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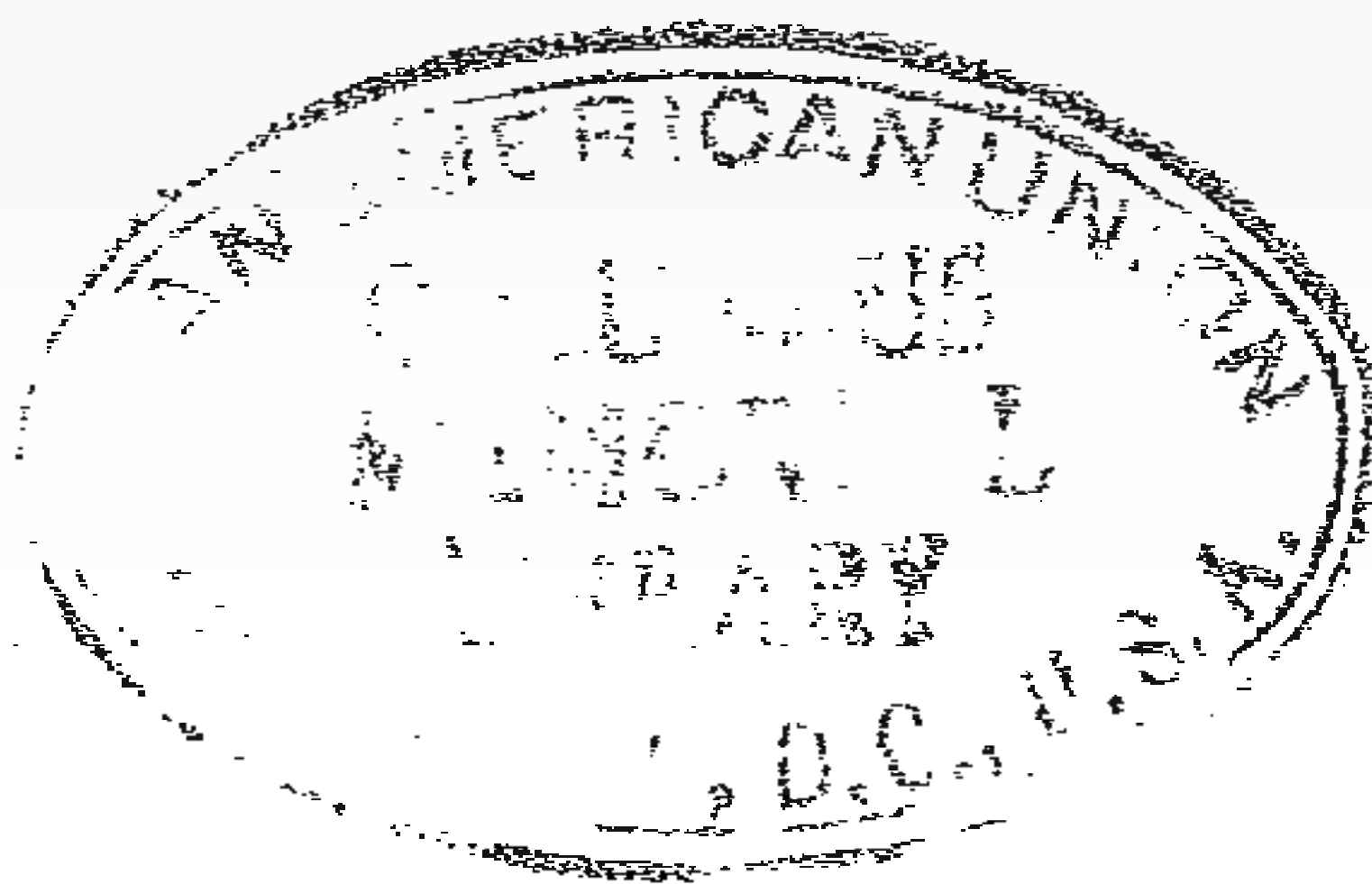
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PEACE AND WAR

