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From National Public Relations Division, The American Legion, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Amer. Holidays Armistice Day

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* Suggested 1948 Armistice Day *
* Address for American Legion *
* speakers. *
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MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

Armistice Day has a special American meaning.

It is a reminder to all enemies of liberty that Americans love freedom more than life, that they are ready to fight to the death to remain free.

On April 2, 1917, addressing Congress, President Woodrow Wilson used the words:

"The world must be made safe for democracy."

It was a phrase that many made a bitter joke of after World War I. But it was not a joke. 123,654 Americans died in its defense.

On December 9, 1941, speaking to the nation, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said:

"Together with other free peoples, we are now fighting to maintain our right to live among our world neighbors in freedom and in common decency without fear of assault." 358,967 Americans died to make good those words.

Today we honor the memory of the dead of both of these wars. Our hearts go out to those still suffering from their wounds. There are still uncounted thousands of brave Americans for whom these wars are not yet over and may never be over. The American Legion is dedicated to helping them carry their heavy burdens. They must never be forgotten. Every American owes his freedom today to these heroes of war, both living and dead. Their willingness to sacrifice was the final proof of American determination to stay free.

Let no world aggressor think, even for a moment, that Americans would not go forth again to battle in freedom's cause! America is the stronghold of liberty. With the help of God and the red blood of patriotic Americans, America will remain that stronghold till the end of time!

Love of freedom goes hand in hand with love of peace.

Americans can never be challenged on the score they have failed to defend their freedom. But they are vulnerable on the score of failing to fight with all they have for peace!

For 30 years we have observed Armistice Day in a spirit of gratitude for the return of peace after a monstrous war. But gratitude is no safeguard of peace! For 30 years we have failed to emphasize and to adhere to the simple and obvious things that would assure a lasting peace. We seem to be guilty of that same fault again, now that a second great war is behind us and a nominal peace is restored.

Because our quest for the permanency of peace since VJ-Day has been ineffectual, America on Armistice Day of 1948 again faces a troubled future over which already the specter of World War III is casting a frightening shadow.

If another war comes every American will stand indicted for his individual failure in the fight for peace!

After the first World War, the American people convinced themselves that because new conflicts would be contrary to world welfare and human happiness they would never occur again. So they went blithely about their pursuits of personal affairs.

They permitted their defense establishments to be largely dismantled and they let what was left become obsolete. They neglected entirely to provide themselves with a competent and adequate national defense in the field of military aviation although the science of aeronautics originated in America.

They failed to include training for national security in the education of American youth.

They scrapped the most powerful Navy in the World and let their Merchant Marine vanish from the high seas.

They pared Army and Navy budgets until our armed forces were reduced to military police battalions.

Thus they gave encouragement to another dictator to wreck the peace of the world by banking on American weakness and American unpreparedness to defend freedom.

The one powerful voice raised for two decades on behalf of American fighting strength was that of The American Legion whose veterans learned the folly of weakness the hard way on fields of battle.

We can discharge no obligation to our hero dead of two great wars by lauding their valor on this Armistice Day. We can prate about the peace which they bought at so precious a cost. That is merely making a mockery out of Armistice Day if that is all we do to show our gratitude for those who gave all that we might live in freedom and peace.

We should be grateful, of course, as we observe Armistice Day. But this time let us give our thanksgiving a substance of reality. Let us do something to safeguard that precious peace - something intelligent, something realistic, something practical and something resourceful!

The place to start is with yourself, you the American citizen, the sovereign individual. How much have you contributed personally and <u>how</u>, to our present fight for peace? This is your fight. This is your biggest fight today. If you do not do your part of fighting there is catastrophe ahead for all of us beside which all our previous wars will be picnics.

The course of events, since World War II guns have been stilled, presents a clear cut argument that today the best protection of American peace lies only in American strength! That means American fighting strength, American economic strength and American spiritual strength!

In that strength lies insurance not only for American security but the last best hope of building up effective international machinery for the prevention of recurring war!

