

Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Words of War:  
Their Speeches and Correspondence, November 1940-March 1941

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## ABSTRACT

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Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt inspired the Allies with memorable speeches in their fight against the Axis Powers during World War II.

These speeches resulted from their personalities, preparation, and correspondence; and the speeches directed Allied conduct and challenged Axis aggression. The speeches examined here pertain to Lend-Lease in November, 1940-March, 1941.

The author consulted the collections of Churchill's and Roosevelt's speeches and correspondence and drew from memoirs and newspapers. The first two chapters examine Churchill and Roosevelt's rhetorical abilities; the third chapter looks at how their correspondence shaped their speeches; and the fourth chapter looks at the Lend-Lease rhetoric.

Roosevelt and Churchill's speeches contributed to the success of the Lend-Lease bill and strengthened the Anglo-American alliance. Their words and actions led to the emergence of America as the leader in the alliance and affected Hitler's perception of the Anglo-American relationship and policy.

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## DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad, Amy and Mason, Buster and Coletta Mattingly, and Bill and Ruth Darland, and Adam.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The old sayings go “Actions speak louder than words” and “Deeds, not words,” but for Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt powerful words preceded and accompanied their actions and deeds. Whether hearing a recording of one of the speeches from an old record player, CD, or digital archive, their words continue to reach out and capture attention. Phrases, like Churchill’s “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat” and Roosevelt’s “we must be the great arsenal of democracy,” have become historic moments of World War II in their own right.<sup>1</sup> Their war speeches continue to evoke emotion, inspiration, and optimism in spite of terrible circumstances and hardships.

In 1940, Churchill and Roosevelt found themselves in unique and powerful positions as world leaders. Churchill, who had only recently come back into political office, found himself the Prime Minister of Great Britain confronting a new European war and the German bombing of Great Britain (known as the “Battle of Britain”). Roosevelt was elected for an unprecedented third term to presidential office and still faced the enormous task of improving the economic crisis and handling foreign affairs.

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<sup>1</sup> David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (New York: Random House, 2005), 182. Reynolds says that Churchill’s speeches have an historic quality and they accompany his war memoirs.



Their leadership during the Second World War cannot be emphasized enough when discussing the decisions, actions, consequences, and aims of the war and post-war world, and their ability to inspire and motivate through their words remains a significant element of their leadership, especially during the early years of World War II. What made them such master communicators? How did they translate their thoughts into words? What impact did their speeches have on public opinion, the Anglo-American relationship, and the Axis perception? Churchill and Roosevelt's oratory flowed from their personalities, hours of preparation, and hard work. Churchill's and Roosevelt's speeches also stemmed from their interaction and communication with each other, and the speeches affected the early wartime alliance, directed allied conduct, and responded to Axis aggression.

Even though the United States did not officially join the wartime alliance until after the Pearl Harbor attack in December of 1941 (two years after the beginning of war in Europe), Churchill and Roosevelt initiated and developed a relationship and alliance through telegrams, letters, and intermediaries. It seems surprising that Churchill and Roosevelt only met together nine times during the war.<sup>2</sup> Two personal meetings between the two leaders preceded the war summits. The first meeting came during World War I, in July of 1918, early in their careers when Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary to the Navy and Churchill was First Lord

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<sup>2</sup> World War II Summit Meetings between Roosevelt and Churchill: Washington (1941, 1942, and 1943), Quebec (1943 and 1944), Cairo (1943), Tehran (1943), Malta and Yalta (1945).

of the Admiralty. Churchill did not recall this meeting in later years, but he would come to value the constant communication and working relationship with Roosevelt. The second meeting, which was much more memorable for both men, came in August of 1941, off the coast of Newfoundland; there Churchill and Roosevelt laid out and signed the Atlantic Charter. Between 1918 and 1941, however, Churchill and Roosevelt had to rely on their lines of communication, speeches, and actions.

Churchill and Roosevelt had much in common – their aristocratic upbringing, love of the navy and politics, advocacy of social and political reform, interest in history, witty sense of humor, and partiality to alcohol; they were also experienced politicians, intelligent and well-informed leaders, and hopeless egotists. Their friendship and wartime alliance often receives high praise or harsh criticism. These gentlemen were leaders, but their human weaknesses and national interests occasionally interfered with their ability to get along with one another. This was most clearly seen in Churchill's and Roosevelt's approach to Josef Stalin and the Soviet Union, the future of post-war Europe, and the status of the British colonies in the post-war world. Warren F. Kimball correctly suggests that historians should view Churchill and Roosevelt's relationship in different phases, and in the fall of 1940 through the spring of 1941 their commonalities, personalities, and communication contributed to a positive working relationship.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Alliance Emerging, October 1933-November 1942*. Vol. 1 of *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, 3 Vol., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 4-6.

Historians also easily identify another common trait and talent of these two leaders – Churchill and Roosevelt were master communicators and public speakers.

The scholarship on Churchill and Roosevelt and their interaction during World War II is extensive, detailed, entertaining, voluminous, and controversial. Although much has been researched, written, and rewritten, room remains for further scholarship, especially pertaining to their qualities as orators. Most of their biographers and historians recognize the importance of their oratorical skills. The research in this thesis, however, will offer a comparison and analysis of Churchill and Roosevelt as public speakers and will argue that their speeches shaped the early wartime alliance, directed allied conduct, and responded to Axis aggression.

For primary source material the author consulted the official multi-volume collections of their public papers and speeches as well as Warren F. Kimball's edited three-volume work on their official correspondence.<sup>4</sup> Because Churchill and Roosevelt delivered hundreds of public speeches, addresses, and greetings during the war, the selection of speeches discussed in great detail are those speeches pertaining to the introduction of the Lend-Lease Act, between November of 1940-March of 1941. Even within those five months, the selection

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<sup>4</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897-1963*, edited by Robert Rhodes James (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974); Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, edited by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Russell & Russell, 1941).

was narrowed down to six speeches (three from each leader) that received national and international attention, such as speeches delivered to the US Congress or British Parliament or broadcast to the public via the radio. It is not the quantity of their war speeches that is impressive here, but how and why Churchill and Roosevelt translated their thoughts, aims, hopes, and ideals in the Lend-Lease period.

The first two chapters examine Churchill and Roosevelt's personalities and rhetorical abilities and the scholarship that already exists on the subject; the third chapter looks at how their correspondence and interaction shaped their speeches; and the fourth chapter looks at the historical context and rhetoric of Lend-Lease. Although Churchill and Roosevelt were both excellent communicators, their oratorical styles and purposes differed. The introduction of the Lend-Lease bill brought a small victory to Britain, gave optimism to American interventionists, and challenged the Axis powers.

## CHAPTER 2

### A CONFIDENT PERSONALITY: ROOSEVELT AS A PUBLIC SPEAKER

When the student looks at the famous picture of the “Big Three” at Tehran in 1943, the first adjective that comes to mind describing President Franklin D. Roosevelt is “confident.” The generation of men and women from the Great Depression also commonly referred to Roosevelt’s “confidence,” and how his confidence assured and encouraged them to be optimistic during the depression and war. The way Roosevelt conveyed this confidence was through his speechmaking and radio broadcasts to the American public. Roosevelt’s use of the media set a precedent for the modern 20<sup>th</sup> century American presidents, and his speeches set the standard for future presidential inaugural addresses, congressional speeches, and public broadcasts.<sup>5</sup>

#### Family, Education, and Politics

Franklin succeeded a long line of successful and prominent New York leaders on both the Roosevelt and Delano sides of the family. Born on January 30, 1882, in Hyde Park, New York, to James Roosevelt and Sara Delano Roosevelt, Franklin’s aristocratic background afforded him all of the opportunities to become a polished and talented public speaker. James and Sara Roosevelt ensured that Franklin, as a child, received the best education from private tutors. Young Roosevelt also observed his father’s management of the Hyde Park estate and traveled abroad with his parents. Franklin attended Groton

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<sup>5</sup> Halford R. Ryan, *Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Rhetorical Presidency* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), 10.