ADDRESS BY THE
HONORABLE CORDELL HULL
SECRETARY OF STATE

AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

PROVIDENCE, R. I., JUNE 15, 1936



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PEACE AND WAR¹

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I am happy to be with you today. On similar occasions in the past, William L. Marcy, Richard Olney, John Hay, and Charles Evans Hughes, four of my distinguished predecessors in the office of which I am proud to be the present incumbent—all of them your alumni—were the recipients of the honor which you bestowed upon me this morning. I am deeply grateful to your trustees for inducting me into the high company of those whom Brown University has chosen to favor with this mark of distinction.

I should like to address the remarks which I am about to make ~~particularly to the youth~~ of our country, represented by your newest alumni, the class which has just graduated from this great university. You and thousands like you are entering upon a new stage of your life's course. Your paths will diverge into various walks of endeavor. Your immediate preoccupations and interests will become diversified as you choose your particular avocations and determine to devote your effort to the particular pursuits of your choice. But whether your life work will lie in the field of business, or of public service, or of the various professions, there are some things that you will always have in common among yourselves and with the rest of your countrymen. Each of you will carry the responsibilities of citizenship in your country. As a component part of our Nation, none of you will be able to escape a sense of vital relationship with other nations

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¹ Address delivered by the Honorable Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, before the alumni of Brown University and their guests, at Providence, R. I., June 15, 1936, at 2:15 p.m., daylight-saving time.

in a world that is constantly being refashioned in a mold of growing interdependence and integration.

We of the older generations will gradually share with your generation, and finally relinquish to you, the management of our country's national and international affairs. You, in turn, will some day move into a similar relationship with your own children. All of us are the inheritors of the great things for which our country has stood, at home and abroad, since its beginnings. All of us are also the trustees of this precious heritage, which it is our manifest duty to pass on to our successors brighter rather than tarnished, made richer rather than poorer. Under a democracy as the form of government which it is our privilege and our blessing to enjoy in this country, each of us must individually bear his full share of responsibility for the kind of nation we are and the kind of world we live in.

My own immediate preoccupation is with the foreign relations of our country. For that reason, it may be fitting for me to direct my thoughts today primarily to a contemplation of what is basic in that particular aspect of our national life and to share with you what experience has taught me as to the part which each of us, individually and collectively, must play in the exercise of that phase of our free citizenship.

Dominant in the field of international relations, almost to the point of overshadowing all other considerations, is the great problem of peace and war. Human history has been a record of constantly shifting balance between the forces that make for peace and those that make for war, with now one, now the other tipping the scales.

Out of the far reaches of the past there has come down to us the admonition "In time of peace, prepare for war." We of the modern world cannot accept this guiding rule in all

its implications. It is true that war is still a part of our life and that circumstances may arise under which we may have to fight. So long as that remains true, common sense and prudence require each nation to be ready to meet its responsibilities. But side by side with that, and as an even more sacred duty, each nation should seek, in time of peace, to arrange its own affairs and its relations with other nations in such a way as to make resort to war unnecessary and, when humanity has progressed far enough, utterly unthinkable.

The grim counsel of the ancients is too deeply imbued with the inevitability of war. It lends to peace the aspect of a purely negative concept. It makes peace merely an interval between two succeeding conflicts, characterized by an absence of war, yet constantly overshadowed by its impending doom.

Peace, in a deep and broad sense, is not that. It is the indispensable foundation of human freedom and human progress. It is the framework within which alone the constructive genius of mankind can have unhampered scope to create an advancing civilization in terms of material comfort, cultural development, and spiritual happiness.

War inevitably interrupts the march of human progress. The advance of civilization requires an interplay of free individual initiative and originality to provide the driving power, and an appropriate social organization to furnish, through the combined and cooperative effort of many individuals, the necessary adequacy of resources. This advance is real when it creates new wealth by constantly expanding the productive equipment capable of supplying more and more abundantly our material needs, and when it multiplies those facilities which permit an enlarged and more widely diffused satisfaction of our cultural needs. War of necessity redirects, suddenly and brutally, the whole course of individual and collective effort.