Because we are traditionally good neighbors, we have again made the mistake since VJ-Day that there will be such a common good will among the family of nations that permanent peace could be built. We got into an awful hurry to tear down the most powerful fighting force ever put together by any nation. Then we discovered that universal good will was distinguished by its absence. We found that a new force of aggression was on the march, depending on might to spread its tentacles of tyranny. Communism replaced Nazism, Fascism and Nipponism as the great enemy of mankind.

Once again the people of America awoke, almost too late, to the harsh lesson which The American Legion has been preaching for 30 years that WAR IS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO PREPAREDNESS!

Thank God, some of the labors of The American Legion in the field of national security have borne fruit. We have started to build up our defenses again. We have appropriated billions to restore our disappearing air power. We have enacted a peacetime selective draft, as a milked-down substitute for Universal Military Training.

The American Legion has always stressed, and repeats with urgent emphasis today, that every young an abled-bodied American should be trained in the tasks and duties of national defense through a system of Universal Military Training. It is the only just and only democratic system yet devised through which a free people can assure itself of maximum ability to defend its freedom!

These are arduous purposes but they are the minimum conditions of peace in an age when highly technical weapons of mass destruction place a life and death premium on military know-how!

Ask yourselves, Mr. and Mrs. Average American, just what have you done, in person, to help build up American fighting strength. Have you raised one little finger to help The American Legion in its fight for the enactment of UMT? Have you written your Senator and your Congressman in favor of American air power as peace power? Have you advised your representatives in national government you are willing to sacrifice financially to pay for the money needed by our armed forces, to maintain the peace.

Those are your individual responsibilities in building up American strength. They are among the things you can and you must do to do your part in the

vital fight for enduring peace!

We are now in the midst of what is called a "cold war" with communism headed by Soviet Russia. Thus far we are fighting this "cold war" mainly with dollars. Mr. and Mrs. Average American are all your available dollars fighting in this economic war! It is with your spare dollars that YOU can help in building American economic strength!

Let's get down to cases on your vital role in this important economic fight. America is pouring billions of dollars into its generous program for the recovery of Western Europe. It is our economic offensive to stop the spread of communism short of a shooting war.

We are, as a nation, making tremendous gifts to the people of many countries under the Marshall Plan to help them remain free so they can help us build a brave new world in which war will be outlawed forever. It is smart for us to do this. We may save American lives and American blood. But it is not charity. It is a common sense effort to build for peace in a practical way.

Naturally this huge outpouring of money and goods has an inflationary effect. We can all help to check that effect with personal sacrifice and personal self-control. Our greatest danger today lies only in the unbridled practice of individual selfishness!

We are threatened with rampant selfishness! It is in evidence on every hand. Everybody is out to grab what he can for himself. We gripe about high taxes but we throw our money around lavishly for luxuries and high living. Our sense of civic responsibility has declined. Ducking jury duty, for instance, is popular. Failure to vote is alarming. There is a growing apathy in service to community, state and nation. The spirit of one for all is giving way to the selfish demand of all for one.

Through our Marshall Plan and our earnest support of the United Nations we have undertaken to become the saviors of a free humanity. But we must remember that before we can become a nation of saviors we must first become a nation of savers!

Work and thrift built America! Work and thrift alone can preserve America today! Never has work and thrift been so important in the affairs of America.

That brings us to the role that YOUR work and YOUR thrift must play in building vital American economic strength. Of course, it means some sacrifice on your individual part! But who are you, Mr. and Mrs. Average American, to shirk only a relative sacrifice in the face of the supreme sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of hero dead whom we are honoring on this Armistice Day?

In this all-out effort to build American economic strength, you, Mr. and Mrs. Average American, can help in three ways all of which will contribute to bring money, goods and prices into balance and stave off further inflation.

These three ways are:

1 - You can produce more.

2 - You can spend less for things you can do without.

3 - You can save more.

They are all important but saving tops them all.

