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Address by

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Before

THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Statler Hotel

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9:30 P.M.

Commander Starr, Colonel Hunsicker, and fellow veterans:

The honor I feel on being invited to address you is wholesomely tempered by the knowledge that I am the only no-star "general" present.

I am proud to say, however, that I, too, am a veteran of our country's armed forces, war before last.

More important, I share with you -- as only one who has been a top Sergeant himself can share it -- the resolve that for our sons and daughters, there will be no next war.

And as we had our problems back in 1918 and '19, the memory of those disturbed times gives us a better understanding and a fuller sympathy with the present generation that has followed us on their long, long trail to battlefields overseas, and home again.

In World War II, you know, there was a bit of advice that gained currency among the boys in the Army. It went like this:

If it moves, salute it.

If it doesn't move, pick it up.

If you can't pick it up, paint it.

Today, with those boys back with their families, new problems confront them. And that advice has been changed to fit the occasion. Now it goes:

If it cries, change it.

If it's on wheels, buy it.

If it's hollow, rent it.

Since the time of George Washington, whose memory we honor on this day, the 215th anniversary of his birth, the domestic problems that grow out of war, the economic upheavals, the difficulties of readjustment, the

(OVER)

growls and the gripes, have been pretty much the same in every war our country has fought.

So much has been said and written about Washington that from this distance down the long road of history, we are sometimes in danger of missing the truth for the cherry trees. But if you dig back into the history of those formative days of our Nation, you will find there the same war frauds, the same profiteers, the same rent gougers, the troubles when the boys came home -- counterparts of almost every situation we have faced in the aftermath of this greatest war of all.

I say almost every situation. But this time there is one exception. And it is important -- so important that for the world of our children, it means the making or the breaking.

The difference this time is that we have had our last war for civilization. We cannot win another war. If there is a next war, the only winners will be the moles, the bats, and the carrion things that crawl a broken, silent earth.

This we know. We have had it demonstrated to us -- most fearfully. And nobody disagrees.

The astonishing thing, the shocking thing, is that with this knowledge before them as clearly and as certainly as night follows day, there can be so many among us who are doing their utmost to bring on just such a war.

History shows us that there are several very effective, tried-and-true ways to bring on war in the world.

One is to crawl into our shell and tell ourselves that the rest of the world can go hang. Every time we have tried that we have found ourselves

faced with Ben Franklin's oft-quoted alternative -- of hanging together or hanging separately.

Another way to bring on war, also historically tested and found practically sure-fire, is for a nation to squeeze its neighbors in the vice of its own greed -- to insist on selling to them without buying from them; to build tariff walls over which they cannot deliver their product thereby creating such economic chaos that the whole world becomes engulfed in war.

And a third way -- perhaps the most dangerous way of all to risk a war -- is to ask for it by being unprepared to fight.

This was as true in the day of Washington as it is now. I can think of no better authority to cite than the Father of Our Country, George Washington who said:

"If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace -- one of the powerful instruments of our rising prosperity -- it must be known that we are at all times ready for war."

Again and again, Washington repeated his warning against the kind of "economy" that we have been hearing of late.

In his first annual message to Congress, in 1790, he said:

"To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

Again, in a letter to Elbridge Gerry, Washington said:

"There is nothing so likely to produce peace as to be well prepared to meet an enemy."

Of course it costs to be well prepared to meet an enemy. Even after sifting out the gold braid, the frills and the fruit salad from the real essentials of national defense and cutting to the bone -- the figure is high -- some 11 billion.

(OVER)

A big sum? Of course it's big. So big that you and I can't see around it in one look. But so is the explosion of an atom bomb big. So big that you and I couldn't even look at it -- not twice anyway -- for once blinds you. Little wars aren't fought any more -- not when we are drawn into them. We can't come out second. Another Texan, General Ira Eaker put it right when he said -- a second best army is like a second best poker hand -- and it brings the same results.

Well, some folks have sat themselves down, taken out their pencils, and began to figure. They figured and they figured.

Some seem to think they know better than the men of the high command who had led our armed forces to victory in World War II. They would prove that men like General Eisenhower and General Marshall and Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Leahy didn't know their business -- or so they must have believed.

And just to show you how little Eisenhower and Marshall and Nimitz and Leahy knew about it, these people with their little pencils proved that the \$11,200,000,000 for our armed forces should be cut to \$6,000,000,000. Yes, sir, almost in half. Marshall and Eisenhower and Nimitz and Leahy were off by almost 50 per cent!

Now if you do believe that, then you must agree that we ought to fire Eisenhower, Marshall, Nimitz and Leahy. We ought to combine the armed forces -- both tanks, both ships, and all three guns -- and make these pencil pushers the Generalissimos. If we are to have any such two-cent army, they deserve the high command, for they certainly exhibit penny wisdom.