Under the pressure of its exigent intensity, war absorbs, for purposes of destruction, a varying share of both existing and newly created wealth. It forces upon each country involved two sets of adjustments: from peaceful pursuits to an all-embracing mobilization for military conflict, and a subsequent demobilization to peaceful pursuits. These processes use up precious energy and resources and thus serve to slow down the pace of human progress. They represent a set-back which must be overcome before the advance of our civilization can be resumed.

War disrupts the operation of cultural facilities. It harnesses personal liberty to the chariot of its own grim purpose. It weakens the fiber of individuals and of nations. It leaves mankind poorer than it would have been, both materially and spiritually, and imposes upon the world, during the period that immediately succeeds armed hostilities, the choice between permanent enfeeblement and a supremely difficult effort of physical and moral regeneration.

The seeds of war are sown long before actual military operations begin. They lie and germinate in the frictions and conflicts, real or imaginary, that constantly arise between the interests and aspirations of individual nations. The duty of statesmanship is to reconcile these conflicts, to remove their causes, and thus to open wider and wider the horizons of human advancement.

The supreme care of the statesman should be the well-being of the people. War exacts too high a price to be conducive to human welfare—a price which normal human intellect cannot possibly accept as justified by any achievement that can be secured through a deliberate resort to arms. That is why enlightened and responsible statesmen of our days seek, in every way possible, to outlaw war as a means of national policy and to substitute for it the

constructive processes of friendly conciliation and arbitration and fair adjudication of international disputes.

War is sometimes described as the last resort of the statesman. I should rather say that recourse to war as a means of attaining the aims of national policy is an unmistakable symbol of bankrupt statesmanship.

But the statesman is only an instrument of national action. The mainsprings of that action lie in the will of the people. This is true ultimately even under a dictatorship, when individuals or small groups temporarily are able to assume autocratic control of the people's destiny. It is true, immediately and in full measure, in a democracy.

In the long run, statesmen can act only within the limits of the popular will, which finds its expression through the various agencies of public opinion. It is the trend of such opinion that determines fundamentally the course of a nation's policy. Well-informed public opinion, alert to the constructive needs and the best interests of the nation and the world, vigorous in the assertion of its demands, will inevitably encourage and compel statesmen to seek for the country friendly and mutually beneficial—rather than hostile and mutually harmful—relations with other countries. It will strengthen in the world the forces of peace and repel the forces of war. Ignorant, indifferent, and supine public opinion will leave the nation and the world at the mercy of blind chance or, worse still, of self-seeking adventurers, ready to sacrifice the well-being of mankind to personal or group greed and advancement.

Public opinion is the sum-total of individual views and convictions. The shaping of conditions which determine whether nations will be at peace or at war with each other—or, for that matter, the outcome of any issue, large or small—reaches back to the individuals who

compose the national entities. If I were asked to express an opinion as to what will be the condition of affairs, in our country or anywhere else in the world, ten or twenty years from now, I should reply unhesitatingly that I would first have to know what the character and temper of individual men and women will be at that time.

Learning is a great thing and a powerful determinant of human action. Knowledge of the essential facts, understanding of the motives of others, ability to distinguish between immediate and long-range advantages, between broad and narrow interests—all these are fundamental to good human relations.

But knowledge and understanding, however great and however widely diffused, are not enough. Human action is even more powerfully affected by those moral fundamentals of good human relations which go into the making of character—honesty, toleration, respect for the pledged word, willingness to adjust differences on a mutually fair basis. The late Frederick Harrison, a profound English philosopher, once addressed this moving challenge to his countrymen:

“Nothing can save us but a high moral sense, a national creed of loyalty, discipline and unselfish devotion to duty—in a word, a more efficient religion.”