School (1896-1900), where he participated in debate and developed his strong sense of moral leadership, heavily influenced by Endicott Peabody. He went on to study history at Harvard University (1900-1903) and law at Columbia University (1903-1907). Although he proved to be an average student, Roosevelt excelled in debate and politics, edited Harvard's student paper, *Crimson*, and made friends easily with his fellow students and colleagues. During his childhood and young adulthood, Roosevelt became an outgoing and confident leader among his peers.<sup>6</sup>

In 1905, Franklin married his distant cousin Eleanor Roosevelt. Franklin and Eleanor made an ambitious political duo, and they were parents to five children. After a brief career in law (1907-1910), FDR entered politics as a Democratic member of the New York Senate (1910-1913), and then became Assistant Secretary to the Navy (1913-1920) under Woodrow Wilson's administration. Roosevelt's family ties to Theodore Roosevelt and political connection with Woodrow Wilson allowed Roosevelt to observe and work with

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<sup>6</sup> Roy Jenkins and Richard Neustadt, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 1-21; Ted Morgan, *FDR: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), 17-88; Geoffrey C. Ward, *Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt, 1882-1905* (New York: Smithmark, 1985); Frank Freidel, *A Rendezvous with Destiny* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1990), 3-32; Jon Meacham, *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship* (New York: Random House, 2003), 3-37; James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York: Smithmark, 1984), 1-21; Kenneth S. Davis, *FDR: The Beckoning of Destiny, 1882-1928* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 15-167; H. W. Brands, *Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 17-33.

TR and Wilson, who possessed different, but memorable public speaking styles.<sup>7</sup> In the 1920 presidential election, Roosevelt ran as the Democratic running mate. Each of these early political roles provided FDR with excellent opportunities to sharpen his public speaking skills.

In the summer of 1921, while vacationing on Campobello Island, New Brunswick, Roosevelt contracted poliomyelitis, which left his legs crippled the rest of his life. Roosevelt's long battle with polio raises questions from historians especially concerning how this affected his presidency and personality. This terrible illness could have easily become an excuse for Roosevelt to give up any ambitions for political office. But with encouragement from Eleanor and Louis Howe, FDR went through physical therapy and remained involved in the activities of the Democratic Party.<sup>8</sup> Roosevelt's struggle with polio prevented him from walking unassisted, and in many cases Roosevelt relied on the assistance of his sons in walking. With the growing significance of the media in politics, FDR wanted to avoid being seen in his wheelchair. Therefore, despite the pain and discomfort, he often delivered his public addresses wearing heavy braces on his legs and gripping the podium. Frances Perkins pointed out in her memoirs that FDR faced great difficulty and humiliation associated with his handicap and speechmaking, but he knew the importance of speaking to the

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<sup>7</sup> Janet Podell and Steven Anzovin, eds., "Franklin Delano Roosevelt," in *Speeches of the American Presidents* (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1988), 479-480.

<sup>8</sup> Brands, *Traitor to His Class*, 145-156.

public and allowed his sons and assistants to help him make his way to numerous podiums. Perkins also thought that Roosevelt's experience with polio made him a better public speaker, helping him identify with people who were down on their luck and making him appear more human.<sup>9</sup>

Roosevelt accepted the Democratic nomination to the Governorship of New York and won in the election of 1928.<sup>10</sup> During that time, he hired and worked with individuals who would follow him to Washington, D.C., and become significant figures in his administration, as well as work for him as speechwriters (e.g., Harry Hopkins, Raymond Moley, Samuel Rosenman). FDR's governorship also provided the chance to develop his communication skills with the radio, addressing his constituencies in New York. His administration conducted surveys monitoring radio influence to ensure maximum results. Roosevelt's knowledge of radio communications and business aided him when he became president, especially with his Fireside Chats.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York: Viking Press, 1946), 43-45; Ryan, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 13-15; Douglas B. Craig, *Fireside Politics: Radio and Political Culture in the United States, 1920-1940* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 157.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey C. Ward, *A First-Class Temperament: The Emergence of Franklin Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989), 799. Ward offers a personal biography of Roosevelt and looks critically at Roosevelt's early life and family between his wedding and election to governorship.

<sup>11</sup> Craig, *Fireside Politics*, 154; Russell J. Buhite and David W. Levy, eds. *FDR's Fireside Chats* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), xiv-xv.



Herbert Hoover's failure to improve the economy and Roosevelt's growing popularity aided FDR's victory in the presidential election of 1932, when he became the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States. Roosevelt took on the presidency during the worst economic depression in the history of America, but his administration faced the task with enthusiasm, swift action, and bold reform.<sup>12</sup> The American people had lost faith in the government, but Roosevelt's Fireside Chats on the radio regained the faith and trust of the public. As president, Roosevelt displayed his incredible ability to address the public on a nationwide stage, and he knew how to use his speeches to introduce the administration's legislation (e.g., FDIC, NRA, WPA, SSA). During the early years of the Great Depression, Roosevelt delivered his chats in order to inform the public and offer assurance and build confidence. After 1937, Roosevelt's chats and speeches turned toward international affairs and the war, hoping to educate the people about foreign policy, change attitudes toward interventionism, and offer support to Winston Churchill and Great Britain.

#### Preparation and Delivery Style

Although Roosevelt personally took great care in writing and editing his speeches, he worked with a team of speechwriters. The most important speechwriters and advisors during the war years were Harry Hopkins, Samuel

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<sup>12</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 131-159, 363-380; Freidel, *Rendezvous With Destiny*, 92-105.

Rosenman, and Robert Sherwood.<sup>13</sup> FDR and the speechwriters would gather notes and points together and work to write out several sections and drafts. Sometimes Roosevelt began with presenting an idea, outline, or draft to his speechwriters; then his speech advisors worked together or separately on a second draft (followed by a third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and sometimes seventh draft); and Roosevelt would discuss other changes until every word sounded perfect for the occasion.<sup>14</sup> The speechwriters, stenographers, and Roosevelt's personal secretaries, Missy LeHand and Grace Tully, would make changes and retype every draft. These speechwriting sessions usually took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House and usually lasted late into the night. The question arises, "If Roosevelt enjoyed writing his own speeches so much, why did he use speechwriters and advisors?" The answer is simple: President Roosevelt could only spend so much time on a speech due to his other responsibilities and circumstances.

In *Working With Roosevelt*, Samuel I. Rosenman offers the most detailed and comprehensive information about the "grind and glamour" of speechwriting

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<sup>13</sup> These three writers were the most important during the war years, but other writers and advisors were involved in the process. Sometimes they assisted because of their specialty or expertise. These other writers were Raymond Moley, Rexford Tugwell, Tommy Corcoran, Benjamin Cohen, Adolf Berle, William Bullitt, Donald Richberg, Stanley High, and Archibald MacLeish.

<sup>14</sup> Buhite and Levy, *Fireside Chats*, xv-xix; Earnest Brandenburg, "The Preparation of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Speeches," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 35 (1949): 214-221.

with President Roosevelt.<sup>15</sup> Rosenman recalls the late nights, constant editing, and numerous drafts involved in the speechwriting process. Rosenman claims that this was a team effort, but that the writers or “collaborators” did argue with each other and Roosevelt to ensure the appropriate and powerful impact of the speech. Although Roosevelt did not “put up” with advisors who disagreed with him, Rosenman said that Roosevelt expected argument and criticism from the writers.<sup>16</sup>

Other memoirs speak of this collaborative process and emphasize Roosevelt’s detailed attention to the composition of the speeches.<sup>17</sup> At times, Roosevelt acted as the primary author, as in the “War Message” on December 8, 1941, or contributed some of the unique phrases or ideas, as in the “Four Freedoms” speech in January of 1941. In *Working With Roosevelt*, Rosenman said, “No matter how frequently the speech assistants were changed through the years, the speeches were always Roosevelt’s. They all expressed the personality, the convictions, the preparation, the mood of Roosevelt. . . .the finished product was the same - it was Roosevelt himself.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working With Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), 8.

<sup>16</sup> Rosenman, *Working With Roosevelt*, 1-12.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948); Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 72-74; Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew*, 107, 113; Grace Tully, *FDR: My Boss* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1949), 87-89, 94-99.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 12.

Roosevelt's gregarious personality suited him well in his chats and speeches. He was warm, friendly, always smiling, attractive, witty, and humorous. FDR's chats were personal, informal, and conversational, addressing his audience as "my friends" and identifying himself with the ordinary citizen.<sup>19</sup> He used gestures and facial expressions in his public speeches that matched the tone of the situation. His infectious smile and confident head tilt embodied an attitude of composure, command, and optimism.<sup>20</sup>

FDR's speeches included a range of emotions from laughter and humor to a sobering look at the depression or war. He often added humor in his speeches and responded well to the crowd's laughter and applause. One famous example comes from the "Fala Speech" from September of 1944, that FDR delivered while attacking Republican opponents who had made a negative comment that involved the Roosevelts' dog, Fala. Roosevelt said:

"These Republican leaders have not been content with attacks on me, or my wife, or on my sons. No, not content with that, they now include my little dog, Fala. Well, of course, I don't resent attacks. . . but Fala does resent them. You know, Fala is Scotch, and being a Scottie, as soon as he learned that the Republican fiction writers in Congress had concocted a story that I had left him behind on the Aleutian Islands and had sent a destroyer back to find him – at a cost to the taxpayers. . . his Scotch soul was furious."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Brands, *Traitor to His Class*, 322; Freidel, *Rendezvous With Destiny*, 99; Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 136-137.