Your best contribution in the battle for peace is to buy U. S. Government Savings Bonds! That doesn't mean to buy them occasionally. Your highest duty as a good citizen calls now for your buying of these savings bonds on a regular, systematic plan. This is something you can do. By so doing you will be helping both the nation and yourself. There will be a profit in it for you. Saving takes moral stamina but it pays off. Our government will pay you four dollars after 10 years for every three dollars you put into these savings bonds today.

There are 7,000,000 Americans buying these bonds today on a regular schedule. They are smart Americans and patriotic too. But there are not enough of them. There are today more than 60,000,000 wage earners in America. But less than one in eight is investing regularly in the future of our Beloved America!

By buying these government bonds you are not only securing your own individual future, you are becoming a financial partner in the greatest business on earth - the United States Government of America!

The Treasury Department is now launching a nationwide campaign to increase government savings bond buying under two systematic plans. One is the Payroll Savings Plan under which the American worker can arrange for bond purchases where he works by having a specific amount deducted from his pay check. The other is the Bond-a-Month Plan under which depositors authorize their bank to purchase a bond every 30 days and deduct the cost from their accounts.

The American Legion has pledged its all-out support to the Treasury Department in this Patriotic thrift campaign. The National Commander of The American Legion has called on its 17,176 posts to take the lead in communities everywhere through special action committees to promote both of the regular purchase plans. American Legion posts everywhere can help effectively. They should encourage every member to buy these bonds regularly. They should canvass all firms in their communities to have them start the regular payroll bond deduction plan for all employees. They should cooperate with all patriotic firms in promoting the widest publicity for bond buying through the media of the press, radio and public speakers.

The Treasury will award special citations to American Legion posts and their Auxiliary units which show more than 50 percent of bond-buying members.

Inflation is the No. 1 Public Enemy on the home front today. At this time, of all times, America can't afford a runaway inflation. We can't afford a depression. Bond buying is the best antidote against both inflation and depression. The gang behind the iron curtain would like nothing better than to be able to broadcast to the world, "Look at Uncle Sam! Wants to lead the world to peace and to prosperity and can't keep his own economy from breaking down!"

You can prevent that from happening. That is your patriotic duty. It is also a practical way in which to assure your own future.

Mr. and Mrs. Average American you have a great responsibility too in building America's spiritual strength! The Soviet program to cover the face of the earth with the ugly mask of communism naturally includes America.

The Kremlin gang is expert in spreading its vicious propaganda. Communist missionaries are busy right here in America, day and night. They are serious about their purpose of infiltrating into every sector of American life and sapping at the idealistic roots upon which our democracy rests.

Your first job in this spiritual battle is to stand up for America! Don't let anybody run down our free institutions and our ways of life. In the sacred name of every American hero dead, have the "guts" to speak up for America when you hear someone trying to slur our country. Take it upon yourself to tell off every peddler of alien philosophies of government. Tell him to pack up and go to Russia. That's where he belongs!

What we need in a spiritual revival in this country is a keener appreciation of the blessings of the American way of life. How many of our citizens actually know all about the dividends from our democracy?

There were pre-election headlines in many of our daily newspapers recently which reflected how too many give too little thought to needs of America and the duties of her citizens. An Indianapolis newspaper reported in big Page I type, "Lightest Vote Here in 12 Years Seen. Registrations fall below 1940-44 totals." Similar headlines were found in many other cities.

This is a shameful indictment of American citizens. The right to vote is the dearest possession of the American citizen. It is his protection of his own freedom. Yet here we were in a presidential election in a year of grave destiny when every American should have done his part to assure the election of the best state and national leaders, and "Registrations Falls Below 1940-44 Totals!"

With Cicero, The American Legion is inclined to exclaim: "Oh, Times! Oh, Morals!" Where is that immortal spirit of Patrick Henry whose words became the battle cry of all patriots when he said, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

We can't all be gifted orators. But all us can be patriots!

Let us all make this Armistice Day a day of personal conversion to active patriotism! Let's cut out lip service to ideals on special occasions! Our duty is clear. It is to be real Americans on every day. As such real Americans let's start today to do our part in building American military strength, American economic strength and American spiritual strength to the end that human freedom shall be preserved and the entire world make into a good neighborhood.

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