His words ring just as true now, and his message is just as fitting in our country and in all other parts of the earth.

The youth of our country are entering the world of action at a time when, as seldom before in the whole gamut of human history, these qualities of character are desperately needed. The cataclysmic war of two decades ago and its tragic, long-drawn-out aftermath have reduced the standards of international morality to a low level. The predatory instinct of national aggrandizement is again rampant and has already set armies marching in some parts of the earth. Solemn international agreements

are being violated with a light heart. Apprehension, suspicion, and confusion rule the political relations among most nations. Search for narrowly exclusive advantage and utter disregard of the broad constructive principles of fair-dealing and of cooperative action to a great extent dominate international economic relations. In nearly every domain of life, hostility prevails over friendliness, and distrust over confidence and good faith.

If the world is not to be plunged into another cataclysm, friendliness and confidence, fair-dealing and good-faith, must triumph once more, in the relations among nations, over hostility and distrust and suspicion and greed. This cannot come to pass unless the spirit underlying national policies undergoes a rebirth—unless individuals within nations, through their personal conduct, through their influence upon others, through their exercise of responsible citizenship, devote themselves to the cause of such rebirth. For, in the final analysis, no nation is better than the individuals who compose it.

To raise once more to their proper height the lowered standards of international morality is a task that confronts your generation and mine. I cannot believe that, stupendous and difficult though it be, this task is beyond our power.

This country of ours was built by men of vision, of determination, of hardihood—men eager and willing to grapple with the problems that confronted them on the basis of integrity, of vigorous initiative, of a profound sense of fairness and justice. They have carved a great and powerful nation out of the wilderness of a new world, a nation instinct with individual freedom, under the protection of the wisest constitutional charter ever devised by the mind of man. They made mistakes. They failed in some of their undertakings. But through prosperity and adversity, they never faltered in their quest for human happiness.

We are confronted today with new and grave political, social, and economic problems that spring out of the growing complexities of modern civilization. We can solve these problems if we have the same moral fortitude, the same qualities of character, that our people invariably exhibited when crises arose in our national existence. We cannot, through supine moral decadence, let America decline from its spiritual and material greatness. It is within our power to will and to achieve for our Nation a new advance toward the exalted goal of our forefathers' unflinching endeavor.

More than that, by our example, by our determination to deal fairly and justly with everyone, we can exert a powerful influence in leading the distracted world of today toward a revitalization of basic moral and spiritual values which alone can appease its present turmoil and direct its energies away from suicidal strife toward creative peace.

There can be no worthier aim in our life, no more exalted conception of civic duty, than to dedicate ourselves, with the fervor of a flaming crusade, to this quest for a better world.

We who are active today in the affairs of our Nation are striving, to the best of our ability, to be guided by this inspiring vision. May it shine ever brighter to the youth of our land!

The alumni of this great university have been fortunate to have had the foundations of their citizenship laid within these walls. For almost 175 years, this superb institution of learning has been sending forth into the active ranks of our people men who have made their mark in every walk of life, who have done much to raise to ever loftier heights those ideas and ideals which have ennobled and perfected democracy within our land, and have made each of us ever more proud of the place which our country occupies in the family of nations. I need not attempt to name them. They are a part of our country's history. Some of them are here

today. I know that Brown's latest graduates are going forth with the same faith, the same zeal, and the same determination.

Despite the set-backs which it suffers from time to time, despite the threatening clouds that today overhang the international horizon, I firmly believe that humanity is constantly going forward to higher and higher achievements in the onward march of its civilization. One cannot read history and not be inspired by the progress already attained over the ages. Nor can one fail to be strengthened in one's faith and hope that new and greater achievements lie ahead. Let me quote, in conclusion, these lines in which a poet has expressed the final thought I wish to leave with you:

" . . . I count him wise
Who loves so well Man's noble memories,
He needs must love Man's nobler hopes yet
more."