<sup>20</sup> Ryan, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 13-24

<sup>21</sup> Roosevelt, *PPA, 1944*, 290.

Roosevelt's speeches often dealt with serious subjects, and he tried to seek a balance between being too optimistic and too realistic or pessimistic. This balance is seen clearly in Roosevelt first Fireside Chat on the Banking Crisis and the Fireside Chat on the "Arsenal of Democracy." Roosevelt and his speechwriters edited the addresses so as to avoid being unnecessarily offensive, abrasive, detailed, oratorical, or lenient. But again, the emotion of compassion and confident determination remains prevalent in Roosevelt's speeches.

Whether Roosevelt delivered a speech from a podium or seated at his desk, he knew his speeches well enough to make eye contact with his audiences. Compared to other popular radio voices during Roosevelt's presidency, like Huey Long and Father Coughlin, Roosevelt did not resort to emotional inflections in his tone, but kept a calm and steady pace. One element of FDR's speeches was his ability to pause before certain words, making the audience wait and wonder what the President was going to say next.<sup>22</sup>

Roosevelt's speeches used simple language, imagery, metaphors, and religious phrases that Americans immediately understood.<sup>23</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt said that Franklin had a gift of simplifying the language.<sup>24</sup> FDR often referred to a "Good Neighbor" image, especially during the early days of the Depression, encouraging farmers, employers, and laborers to come together to work out the

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<sup>22</sup> Ryan, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 15-23.

<sup>23</sup> Ryan, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 19-24; Buhite and Levy, *Fireside Chats*, xii-xv; Craig, *Fireside Politics*, 155.

<sup>24</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember*, 72-74.

problems of the Depression. The neighbor image resurfaced in his wartime speeches, reminding the American public of how they all “pulled together” during the economic crisis. In addressing the Great Depression, Roosevelt used military terminology and images, such as training, discipline, duty, sacrifice, and commitment. There were other unique images employed in FDR’s speeches, such as the “quarantine” speech and “arsenal of democracy” fireside chat. Roosevelt and his speechwriters were also excellent propagandists, and during World War II Roosevelt constantly contrasted “civilization,” “innocence,” and “freedom” with ideas like “barbarism,” “oppression,” and “totalitarianism.” Roosevelt directly related the triumph of the dictators in Europe and Asia and the calamity and destruction facing the citizens as a threat to American national security and defense.

Roosevelt’s Episcopalian background helped him to understand the power of religion and faith to move the American people, and Eleanor Roosevelt said that she believed his faith played an important role in his concept of moral leadership.<sup>25</sup> FDR often included religious phraseology in speeches, appealing to the higher moral ground and knowing they would have an immediate impact. American presidents, before and after FDR, evoked the concepts of religion, democracy, and freedom, and Roosevelt masterfully incorporated faith and religion in his speeches. This is especially evident in his “Christmas Greetings,” when Roosevelt took the time to survey the conflicts, fears, and troubles in the

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<sup>25</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember*, 67-70.

world. In the Christmas address from 1939, Roosevelt ended his message quoting the Christian “Beatitudes.” And in the Christmas address of 1940, Roosevelt said:

“But for most of us it can be a Happy Christmas if by happiness we mean that we have done with doubts, that we have set our hearts against fear, that we will still believe in the Golden Rule for all mankind, that we intend to live more purely in the spirit of Christ, and that by our works, as well as our words, we will strive forward in Faith and in Hope and in Love.”<sup>26</sup>

Attempting to avoid criticism from the press, Roosevelt worked with news reporters, constantly hosting press conferences and posing for pictures. While newsreels allowed the public to see the president deliver speeches, Roosevelt understood the importance of using the radio. Because his disability hindered movement, FDR turned to the radio where he could comfortably sit at his desk, allowing his words and ideas to enter the homes of millions of Americans. In his four-term presidency, Roosevelt delivered thirty-one Fireside Chats with the subject matter varying according to the situation, audience, and timing. Roosevelt delivered his radio broadcasts in the evenings, mostly at the beginning of the week in order to receive the most press coverage throughout the week. He delivered twelve of his chats on Sunday evenings but avoided speaking over the radio on Saturdays. In addition, the chats were brief and concise, and FDR made sure that he did not deliver the chats too often, preventing repetition.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Roosevelt, *PPA*, 1940, 632-633.

<sup>27</sup> Waldo W. Braden and Earnest Brandenburg, “Roosevelt’s Fireside Chats,” *Speech Monographs* 22 (1955): 290-302; Ryan, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 27-33; Craig, *Fireside Politics*, 156-157.

Roosevelt's early war speeches played an important role during the Lend-Lease ordeal and in supporting Great Britain. President Roosevelt delivered his war speeches for three reasons: (1) to educate the American public on foreign affairs, (2) to change American attitudes toward interventionism in Europe, and (3) to offer support to Winston Churchill and Great Britain in their stand against Hitler and Mussolini.

With the European crisis increasingly appearing grim with Germany and Italy, as well as the rising tensions in the Pacific with Japan, the subject of Roosevelt's speeches and chats gradually shifted focus from the economic crisis to foreign and international affairs. Roosevelt's efforts to prepare the United States for defense and security encountered major opposition from strong isolationist sentiment. As the American people were still recovering from the Great Depression and disillusionment from their involvement in WWI, they firmly stood against interventionism in Europe and Asia. The traditional and historical American isolationist policy only strengthened their stand.

Therefore, between 1937-1941, Roosevelt embarked on an unspoken campaign to educate the American people on foreign policy, making them aware of activities going on in the rest of the world. The President wanted the public to take an active and intelligent role in international affairs, working toward a lasting peace and helping the governments and people facing oppression from dictators that were threatening individual freedom, democracy, and capitalism.<sup>28</sup> President

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<sup>28</sup> David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 171-178; Michael Weiler, "President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Third



Roosevelt's speeches during this time, however, left the audience unsure of FDR's foreign policy. He promoted action against aggressors and support of those that opposed the dictators and fascists but never laid out a detailed plan of action. Three speeches come to mind that reflect this ambiguity: (1) the Chicago "Quarantine" speech (October 5, 1937), (2) the Fireside Chat on the European War (September 3, 1939), and (3) the Address at the University of Virginia (June 10, 1940).

### Historiography

The memoirs of those who worked closely with Roosevelt, such as Hopkins, Rosenman, and Sherwood, provide the best first-hand knowledge and account of FDR's speechwriting and delivery style. These works are extremely insightful, but they present a positive and biased perspective. Rosenman admits that he presents a "partisan" work in his memoir of Roosevelt. And many of these early memoirs and histories show great admiration for Roosevelt as a leader and public speaker, discuss Roosevelt's excellent timing and tone with each speech, emphasize the conversational tone in the addresses, and recall the late nights and numerous drafts (as well as the bourbon involved).

Even during Roosevelt's lifetime, speech analysts looked at the composition, vocabulary, and rhetorical elements in his campaign speeches and Fireside Chats. Some of the earliest articles and materials comes from the

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Inaugural Address, 1941," in *The Inaugural Addresses of Twentieth-Century American Presidents*, ed. Halford Ryan (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 118-120; John McV. Haight, Jr., "Roosevelt and the Aftermath of the Quarantine Speech," *The Review of Politics* 24.2 (1962): 234-236.

communication and rhetorical perspective dating between the late 1940s-1960s. Many of these sources tend to focus on Roosevelt's earlier Fireside Chats and speeches during the Great Depression rather than his speeches pertaining to the war. They deal with the speechwriting process and take an in-depth look at the different drafts of each speech. FDR's speech notes and drafts can be studied and viewed at Roosevelt's Presidential Library at Hyde Park, New York.

