

CLOSE READING

Fireside Chat 19

On the War with Japan (Dec. 9, 1941)

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (abridged)

(Genre: Speech)

President Roosevelt gave this talk by radio two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which sparked the U.S. entry into World War II against Japan, Germany, and Italy.



1 My fellow Americans:

2 The sudden criminal attacks perpetrated by the Japanese in the Pacific provide the climax of a decade of international immorality.

3 Powerful and resourceful gangsters have banded together to make war upon the whole human race. Their challenge has now been flung at the United States of America. The Japanese have treacherously violated the longstanding peace between us. Many American soldiers and sailors have been killed by enemy action. American ships have been sunk; American airplanes have been destroyed.

4 The Congress and the people of the United States have accepted that challenge.

5 Together with other free peoples, we are now fighting to maintain our right to live among our world neighbors in freedom, in common decency, without fear of assault. . . .

6 We are now in this war. We are all in it—all the way. Every single man, woman, and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history. We must share together the bad news and the good news, the defeats and the victories—the changing fortunes of war. . . .

7 . . . We must be set to face a long war against crafty and powerful bandits. The attack at Pearl Harbor can be repeated at

any one of many points, points in both oceans and along both our coastlines and against all the rest of the Hemisphere.

8 It will not only be a long war, it will be a hard war. That is the basis on which we now lay all our plans. That is the yardstick by which we measure what we shall need and demand; money, materials, doubled and quadrupled production—ever increasing. The production must be not only for our own army and navy and air forces. It must reinforce the other armies and navies and air forces fighting the Nazis and the war lords of Japan throughout the Americas and throughout the world.

9 I have been working today on the subject of production. Your government has decided on two broad policies.

10 The first is to speed up all existing production by working on a seven day week basis in every war industry, including the production of essential raw materials.

11 The second policy, now being put into form, is to rush additions to the capacity of production by building more new plants,

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

by adding to old plants, and by using the many smaller plants for war needs.

12 Over the hard road of the past months, we have at times met obstacles and difficulties, divisions and disputes, indifference and callousness. That is now all past. . . .

13 The fact is that the country now has an organization in Washington built around men and women who are recognized experts in their own fields. I think the country knows that the people who are actually responsible in each and every one of these many fields are pulling together with a teamwork that has never before been excelled.

14 On the road ahead there lies hard work—grueling work—day and night, every hour, and every minute.

15 I was about to add that ahead there lies sacrifice for all of us.

16 But it is not correct to use that word. The United States does not consider it a sacrifice to do all one can, to give one's best to our nation, when the nation is fighting for its existence and its future life.

17 It is not a sacrifice for any man, old or young, to be in the army or the navy of the United States. Rather it is a privilege.

18 It is not a sacrifice for the industrialist or the wage earner, the farmer or the shopkeeper, the trainmen or the doctor, to pay more taxes, to buy more bonds, to forego extra profits, to work longer or harder at the task for which he is best fitted. Rather it is a privilege.



19 It is not a sacrifice to do without many things to which we are accustomed if the national defense calls for doing without it.

20 And I am sure that the people in every part of the nation are prepared . . . to win this war. I am sure that they will cheerfully help to pay a large part of its financial cost while it goes on. I am sure they will cheerfully give up those material things that they are asked to give up. . . .

21 I repeat that the United States can accept no result save victory, final and complete. Not only must the shame of Japanese treachery be wiped out, but the sources of international brutality, wherever they exist, must be absolutely and finally broken.

22 In my Message to the Congress yesterday I said that we “will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.” In order to achieve that certainty, we must begin the great task that is before us by abandoning once and for all the illusion that we can ever again isolate ourselves from the rest of humanity. In these past few years—and, most violently, in the past three days—we have learned a terrible lesson.

23 It is our obligation to our dead—it is our sacred obligation to their children and to our children—that we must never forget what we have learned.

24 And what we have learned is this:

25 There is no such thing as security for any nation—or any individual—in a world ruled by the principles of gangsterism.

CLOSE READING

- 26 There is no such thing as impregnable defense against powerful aggressors who sneak up in the dark and strike without warning.
- 27 We have learned that our ocean-girt hemisphere is not immune from severe attack—that we cannot measure our safety in terms of miles on any map any more.
- 28 We may acknowledge that our enemies have performed a brilliant feat of deception, perfectly timed and executed with great skill. It was a thoroughly dishonorable deed, but we must face the fact that modern warfare as conducted in the Nazi manner is a dirty business. We don't like it—we didn't want to get in it—but we are in it and we're going to fight it with everything we've got.
- 29 I do not think any American has any doubt of our ability to administer proper punishment to the perpetrators of these crimes.
- 30 Your Government knows that for weeks Germany has been telling Japan that if Japan did not attack the United States, Japan would not share in dividing the spoils with Germany when peace came. She was promised by Germany that if she came in she would receive the complete and perpetual control of the whole of the Pacific area—and that means not only the Far East, but also all of the Islands in the Pacific, and also a stranglehold on the west coast of North, Central, and South America.
- 31 We know also that Germany and Japan are conducting their military and naval operations in accordance with a joint plan. That plan considers all peoples and nations which are not helping the Axis powers as common enemies of each and every one of the Axis powers.