The wisdom of George Washington has been proved time and again, but never was it more applicable than at this moment. Secretary of State George Marshall is about to meet the spokesmen for the leading powers that were allied with us in winning the war.

The American people are, at this moment, friends with the world. There is no war in the offing. But friendly nations, engaging in the give-and-take that we call diplomacy, seldom see the world and its problems eye to eye. They seek meeting-grounds somewhere between original viewpoints that may be far apart.

That is the case today. Our secretary of State is undertaking to reach an agreement with the other powers on one of the most important of all post-war problems -- the problem of Germany. History, perhaps destiny itself, is in the making in this hour.

But our neighbor nations, peace-seeking though they may be, will deal with us realistically. If we approach them as the most powerful nation on earth, they will deal with us in one way. But make no mistake about this, my friends -- if we approach them as a third-rate power, they will deal with us in quite another way.

Yes, we are strong. But our strength as of this moment is not what counts. If we adopt a course now that points in the direction of a third-rate status for America, our neighbors will not be ignorant of that fact. They will know. And they will anticipate. And our spokesmen will very soon discover that America's opinion, America's hope, America's will, has lost weight in the world.

When we contrast the World of Washington's day with the World as we now find it, there is no escaping the fact that the responsibilities and the perils of the United States of America are now immeasurably more vast. You who have served with our forces overseas know that not only is the World today a smaller one in every sense than it was in 1776, but that our stake in peace and prosperity throughout the World is tremendously greater. The oceans on either side of us are, in comparison, but lakes.

(OVER)

And, of course, the pathways of the air not only invite the universal spread of trade and commerce, but are pathways for the new weapons which man has created. Our first emphasis in this new World must be upon extending the benefits of trade and commerce, so that the conditions upon which peace and amicable relationships rest can exist throughout the entire globe.

Yet, at the same time, the responsibilities which the maintenance of peace and security throughout the World impose upon this Nation, and upon the other members of the United Nations, deserve a place of equal prominence. The preservation of peace, through the United Nations, imposes a continuing duty upon us. In the interest of peace itself, we must remain strong.

President Truman is also studying the problem of universal training for the youth of this country. We all know the path which we have followed in the past of preparing for war after war had descended upon us. We all know the disasters and tragedies that have resulted from that policy. In an atomic age we cannot afford to gamble with fate. We must take steps to insure preparedness on the part of the men who will be called upon as citizen soldiers to share in our defense if war comes -- we cannot afford to rely solely upon a small standing army. The details of the President's program are now being formulated. I believe he plans to send a message to the Congress on that subject in the near future. But I am sure that one of the keystones of his view of universal training is the training it will give, not solely in military science, but in the broad factors of character building. By this I mean those factors which will come from emphasis upon citizenship, physical fitness, cooperation and team work.

As you know, I have been greatly concerned for the past two years over the problem of juvenile delinquency. The post-war world is a harsh one. It

has produced a vast number of problems for the youth of America. I have tried to do my part in extending a helping hand to young men and women who have fallen prey to its temptations. I think real progress is being made by the many state and local organizations that are working on this problem. At the same time, I think that one of the great contributions the Federal Government can make along this line is to provide a system of universal training which will provide real and substantial benefits for the young men participating in it.

It was George Washington who, when the war had been won, told the Governors of the States:

"I will speak to your Excellencies the language of freedom and of sincerity without disguise--- There are four things which I humbly conceive are essential to the well being, I may even venture to say, to the existence, of the United States, as an independent power:

"First, An indissoluble union of the States under one Federal head.

"Second: A regard to public justice.

"Third: The adoption of a proper peace establishment; and

"Fourth: The prevalence of that pacific and friendly disposition among the people of the United States which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and policies; to make those mutual concessions which are requisite to the general prosperity; and in some instances to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the community."

Indeed we do have an indissoluble union. We gave much of our blood to achieve this in the battle between the States.

As to public justice - Washington's second essential - I have much to do with that. We are making progress.

(OVER)

But we now face two great menaces in America. -- Fascism and Communism. Both are totalitarian, anti-religious and materialistic. In fact, they wear the same cloak. Both are the opposite to the American way of life. If other folks want Communism, let them have it. But it has no place here with us in America.

You met the Hitler and Mussolini brands of Fascism and defeated them on the battlefield. We must arise and focus the spotlight of public opinion upon Red Fascism and build up barriers of common decency through which it cannot penetrate.

You defeated dictatorship with bullets - and we can defeat Communism with brains. Like crime, we cannot permit America to become infested with its malignant growth. I count on you to help.

And now for the fourth and last essential as outlined by Washington. We must, indeed, cast aside our prejudices and hatreds. There is no place here for intolerance and bigotry. America is made up of all nationalities.

As Washington so aptly put it, we must sacrifice our individual advantages to the interest of the community. Our country cannot be divided by individual greed. We must act and we shall act for the best interest of all the people.

I pray God that in this fateful hour the will and the wisdom of George Washington will prevail.