Roosevelt's other biographers, like Jenkins, Morgan, Freidel, Ward, Davis, Goodwin, and Brandis, also present perspectives on Roosevelt's speeches and public speaking ability and provided helpful information for this thesis research. More recently a number of chapters on FDR have appeared in monographs on presidential speeches and the rise and popularity of radio broadcasts. But by far the most significant monograph on Roosevelt as an orator and public speaker is Halford R. Ryan's *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Rhetorical Presidency*. Not only does Ryan examine the rhetorical elements of FDR's speeches (e.g., parallelism, metaphor, tactics, tone, gesture), but he also describes the wider historical context surrounding the speeches. Ryan's primary thesis emphasizes the significance of FDR's speechmaking on his reputation as president and how FDR acts as an example of presidential and political oratory for future presidents.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE LANGUAGE OF GREATNESS: CHURCHILL AS AN ORATOR

During the Second World War, Britain's Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill delivered a number of inspiring speeches that captured the fighting spirit of the English-speaking world and all those who fought Adolf Hitler's Third Reich. Since the 1940s those speeches have been the subject of detailed analysis and study. During and after the war, Churchill received praise as a legendary figure and savior of Great Britain and the champion of freedom. More recently a number of historians, like John Charmley and Clive Ponting, have criticized the mythical view of Churchill. Other historians, such as Roy Jenkins, Paul Addison, John Keegan, Geoffrey Best, John Lukacs, and David Reynolds, present a balanced view of Churchill's leadership during the Second World War, and they all note the impact and influence of Churchill's wartime speeches.

#### Family, Education, and Politics

In 1933, Winston S. Churchill published a biography of his famous ancestor, John Churchill (1650-1722), the first Duke of Marlborough, that not only offered a history of the Churchill family but also defended his ancestors and showed how Churchill felt closely linked to his ancestral past. John Lukacs says that Churchill's view of his family and English history was "personal and participatory."<sup>29</sup> Like Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill came from a

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<sup>29</sup> John Lukacs, *Churchill: Visionary, Statesman, Historian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 104. This idea draws a great deal from Maurice Ashley's *Churchill as Historian* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), 13; see also, Reynolds, *In Command of History*, xxii-xxiv.

long-line of wealthy aristocratic politicians and military commanders, and he found inspiration to follow their example in military and political service.

Winston was born on November 30, 1874, to Lord Randolph Churchill and Lady Jennie Jerome Churchill, at the Marlborough estate, Blenheim Palace. Lord Randolph Churchill was the third son to the seventh Duke of Marlborough, and he became a Member of Parliament and Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1880s. His career in British Parliament, however, was filled with controversy, and Lord Randolph died of serious health problems in 1895. Jennie Jerome Churchill was the daughter of an American New York stock broker, Leonard Jerome, and she was known as a beautiful and social butterfly. Churchill's parents led hectic social and political lives that kept them away from Winston and their second son John ("Jack"). As a child in boarding school, Churchill often wrote to his parents appealing for attention and hoping for a visit from Lord and Lady Churchill. Despite their absence in his everyday life at school, Churchill felt that they were a major influence in his life. Churchill experienced much grief following Lord Randolph's death in 1895 and Lady Randolph's death in 1921.

As was customary in wealthy, aristocratic families, Churchill attended private schools in Ascot and Brighton before attending Harrow in 1888. Churchill's previous school experience at Ascot and Brighton inadequately prepared him for a classical education in Latin, Greek, and mathematics. He performed poorly on his examinations, giving the impression that Churchill struggled at school. Although he failed to master the classics and mathematics, he later found this to be a positive part of his education. Churchill said, "I gained

an immense advantage over the cleverer boys. They all went on to learn Latin and Greek and splendid things like that. But I was taught English.”<sup>30</sup> He was interested in military history and became a cadet while at Harrow. During his five years at Harrow, Lord and Lady Randolph occasionally received letters from Churchill’s teachers expressing their concern for Winston’s carelessness and disruptive behavior. Churchill’s instructors worried about his general conduct, but they recognized his abilities in history, literature, and English. Despite a few problems and disinterest in studying the classics, Churchill excelled in subjects that held his attention and fascinated his imagination, such as history and English. Churchill also developed the habit of memorization and recitation. On one occasion Churchill set out to memorize 1,200 lines from Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome* for a school-wide contest, which he won. He also memorized lines from Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII* and *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.<sup>31</sup> Churchill’s commitment to memorization and oratory also helped him to minimize a speech impediment or lisp.<sup>32</sup> Young Churchill worked hard in these subjects and the

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<sup>30</sup> As quoted in Meacham, *Franklin and Winston*, 16; see also Keegan, *Churchill* (London: Phoenix, 2002), 24.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Addison, *Churchill: The Unexpected Hero* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10-12; Geoffrey Best, *Churchill and War* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), 3; Geoffrey Best, *Churchill: A Study in Greatness* (London: Hambledon and London, 2001), 6-7; Roy Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girouz, 2001), 3-21; Keegan, *Churchill*, 22-25; Norman Rose, *Churchill: The Unruly Giant* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 3-38.

<sup>32</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat: The Speeches of Winston Churchill*, edited with an introduction by David Cannadine (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 2; Addison, *Churchill*, 32.

knowledge he acquired proved to be invaluable to his ability to inspire through words.<sup>33</sup>

After failing the Sandhurst entrance exams twice, the faculty of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst finally accepted Churchill into the Cavalry class in 1893. Churchill found more success at Sandhurst and learned from his military studies. Churchill graduated eighth out of 150 students and received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the 4<sup>th</sup> Hussars, serving in India. Churchill later served with the 21<sup>st</sup> Lancers in the Sudan and as a war correspondent in South Africa during the Boer War.

Although Churchill's classical education ended with his admittance into Sandhurst, Churchill continued to improve and educate himself. While serving in India, Churchill wrote his mother, asking her to send him books to read and study. Churchill read Thomas Babington Macaulay, Edward Gibbon, Adam Smith, Charles Darwin, and Rudyard Kipling. Of all his reading, Churchill favored the histories and essays of Gibbon and Macaulay but viewed these writers in different ways. To Churchill, Gibbon seemed "stately and impressive" and Macaulay seemed "crisp and forcible." One can see how Churchill tried to incorporate these characteristics in his own writing and speechmaking, and his interests would help him connect to a wider audience, evoking images and symbols in which they were already familiar.

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<sup>33</sup> Andrew Roberts, *Hitler and Churchill* (London: Phoenix, 2003), 78.

In addition to reading British literature and history, Churchill critically analyzed twenty-seven volumes of Parliamentary debates recorded in the *Annual Register*, thinking through his personal responses on every issue. During his service in India, Churchill also developed his understanding of oratorical skill as the primary source of power, authority, and leadership, which can be seen in his article “The Scaffolding of Rhetoric” and his novel *Savrola*.<sup>34</sup> Churchill’s experiences abroad as a soldier and war correspondent propelled his professional career as a politician, gave him material for two important histories, and provided him with military imagery that would fill many of his future wartime speeches.<sup>35</sup>

In the early 1900s, Churchill embarked in a career of politics, holding a number of notable positions like Member of Parliament (several terms), Under-Secretary for the Colonies (1905-1908), Home Secretary (1910-1911), First Lord of the Admiralty (1911-1915, and again in 1939-1940), and Chancellor of the Exchequer (1924-1929). Numerous controversies arose over Churchill’s party affiliation (Liberal or Conservative), the situation in Ireland, the disastrous Dardanelles Campaign of World War I, and the appeasement debate of the late 1930s. Historians often refer to Churchill’s life during the 1930s as “The Wilderness Years.” As an attempt to console himself at this time, Churchill painted, published some of his writings, worked on his home at Chartwell, and

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<sup>34</sup> Cannadine, *Speeches*, xv-xviii; Rose, *Churchill*, 55-58.

<sup>35</sup> Addison, *Churchill*, 12-16; Best, *Churchill and War*, 5-31; Best, *Churchill*, 9-10; Jenkins, *Churchill*, 24-26; Keegan, *Churchill*, 34-35; Meacham, *Franklin and Winston*, 29; Rose, *Churchill*, 45.

traveled and lectured in the United States. It appeared that Churchill was past the height of his political career. During this time, few British politicians and citizens would have expected Churchill's return to the world stage and enormous success as Prime Minister.

As Churchill was starting out in politics, he married Clementine Hozier on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1908. Winston relied a great deal on Clementine's support and advise during their marriage and his career. One of the most famous examples of Clementine's involvement in Winston's work comes from a letter at the beginning of the war. Someone in Churchill's cabinet told Clementine that the Prime Minister was being "rough" and "overbearing." Clementine wrote to Churchill, "My darling Winston – I must confess that I have noticed a deterioration in your manner; & you are not so kind as you used to be. . . . with this terrific power you must combine urbanity, kindness, and if possible Olympic calm." Winston and Clementine were parents to five children, and their daughter, Mary Soames, edited a volume of the Churchills' personal letters and correspondence, which provides evidence of their warm and caring relationship even through the tough "wilderness" years and the difficult wartimes.<sup>36</sup>

Churchill gave his first speech to Parliament in 1901, and over the next couple of decades Churchill developed and improved his oratory. As a young politician, Churchill observed and learned from other notable British orators such

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<sup>36</sup> Mary Soames, ed., *Winston and Clementine: The Personal Letters of the Churchills* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 454.



as Gladstone, Pitt, and Lord Randolph Churchill.<sup>37</sup> Churchill also found a fascination with the Irish-American speaker and Tammany Hall politician, Bourke Cockran.<sup>38</sup> He continued to pour over his speeches during the writing and preparation stage, and Churchill created a unique style of speaking by pausing, modulating his voice, and drawing dramatic emphasis.

