval cooperation with any other power in the world; that the policy of the United States was to avoid both extreme internationalism and extreme isolation; that, while avoiding alliances and entangling commitments,

it was advisable to confer and exchange information with other governments having common objectives and, when practicable, to proceed on parallel lines. Finally, the Secretary said that if every peaceful nation insisted on remaining aloof from every other peaceful nation and on pursuing a policy of armament limitation without reference to relative armaments, the inevitable consequences would be to encourage and even to assist nations inclined to play lawless roles.

The President's proposals for military and naval rearmament were substantially adopted by the Congress.

* * * * *

Excerpt from "Peace and War"
Official publication
Department of State, U. S. A.
Pages 52 and 53