



ADDRESS

BY

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Prepared for Delivery

at

ARMED FORCES DAY

Luncheon

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This is only the second Armed Forces Day in the history of our Nation, and already the advantages of what it signifies are in clear and unmistakable evidence.

The designation of an Armed Forces Day about a year ago had a three-fold purpose:

First, it was a formal recognition of the progress that our Armed Forces had made in the unification of their effort to insure the security of the United States.

Second, it was to give the American public a periodic opportunity to examine at first hand what our Armed Forces are doing, and

Third, it was to give the American public an opportunity to demonstrate that it is interested in, and is supporting, our Armed Forces.

Much quicker than we realized one year ago, the first of these purposes has been demonstrated in splendid fashion. For unification has been complete and effective in Korea, where Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force units are fighting in perfect unity against a numerically superior enemy, and punishing him severely at every turn.

And as to the second and third of the purposes of this Day, your grand celebration here today -- and similar celebrations all over the United States -- are eloquent testimony of your interest in, and support of, the Armed Forces, as well as a fitting tribute to their brave deeds in Korea and their efforts elsewhere to rebuild our strength and that of our friends so that other Koreas elsewhere in the world may not occur.

As you know, at the end of World War II, in consonance with our good faith and peaceful intention, we demobilized the greatest Army, Navy, and Air Force that the world had ever seen, and demilitarized and destroyed the

vast quantities of war materials that we had produced in our great industries, We did this, of course, with the earnest desire that from our example, the rest of the world would do likewise.

Unfortunately, our example came to naught, and our good intentions turned to disillusionment. One of our chief former allies did not follow our example. It did not demobilize and disarm as we did. Instead, this nation -- the Soviet Union -- has kept huge armed forces in being, has continued to produce war materials in large quantities, and has built huge armies among her captive satellites, until last June one of these felt strong enough to invade the free world in a cynical and calculated attack upon an unfortunate little nation that was still trying desperately to overcome the debilitating effects of many years of war's devastation.

That attack shocked us into the realization that in spite of our successes in the so-called "cold war," which we had been winning with our fine programs of rehabilitation, such as the Marshall Plan; our Military Assistance Program, which contributed to the defeat of the communists in Greece; and our information program, the Voice of America, which has been successfully penetrating the Iron Curtain -- in spite of all of these, we no longer possessed sufficient armed strength in being to deter aggression.

For these reasons, we have had to turn once again to the rebuilding of our armed strength. We do so sadly and reluctantly -- as Americans have always turned to the production of the lethal material of war -- for it has always been our intention, and our fervent hope, that our great productive capacity would be able to continue to build and even improve, without diminution or interruption, our way of life, which is the nearest to perfection that man has been able as yet to devise.

And although we have not relinquished, and do not intend to relinquish, our peaceful objectives, we are making genuine progress in the rebuilding of our armed strength. We are doing this efficiently, systematically, and rapidly, according to the best plans of our military leaders.

Fortunately, we are blessed with the greatest military leaders that we have ever had, and their plans for the mobilization of our armed strength had only to be implemented -- not changed or altered -- by the communist aggression in Korea.

Fortunately, also, we had only to intensify long-range programs that had already received the approval of the Congress, and of the American public, for participation in a collective effort with our friends to rebuild the defenses of the free world.

Our emphasis in this intensification has been wisely placed upon those areas that are most critical. The North Atlantic Community, for example, is second only to the United States itself in industrial capacity. It has, therefore, long been a primary objective of the Soviet Union and of world communism. For without it, the communists could not hope to aggregate the industrial advantage that is essential to success in modern war -- with it, they would be well on the way toward overcoming our present potential advantage.

I use the words "potential advantage" advisedly in this context. For although within the free world -- and particularly within the United States and the North Atlantic Community -- is contained many times the industrial capacity of the communist world, it is only a potential advantage while it is not actually producing the weapons of war. For we have been devoting our factories, and our time and energy, to peaceful pursuits, while the communists have been devoting theirs sedulously and purposefully to preparation for war.

Now we must convert this potential advantage to an actual advantage, and if we do so wisely -- which to me means carefully and efficiently -- it is my earnest belief that we can maintain freedom in the world, and that we can do so without unduly decreasing the abundance of our way of life, and without inordinate dislocation of our individual lives.

I should like to emphasize, however, that until we have actually converted our potential advantage to an actual advantage, careful, prudent use of our resources is just as important as efficient use of them. The stakes are high in the world struggle with communism, and hasty or ill-advised action could very well spell disaster.

To those who would label prudence and carefulness as "appeasement," I say there is great danger should we overestimate our still viable defenses. Surely, it is not appeasement to hold a foe at bay while our own strength to repel aggression is still potential. On the contrary! We should be foolhardy to forget that the communists have large standing forces, fully equipped, while we are still converting our industries from peace to defense production, and while we are still training our national defense forces.

Certainly, to say that Korea is a local war does not deny that the struggle with communism is world-wide. Nor does it indicate lack of resolve to maintain our limited objectives where the enemy is engaged. Our intensive effort to rebuild our strength and that of our friends is clear evidence of our determination to face the over-all issue, while our patience and steadfast forbearance in Korea is testimony of the earnest quality of our desire for peace.

A strategy of patience and forbearance is, of course, difficult for us Americans, with our "get-it-done-and-over-with" attitude. Such a strategy

is particularly difficult for those who are actually doing the fighting in Korea. But the possibility that more of our young men would be required in an expanded war must also be considered. And in the meantime, the plight of those brave men can to a degree be alleviated -- and is being alleviated -- by a program of rotation that is now being implemented.

There can be, of course, no real alleviation for the indescribable horrors these men have faced, unless it may be that measure of comfort that may be found by them and their loved ones in the knowledge that their sacrifices are known and appreciated by the American people. Above all, they want to know that by their sacrifice the cause for which they fought is being preserved.

The enthusiastic response of groups such as this on Armed Forces Day, is, I feel, ample proof that the American people do know, and do appreciate, the sacrifices that our Armed Forces are making in Korea.

However, we must insure that while these brave men are holding back this evil incursion of the free world, we here at home are fully taking advantage of the precious time that their effort is giving us to build a security based upon strength. And we must continue to build our security until it is of such strength that it will conclusively deter aggressors, or repel them if they aggress.

And to do this, I feel that it is not enough that our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines serve, as is expressed by the slogan chosen for Armed Forces Day -- as "Defenders of Freedom." I feel that it is necessary that this fine slogan apply to all Americans.

We must all be "Defenders of Freedom."