#### Preparation and Delivery Style

Known as a master communicator, Churchill delivered speeches that were the product of his hard work and unique personality. Churchill devoted much time to preparing, writing, editing, and practicing his own speeches. It was not uncommon for Churchill to devote several hours to writing a simple and brief speech. Unlike President Roosevelt, Churchill composed his own speeches, and his addresses resulted in masterpieces of proper and classical rhetoric, rather than Roosevelt's conversational and personal style. Churchill's language reflected an Old Victorian English, rather than a modern political rhetoric and contained themes of nobility, sacrifice, and morality. Churchill also included humor and used strong grammatical structure, which made his messages clear, descriptive, and understandable as well as entertaining.<sup>39</sup> In many of his speeches, Churchill

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<sup>37</sup> Cannadine, *Speeches*, 2-3; Best, *Churchill*, 7; Roberts, *Hitler and Churchill*, 38-39.

<sup>38</sup> Cannadine, *Speeches*, xx; Addison, *Churchill*, 14; Rose, *Churchill*, 43-44.

<sup>39</sup> Rose, *Churchill*, 55-56; Jenkins, *Churchill*, 611-612.

referred to British history and literature, and the speeches provided vivid and inspiring imagery.<sup>40</sup>

Much like his personality, however, his rhetoric contained glaring weaknesses and flaws. And unfortunately his speeches as a Member of Parliament and politician failed to persuade and bring about the changes that he wanted. Many times before and after his career as Prime Minister, Parliament and the British people did not take Churchill's speeches seriously. His speeches are praised for their grandness and magnanimity, but Churchill's vocabulary and phrases often exaggerated problems and offended his colleagues.<sup>41</sup> The language and ideas of Churchill's oratory, however, matched the gravity of the situation during World War II. Churchill humbly bragged after the war "It was a nation and a race dwelling all round the globe that had the lion heart. I had the luck to be called upon to give the roar."<sup>42</sup>

After Neville Chamberlain and the British government realized that Hitler would not be appeased, Churchill became the newly appointed Prime Minister in May of 1940. British parliamentary members, especially the Conservative party members, remained skeptical and hesitant about the decision to appoint Churchill. Churchill's speeches had to combat the defeatist ideas of the appeasement group like Chamberlain and Halifax, who wanted a negotiated peace with Hitler. In his

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<sup>40</sup> Keegan, *Churchill*, 134-135, 176-177.

<sup>41</sup> Cannadine, *Speeches*, xxiii-xxix.

<sup>42</sup> Churchill, *Complete Speeches*, Vol 8, 8608.

newest book, *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat: The Dire Warning, Churchill's First Speech as Prime Minister*, historian John Lukacs examines the events of May 1940 and what public opinion was of Churchill at the time. Lukacs argues that Churchill's speech, delivered to the House of Commons on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1940, was responsible for changing public opinion about the new Prime Minister and the war situation. Many of the political leaders and English people had no idea what was about to happen to Great Britain and what would be expected of them. Churchill's speeches had a powerful impact during those first few months of the war, especially during the Battle of Britain.<sup>43</sup>

Churchill's early 1940-1941 war speeches served three purposes: (1) to inform the House of Commons and the public about the war effort, (2) to raise morale among the British people, and (3) to persuade Americans, especially Roosevelt, to support the Allied war effort. Churchill's war speeches were honest and reflected his determination to challenge the tyranny and barbarism represented by Hitler and the Nazis. Churchill never shied away from admitting his faults and mistakes in his speeches (e.g., "I offer no excuses" address, House of Commons, January 29, 1942) once he realized he had made a mistake. He also presented the bad news with the good news but kept an overall optimistic tone and message (e.g., "Wars are not won by evacuations," the Dunkirk message). The greatness of Churchill's oratory comes from his superb use of vocabulary and

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<sup>43</sup> John Lukacs, *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat: The Dire Warning, Churchill's First Speech as Prime Minister* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

descriptive language, as well as his use of British history and literature, which the British people would have immediately recognized and identified.

Churchill's philosophy or understanding of history has come under scrutiny in the past few decades. Churchill's love of the English language, literature, and its history resulted in the production of several major histories: *The Story of the Malakand Field Force* (1898), *The River War* (1899), *Lord Randolph Churchill* (1906), *The World Crisis* (1923-1931), *Marlborough: His Life and Times* (1933-1938), *The Second World War* (1948-1954), and *A History of the English Speaking Peoples* (1956-1957). In these histories, Churchill dealt with war, politics, and his own relatives. Two of the standard older works pertaining to Churchill as a historian are Maurice Ashley's, *Churchill as Historian*, and J. H. Plumb's chapter, "The Historian," from *Churchill Revised: A Critical Assessment*.<sup>44</sup> Newer perspectives on Churchill as a historian come from John Lukacs' *Churchill: Visionary, Statesman, Historian*, and David Reynolds' *In Command of History: Churchill Writing and Fighting the Second World War*.<sup>45</sup> These works examine Churchill's understanding of history, methodology in research, and writing of the past.

Like other historians, Churchill used his perception of the past to defend his family and justify his beliefs. Churchill's histories often contained factual

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<sup>44</sup> Ashley, *Churchill as Historian*; J. H. Plumb, "The Historian" in *Churchill Revised: A Critical Assessment*, Edited by A. J. P. Taylor, et al. (New York, Dial Press, 1969).

<sup>45</sup> Lukacs, *Churchill: Visionary, Statesman, Historian*; Reynolds, *In Command of History*.

errors and exaggerated events, lacked proper analysis and data, and reflected his own personal experiences and biases.<sup>46</sup> For his six volumes on *The Second World War*, he relied heavily on the assistance of a team of research assistants, the Syndicate.<sup>47</sup> These assistants helped Churchill gather documents, correspondence, statistics, and intelligence, but Churchill ultimately chose what to include and what to leave out.<sup>48</sup> At the time of writing both his post-WWI and WWII memoirs, Churchill wanted to maintain a position of leadership in the present and future. Therefore, Churchill used his account as a political tool. Churchill understood the power of history when he said, “I shall leave it to history, but remember that I shall be one of the historians.”<sup>49</sup> It seems fair to say that Churchill cannot be considered a professionally trained historian, but his amateur histories offer a unique and often first-hand perspective on the events that he describes so vividly.

Churchill’s understanding of British history came from his Victorian education, family background, and experiences abroad in the British Empire and at home in Parliament. Churchill saw history as a progression of uplifting events – Britain progressing culturally, politically, and socially, taking the role of a

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<sup>46</sup> Plumb, “The Historian,” 152, 156.

<sup>47</sup> Reynolds, *In Command of History*, xxi.

<sup>48</sup> Lukacs, *Churchill: Visionary, Statesman, Historian*, 113; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, xxi.

<sup>49</sup> As quoted in Reynolds, *In Command of History*, xix.

moralizing and civilizing force in the world.<sup>50</sup> Churchill was certain of Great Britain's significance in the world, especially during World War II, but Churchill also viewed history with an individualistic or humanistic mind set, being a fan of the "great men" theory of history.<sup>51</sup> Churchill believed in human destiny and, more importantly, believed in his own destiny as a leader in history. In May of 1940, when Churchill took his place as Prime Minister, he said, "I felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial."<sup>52</sup>

As J. H. Plumb noted, Churchill did not study the major philosophies of history, like Hegel or Marx, and Churchill never developed or identified a clear philosophy of history.<sup>53</sup> From his written histories, however, one realizes that Churchill viewed the nature of history as a story of progression – events progressing to an increasingly better government, society, and culture (a common and prominent Whig interpretation of history from Churchill's day). Churchill showed a fascination for the history of the English speaking world and believed in the words and deeds of significant individuals who stood out as men of destiny, driving and pushing historical events.

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<sup>50</sup> Keegan, *Churchill*, 14; Plumb, "The Historian," 134.

<sup>51</sup> Ashley, *Churchill as Historian*, 16-17.

<sup>52</sup> As quoted in Reynolds, *In Command of History*, xx.

<sup>53</sup> Plumb, "The Historian," 134-135, 138, 142, 168; Ashley, *Churchill as Historian*, 18-20; Lukacs, *Churchill: Visionary, Statesman, Historian*, 122-123.