- 32 That is their simple and obvious grand strategy. And that is why the American people must realize that it can be matched only with similar grand strategy. We must realize, for example, that Japanese successes against the United States in the Pacific are helpful to German operations in Libya; that any German success against the Caucasus is inevitably an assistance to Japan in her operations against the Dutch East Indies; that a German attack against Algiers or Morocco opens the way to a German attack against South America and the Canal.
- 33 On the other side of the picture, we must learn also to know that guerilla warfare against the Germans in, let us say Serbia or Norway, helps us; that a successful Russian offensive against the Germans helps us; and that British successes on land or sea in any part of the world strengthen our hands.
- 34 Remember always that Germany and Italy, regardless of any formal declaration of war, consider themselves at war with the United States at this moment just as much as they consider themselves at war with Britain or Russia. And Germany puts all the other Republics of the Americas into the same category of enemies. The people of our sister Republics of this Hemisphere can be honored by that fact.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

35 The true goal we seek is far above and beyond the ugly field of battle. When we resort to force, as now we must, we are determined that this force shall be directed toward ultimate good as well as against immediate evil. We Americans are not destroyers—we are builders.

36 We are now in the midst of a war, not for conquest, not for vengeance, but for a world in which this nation, and all that this nation represents, will be safe for our children. We expect to eliminate the danger from Japan, but it would serve us ill if we accomplished

that and found that the rest of the world was dominated by Hitler and Mussolini.

37 So we are going to win the war, and we are going to win the peace that follows.

38 And in the difficult hours of this day—through dark days that may be yet to come—we will know that the vast majority of the members of the human race are on our side. Many of them are fighting with us. All of them are praying for us. But, in representing our cause, we represent theirs as well—our hope and their hope for liberty under God.

Comprehension Check

1A. On page 88, what is the first action Roosevelt's government takes to address the problem of "production"?

- a. Start war immediately and increase production slowly.
- b. Speed up production by working seven days a week.
- c. Hold off on production.
- d. Stay focused on winning.

1B. Which piece of textual evidence supports the answer to Part A?

- a. "Your government has decided on two broad policies . . ."
- b. "It is not a sacrifice for the industrialist or the wage earner . . ."
- c. "So we are going to win the war, and we are going to win the peace . . ."
- d. ". . . it is our sacred obligation to their children and to our children . . ."

2A. Which of the following BEST summarizes Roosevelt's central idea?

- a. a rationale for fighting Italy
- b. a rationale for fighting Germany
- c. a rationale for fighting Japan
- d. all of the above

2B. All of the following textual details support the answer to Part A EXCEPT

- a. ". . . Japanese successes against the United States in the Pacific are helpful to German operations in Libya."
- b. ". . . the vast majority of the members of the human race are on our side."
- c. "The Japanese have treacherously violated the longstanding peace between us."
- d. ". . . the sources of international brutality . . . must be absolutely and finally broken."

CLOSE READING

- 3A.** What would you NOT infer from Roosevelt's reference to privilege rather than sacrifice in the war effort?
- a. He believes the American soldiers will be proud to defend themselves.
 - b. He believes that fighting treachery and brutality is an honorable cause.
 - c. He believes that American soldiers will be proud to defend the nation.
 - d. He believes that no one is willing to make sacrifices in the war effort.
- 3B.** Which of the following supports the answer to Part A?
- a. "The United States does not consider it a sacrifice to do all one can . . . when the nation is fighting for its existence."
 - b. ". . . the United States can accept no result save victory, final and complete."
 - c. "There is no such thing as security for any nation . . . in a world ruled by the principles of gangsterism."
 - d. On the road ahead there lies hard work . . . day and night, every hour, and every minute."
- 4A.** How does Roosevelt characterize the actions of the Axis powers?
- a. They are acting like heroes.
 - b. They are acting like warriors.
 - c. They are acting like gentlemen.
 - d. They are acting like criminals.
- 4B.** Which of the following words from the text supports the answer to Part A?
- a. declaration
 - b. gangsterism
 - c. dishonorable
 - d. treachery
- 5A.** Which is the BEST summary of a central idea stated at the end of Roosevelt's speech?
- a. The ultimate goal is helping allies like Britain and France.
 - b. The ultimate goal is shutting down the Axis powers.
 - c. The ultimate goal is winning the war definitively.
 - d. The ultimate goal is what happens after the war's end.
- 5B.** Which phrase from the text supports the answer to Part A?
- a. "expect to eliminate the danger"
 - b. "not for conquest, not for vengeance"
 - c. "administer proper punishment"
 - d. "everything we've got"

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

6. Describe two types of evidence Roosevelt presents to support his assertions.

7. Explain one way in which Roosevelt supports the speech's central idea that justifies U.S entry into the war. Use specific words and/or phrases from the text to support your response.

8. Explain in what sequence Roosevelt describes the dangers that lie beyond fighting only Japan in the war. How does he connect important world powers in his discussion? Include details from the text in your response.

9. What language does Roosevelt use to contrast the Americans with their opponents? Be specific.

10. Explain how the last sentence of the speech supports Roosevelt's central idea and point of view.