Churchill's "personal and participatory" view of the past can be seen in his wartime speeches to the public. Churchill realized the significance of WWII in World history and British history, and he wanted his audiences to see how they were involved in major historical events. While Churchill used history to justify and defend his belief, he effectively used his perception and interpretation of history to inspire the British people during those crucial weeks in the summer and fall of 1940.

In Churchill's early wartime speeches, he described the battle between good versus evil and evoked images of destruction and threatening circumstances. Therefore, the British struggle against Germany was not only a physical struggle but also an ideological and linguistic struggle. Churchill used images and metaphors that challenged the Nazi propaganda and German national myths.<sup>54</sup> Churchill did not merely state the concepts and policies he opposed but spoke of his own ideals and beliefs, raising his argument to a higher level and appealing to the higher moral ground.<sup>55</sup> Churchill realized that Hitler and Nazism were challenging the morals and values of Western Civilization, and Churchill's speeches adamantly defended those important morals and values.

Churchill's observations of history in his speeches made the audience look back and see the continuity or connection between the past and present, as well as

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<sup>54</sup> Keegan, *Churchill*, 134-135; Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 32-57; Addison, *Churchill*, 168-169.

<sup>55</sup> Cannadine, *Speeches*, 11.

hopes for the future. His use of historical imagery had great rhetorical effect because it made the British feel that “they were not alone in this struggle; they were walking with history.”<sup>56</sup> Recalling past British victories against France (Napoleon), Spain (the Armada), and Germany (the Kaiser), Churchill reminded his audience of the great achievements of England and the successes of national legends like Nelson and Drake. From speeches such as “Be Ye Men of Valor” (May 19, 1940), “Their Finest Hour” (June 18, 1940), and “The Few” (August 20, 1940) Churchill mentioned events from the distant past but also reflected on the recent history of Britain during World War I and the evacuations at Dunkirk. Churchill used the recent past to find the lessons to be learned from their unpreparedness.

Using comparisons such as the greatness of the British Royal Air Force with the Knights of the Round Table and Crusaders and the resolve of the British people with the soldiers at the Battle of Waterloo, Churchill showed the triumph of the British Empire throughout history, a reminder that once again Great Britain would triumph in the fight against Nazism and Fascism. In addition, the Prime Minister compared Adolf Hitler’s plan of invasion of Great Britain with Napoleon Bonaparte’s unsuccessful invasion in the “Wars are not won by evacuations” speech (June 4, 1940), reminding the people that they had already faced similar dangers. One constant theme of Churchill’s speeches revolved around the survival of their “island,” contrasting the present hardship with future reward and

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<sup>56</sup> Roberts, *Hitler and Churchill*, 41.



victory. Churchill invoked history to provide a framework and perspective for understanding their situation. Although it was a difficult time, the struggle was not unprecedented.

In “Westward, Look, the Land is Bright” (April 27, 1941), Churchill also used historical imagery to describe the Nazi forces as a “mechanized Hun” and “malignant Hun.” The use of the word “Hun” would raise images of barbarism and ancient fears. Churchill wanted to inform the British people of Hitler’s extreme form of oppression and violence. Churchill also called Italian dictator Benito Mussolini a “whipped jackal, who to save his own skin has made Italy a vassal state of Hitler’s Empire.” And in “Their Finest Hour,” Churchill said, “If we can stand up to him [Hitler], all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world. . . including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age.” The image of a “new Dark Age” and “vassal state” of the Medieval Age represented periods in history of absolute rule over a people. These historical images challenged the Axis dictators in their attempts to gain similar totalitarian power over modern European citizens. The imagery also clearly showed the consequences of defeat.

In contrast to the description of Hitler and Mussolini, Churchill identified England in a variety of terms. He referred to Great Britain as the “British Empire,” a “Christian civilization,” a “lion-hearted race,” and an unshakeable “island.” Although Churchill acknowledged England and Europe as the “Old World” and the United States as the “New World,” he hoped to show that

England possessed grand traditions and institutions that made them stand out as noble and civilized (as opposed to the barbaric Nazis).

Occasionally, quotations from English poetry and literature appeared in the war speeches. In “Give Us the Tools” (February 9, 1941) and “Westward, Look, the Land is Bright,” Churchill quoted stanzas from Byron, Longfellow, and Clough. These quotations helped capture the significance of the moment and offered words of hope to the people. With Churchill’s interest and experience in British naval studies, these particular quotes contained images of ships at sea. Churchill also discussed the historical relationship between England and America as well as evoking images from American history. For example, in “A Long Hard War” (US Congress, Washington, D.C., December 26, 1941) Churchill stated, “I have steered confidently towards the Gettysburg ideal of ‘government of the people, by the people, and for the people.’”<sup>57</sup>

In Churchill’s war speeches, the Second World War stood out as a major historical event equal to events from the “glorious” British past, and the war speeches reflected the historical consciousness of Churchill as well as his efforts to maintain a national myth through British history and literature. J. H. Plumb said, “History served Churchill best in his dialogue with his nation. . . And I venture to think that only a statesman steeped in history could have roused and strengthened the nation in the way which Churchill did during those years.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> For more information on Churchill’s relationship with the United States, see Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and America* (New York: Free Press, 2005).

<sup>58</sup> Plumb, “The Historian,” 166-167.

Of course, Plumb re-emphasized the fact that Churchill's history contained more myth than reality, and his perception of history eventually died with the emergence of revisionist history. Churchill's speeches did contribute to raising morale, gaining the Americans as allies, and giving direction and the higher moral ground to the Allied war effort. In *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*, Ian McLaine stated, "The only person whose speeches were more popular was Churchill. . . . his language and the form in which it was cast was far removed from the speech of the ordinary people. However, he so patently declined to talk down to the nation and so clearly avoided self-conscious colloquialisms that the public sensed an honesty of sentiment and delivery and responded to it. Churchill spoke as a leader who possessed a deep faith in the qualities of the led."<sup>59</sup> More importantly, Churchill's use of historical imagery emphasized the significance of their participation in the fight against Nazism and Fascism and provided an historical framework to understand their situation in such a difficult time. These speeches are delightful to read or listen to on recordings, supplementing Churchill's war memoirs and standing out as significant moments during the war themselves.

### Historiography

The scholarship pertaining to Churchill as an orator continues to grow as Churchill's oratory and public speaking skills continue to be relevant to politicians, military leaders, students, teachers, and athletes in the present day.

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<sup>59</sup> Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), 99.

Since his service in India and Africa, Churchill understood the power of public speaking and rhetoric for leadership, and in *The Second World War* memoirs Churchill discusses the importance of his speeches, especially during the summer of 1940. Those who worked closely with Churchill, like John Colville and Lord Moran, also mention listening to Churchill's speeches and how politicians and the public responded to the speeches. Occasionally, Colville added a word of critique about some of the speeches, saying that the speeches were not quite up to the standard of some of Churchill's famous war speeches. These advisors observed the Prime Minister's hours of speechwriting and delivery of the speeches before Parliament and broadcasts to the people on the radio.

Churchill's official biography, Martin Gilbert, provides a voluminous and detailed chronology of Churchill's life and work as the Prime Minister, showing Churchill's great attention to speechwriting and oratory in his political career. Other biographers, such as Jenkins, Rose, Keegan, and Lukacs discuss the historical context to Churchill's speeches; Keegan's *Churchill* and Andrew Roberts' *Hitler and Churchill* also touch on Churchill's use of historical imagery in his speeches and how that imagery conveyed a lively, inspiring, and hopeful message to the British people during WWII. Two other resources contributed significantly to this thesis topic: (1) David Cannadine's edited volume of Churchill's speeches gives an excellent introduction to Churchill as an orator; and (2) John Lukacs' newest monograph presents a case study on Churchill's first speech as Prime Minister and examines the immediate impact of the speech on the war effort and political and public morale.

## CHAPTER 4

### SPEECHES AND COMMUNICATION

The formation of the strong Anglo-American alliance came as a result of Churchill's and Roosevelt's unique personalities and friendship, powerful and persuasive speeches, and extensive correspondence. Although they became personable and friendly with each other, Churchill and Roosevelt (along with their advisors) had several differences of opinion, conflicts, and tensions. These were usually associated with different national interests and their limitations of power. In *Why the Allies Won*, Richard Overy argues that although Churchill and Roosevelt did not always agree, their unified commitment to destroy Nazism brought them ultimate victory.<sup>60</sup> Reading through Churchill's and Roosevelt's personal and political correspondence one gets a better sense of the struggle, tensions, commitment, and effort that went into the Allied decision-making process and relationship, especially during the Lend-Lease period. Churchill and Great Britain were responding to the Fall of France and threats from Hitler, and Roosevelt and the United States were walking a narrow road between isolation and avoiding war at all costs and intervention with all aid short of war (e.g., the delivery of war matériel to Great Britain).

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<sup>60</sup> Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 246. Roosevelt and Churchill worked with skilled, intelligent, and innovative military advisors and cabinet members who each contributed to the unified fight against Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Militaristic Japan.

## Personal Correspondence

Warren F. Kimball's introduction to Churchill and Roosevelt's correspondence is a valuable source on the nature and significance of the correspondence between the Prime Minister and President.<sup>61</sup> Kimball examines the correspondence in chronological order and offers introductory and explanatory notes before a majority of the letters and telegrams. Historians can understand the relationship of Roosevelt and Churchill better if they view their friendship and correspondence in stages or phases. Kimball identifies four phases of their relationship and correspondence: (1) September of 1939-May of 1940, (2) May of 1940-December of 1941, (3) December of 1941-February of 1943, and (4) February of 1943-April of 1945. The Lend-Lease period came during the second phase, what Kimball calls the "Help" stage because of Churchill's constant requests and pleas to Roosevelt for American support and aid.

Their wartime correspondence officially began with a note from Roosevelt to Churchill congratulating him on his commission as First Lord of the Admiralty. But Roosevelt also reached out to Churchill and said, "What I want you and the Prime Minister to know is that I shall at all times welcome it if you will keep me in touch personally with anything you want me to know about."<sup>62</sup> Although Roosevelt was officially communicating with Neville Chamberlain at the time, it

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<sup>61</sup> The research found in this thesis pertains only to Warren F. Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Alliance Emerging, October 1933-November 1942*, Vol. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Kimball, *C & R, Vol 1*, 24.

appears unusual that the President thought it was important to contact Churchill in the Navy. Historians speculate that Roosevelt initiated this communication with Churchill because FDR knew that American security and national defense depended a great deal on the survival of the British navy or that FDR knew about Churchill's perceptive attitude toward Hitler. Kimball suggests that the President wrote to Churchill as a way of staying in charge of the situation.<sup>63</sup> Whatever the reason, Churchill enthusiastically welcomed the communication with the American president, and Churchill received the Prime Minister and Cabinet's blessing to carry-on the correspondence.

Between 1939-1945, Roosevelt and Churchill sent almost 2,000 telegrams and letters to each other, exchanged a few telephone calls, and met together nine times at summit meetings. One of the common traits of their correspondence was that the majority of the telegrams, letters, and notes between the two leaders came from Churchill to Roosevelt. Their correspondence and friendship receives both high praise and harsh criticism. For example, some scholarship, like Jon Meacham's *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship* presents an optimistic view, bordering on the edge of romanticism. Other historians, such as David Reynolds and Warren Kimball, are quicker to point out how these men used each other for their own purposes. This working relationship, though strained at times, was lasting and unique and remains one of the most significant political alliances in history.

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<sup>63</sup> Warren F. Kimball, *Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1997), 35-36.

Kimball said, “It is the nature, not the volume of their exchanges that makes the collection [of correspondence] so special.”<sup>64</sup> Their letters, telegrams, and messages were personal, honest, open, friendly, and thoughtful. Churchill and Roosevelt mentioned family, special occasions, holiday and birthday greetings, and expressions of appreciation and gratitude toward each other. Their correspondence also occasionally brought up some of their similarities and commonalities. Churchill, probably hoping to reinforce some of their similarities, cleverly or humorously referred to himself as the “Naval Person,” and after becoming Prime Minister as the “Former Naval Person,” because of their shared interest in naval affairs.

Between the fall of 1939 and the spring of 1940, the correspondence pertained to naval strategy and news. Once Churchill became Prime Minister in May of 1940 until the ushering in of the Lend-Lease Act, their correspondence consisted of Churchill’s persistent requests and pleas to Roosevelt for war matériel and Roosevelt’s letters of support and hopes of helping more in the near future. After Pearl Harbor, Churchill and Roosevelt’s correspondence reflects an attitude of co-operation and joint leadership.<sup>65</sup> Throughout their correspondence,

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<sup>64</sup> Kimball, *C & R, Vol 1*, 24.

<sup>65</sup> Roosevelt and Churchill surrounded themselves with excellent military advisors and cabinet members who successfully contributed to the Allied victory. Roosevelt and Churchill’s ability to work and listen to their advisors provides proof of their skills as world leaders. See Eric Larrabee’s *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1987) and John Keegan’s *Churchill’s Generals* (London: Orion Publishing, 2005).



they continue to mention officials and aids who are acting as liaisons between Great Britain and England and the good work and progress of these individuals. A key person in the initial stages of the developing relationship between Roosevelt and Churchill was one of Roosevelt's trustworthy friends and advisors, Harry Hopkins, especially during the Lend-Lease period in January of 1941. Following the Teheran Conference in 1943, however, tensions arose between Roosevelt and Churchill because of their difference of opinion concerning the role of the Soviet Union in the alliance, postwar Europe, and the status of the British colonies.

Churchill became Prime Minister and Defense Minister on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1940, and formed a War Cabinet comprised of members from each political party. With German occupation of Western Europe and greater pressure on France, Churchill understood the delicate situation that Great Britain found itself in and felt that continued communication with Roosevelt was vitally important to the war effort and for the survival of Great Britain. Churchill's message to President Roosevelt on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1940, was the first significant request for direct American support. That telegram and Roosevelt's response became a typical exchange between the two leaders during the next couple months. The correspondence between May and November of 1940 provide the necessary background in communication preceding the Lend-Lease ordeal.

In the telegram from May 15<sup>th</sup>, Churchill related his perception of the dangers Great Britain faced with Germany and the entrance of Italy into the war. The PM also emphasized his resolve to fight on and asked for US cooperation

through the sale of old destroyers, aircraft, anti-aircraft, ammunition, and steel, as well as US naval support around Ireland and in the Pacific with Japan. Churchill explained that the British government was willing to pay for these goods and would return some of them if the US needed them. Roosevelt's response on May 16<sup>th</sup> was unclear and indecisive. Throughout the next few months, FDR's responses reflected the balancing act with Congress and popular opinion. Roosevelt had to think about the political and economic consequences of offering outright support of Great Britain. The President could not act hastily for fears of ruining any progress made with isolationists, and FDR had to keep the upcoming third presidential election in mind. Therefore, it is difficult to gauge Roosevelt's thoughts on entering the war effort this early. Churchill's blunt and direct letters and Roosevelt's unclear and indecisive messages would continue until the 1940 presidential election.

Their messages constantly referred to the work of their advisors and aids such as Lord Lothian, William Bullitt, Arthur Purvis, Henry Morgenthau, Anthony Eden, Lord Halifax, and Wendell Wilkie. Churchill continually emphasized the commonalities between Great Britain and the United States, tying Britain's fate to the fate of America. He did this by referring to their shared values such as democracy, freedom, and goodwill, emphasizing their shared "civilization" between the "Old World" and the "New World." Another common trait of Churchill's messages at this time was that of the sense of urgency required of Roosevelt and the US Congress. On July 31<sup>st</sup>, Churchill sent a message to

Roosevelt and said, “Mr. President, with great respect I must tell you that in the long history of the world, this is a thing to do now.”<sup>66</sup>

Churchill is remembered today for his eloquent and famous speeches delivered during the first few months of his leadership as Prime Minister. After the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Forces at Dunkirk, Churchill delivered one of those speeches in his “Wars are not won by evacuations.” This speech was recorded and broadcast in the US.<sup>67</sup> Shortly after that speech, Roosevelt delivered a speech at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville on June 10th, which is called the “Stab in the back” speech, responding to Mussolini and Italy’s alliance with the Axis. In this speech, Roosevelt said, “We [in America] will extend to the opponents of force the material resources of this nation; and at the same time, we will harness and speed up the use of those resources in order that we ourselves in the Americas may have equipment and training equal to the task of any emergency and every defense.”<sup>68</sup> In a message to FDR on June 11<sup>th</sup>, Churchill said, “We all listened to you last night [the Charlottesville speech] and were fortified by the grand scope of your declaration. Your statement that the material aid of the United States will be given to the Allies in their struggle is a strong encouragement in a dark but not unhopeful

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<sup>66</sup> Kimball, *C & R, Vol I, 57.*

<sup>67</sup> Kimball, *C & R, Vol I, 42.* Kimball notes that the British often used the impersonator, Norman Shelley, for Churchill’s speech recordings, usually for time constraints on the PM’s schedule.

<sup>68</sup> Roosevelt, *PPA, 1940, 264.*

hour.”<sup>69</sup> This is one of the first clear examples of the direct relationship between Churchill and Roosevelt’s public speeches and private correspondence.

Finally, in August, Roosevelt worked out an exchange of old destroyers for rights to British bases around the world, which would easily pass Congressional approval as an augmentation of self-defense and build-up of military strength. Roosevelt and Churchill, however, argued over the details of the exchange because Roosevelt wanted full assurance from Churchill and the British government of the integrity of the naval fleet. The details of Lend-Lease drew from this experience and prepared Roosevelt and Churchill for the Lend-Lease contracts and agreements (e.g., time frame for lease, publicity). In addition to this exchange, Roosevelt and Churchill turned all of their attention to the Blitz – the German bombing of England (and a possible invasion of Great Britain) – and the condition of the French naval fleet in the Mediterranean Sea. During the Fall of 1940, Roosevelt became more confident in Churchill and Britain to stand up against Hitler and Nazi Germany, and fears of Great Britain arranging peace negotiations with Germany subsided (especially due to winter weather approaching). In November, Roosevelt won an unprecedented third presidential election and could focus on US aid to Great Britain, which materialized in the Lend-Lease Act.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Kimball, *C & R, Vol I*, 43.

<sup>70</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill and America*, 184-204; Kimball, *Forged in War*, 55-61; Brands, *Traitor to His Class*, 542-575.

## Correspondence and Lend-Lease

Following the 1940 presidential election, while vacationing and resting aboard the *USS Tuscaloosa*, President Roosevelt received one of Churchill's most lengthy and forthright telegrams of the war. Kimball suggests that Churchill's December 8<sup>th</sup> telegram perhaps has been overemphasized in its importance because Roosevelt had already been working on a solution to Britain's financial troubles.<sup>71</sup> Churchill's disclosure and honesty about the financial situation in England, however, led to a turning point in Britain's ability to remain at war. Churchill wrote in his war memoirs that this letter "was one of the most important I ever wrote. . . He had only his own intimates around him. Harry Hopkins, then unknown to me, told me later that Mr. Roosevelt read and re-read this letter as he sat alone in his deck chair, and that for two days he did not seem to have reached any clear conclusion. He was plunged in intense thought, and brooded silently. From all this there sprang a wonderful decision [Lend-Lease]."<sup>72</sup>

For several months Churchill had been asking for war matériel, but in this telegram he admits the worry or concern for Great Britain's financial problem – the inability to pay the US for materials with cash. Churchill expressed his relief that the suspected German invasion was at least postponed due to the winter weather and his gratitude for the US destroyers and aid. But Churchill wanted to

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<sup>71</sup> Kimball, *C & R, Vol I*, 88, 101; David Stafford, *Roosevelt and Churchill: Men of Secrets* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1999), 46-47.

<sup>72</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War, Their Finest Hour* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), 501.

remain prepared for the worst scenario. Churchill said that he assumed Hitler would not encourage a war with the US until Great Britain had been defeated. Churchill, however, offered no answer or solution to Great Britain's cash and credit situation in the US and left the problem for FDR to sort out. The Lend-Lease idea came as Roosevelt's solution and led to FDR's December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1940, press conference; this press conference *was* Roosevelt's response to Churchill's telegram.<sup>73</sup>

The press conference was the first among a number of other speeches and addresses that explained and introduced the Lend-Lease legislation because Roosevelt knew how to use his speeches to pass the administration's legislation. After Roosevelt delivered the "Arsenal of Democracy" Fireside Chat on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1940, Churchill sent a formal and official note of thanks for Roosevelt's support. Churchill wanted to encourage Roosevelt's actions and make his appreciation known among the American public.

On January 1, Churchill wrote, "I feel it my duty on behalf of the British Government and indeed the whole British Empire to tell you, Mr. President, how lively is our sense of gratitude and admiration for the memorable declaration which you made to the American people and to the lovers of Freedom in all continents on Sunday last." Churchill continued to relate the British

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<sup>73</sup> The British Ambassador to the United States, Lord Lothian, died suddenly on December 11, 1940. Lord Lothian played a significant role in these early months of cooperation between Roosevelt and Churchill; it would be hard to predict how his knowledge and experience of American policy would have influenced and helped the Lend-Lease agreements. Lord Halifax became the next British Ambassador to Washington, D.C.

government's gratitude for the American Lend-Lease Act, and Churchill anxiously anticipated the bill's final Congressional approval. Roosevelt's correspondence during January and February reflected FDR's confidence that the bill would pass and confidence in Great Britain's stand against Nazi Germany and Hitler.

On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1941, Roosevelt sent Churchill a letter that included a stanza from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Building of the Ship" poem. Because of Churchill's love of English literature, the inclusion of this stanza was inspiring, and it symbolized Roosevelt's understanding of the gravity of the war situation as well as Churchill and Great Britain's role in that situation. In the letter, Roosevelt said,

"Dear Churchill,  
Wendell Wilkie will give you this – He is truly helping to keep politics out over here.  
I think this verse applies to you people as it does to us:  
    'Sail on, Oh Ship of State!  
    Humanity with all its fears  
    With all the hope of future years  
    Is hanging breathless on thy fate.'  
As ever yours, Franklin D. Roosevelt."<sup>74</sup>

Churchill appreciated the encouraging note and felt the necessity to quote it to the British public in his "Give Us the Tools" speech on February 9, 1941. This letter and Churchill's use of it in a speech to the British people is perhaps the most famous example of the relationship between Roosevelt and Churchill's correspondence and speeches. Although the President and Prime Minister came

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<sup>74</sup> Roosevelt, *C & R, Vol I*, 131.

from similar backgrounds and shared common interests, it is difficult to determine whether they would have become friends in different circumstances. Roosevelt's and Churchill's speeches stemmed from their constant communication and correspondence, and their prodding and discerning telegrams contributed to the formation of the Anglo-American alliance.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE LEND-LEASE ORDEAL

In *The Second World War, Their Finest Hour*, Winston Churchill called President Roosevelt's Lend-Lease idea "the most unsordid act in the history of any nation."<sup>75</sup> In order for the Lend-Lease bill to pass public approval, Roosevelt and Churchill each had to deliver speeches and use their rhetoric to offer persuasive arguments to ensure the passage of the Lend-Lease bill. These speeches, delivered between November of 1940-March of 1941, promoted Lend-Lease and contributed to the developing relationship between Great Britain and America. Since his first term as president, Roosevelt used his speeches and Fireside Chats to introduce the administration's New Deal legislation and offer persuasive arguments to the public for the new policies and programs. Roosevelt followed this same pattern to introduce the Lend-Lease legislation. In a similar way, Churchill's speeches from late 1940-early 1941 expressed his hopes for an Anglo-American alliance and offered evidence as to why the United States should industrially and financially support Great Britain in their war production.

#### The Lend-Lease Act

Historically, the American public was hesitant to offer aid to the Allied nations because of bad feelings left from the post-WWI reparations. The US Congress passed a string of Neutrality Acts in the late 1930s that prevented the Allies from receiving goods based on war loans or credits. Instead, they followed

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<sup>75</sup> Churchill, *Second World War, Their Finest Hour*, 503.

the policy of “cash and carry” (pay for the goods up front in cash and transport them on British ships). With the fall of France and the German bombing of England, Great Britain faced severe financial troubles and would not be able to pay in cash for war matériel much longer. The British Ambassador to the US, Lord Lothian, and US Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., convinced Roosevelt that the administration would have to come up with a solution for Britain’s credit problem. Churchill’s letter to Roosevelt on December 8<sup>th</sup> appealed for Roosevelt’s help in finding a solution.

Roosevelt and his advisors came up with the concept of Lend-Lease in early December of 1940, which was a brilliant action and a significant decision and turning point in the war.<sup>76</sup> Roosevelt wanted to avoid using language like “loans,” “credit,” and “reparations” and wanted to argue that this action would strengthen national defense. Therefore, Roosevelt’s rhetoric had to introduce the legislation in a neutral manner. Roosevelt encountered strong disagreement from isolationists such as Charles Lindbergh and Senator Burton K. Wheeler as well as those who supported full industrial and military support to Britain like Frank Knox and Henry Stimson. Controversies arise over Roosevelt and Lend-Lease, such as whether or not Roosevelt led public opinion or followed it, and if Roosevelt wanted to go to war during this time or was holding back from full participation. Whether or not Roosevelt wanted to go to war, the President

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<sup>76</sup> Lend-Lease was often referred to as “Lease-Lend,” but either one is acceptable. The bill was officially introduced to Congress as H.R.1776.

thought that the survival of Great Britain and the success of Lend-Lease was crucial for American national defenses and war production.

Between December of 1940-March of 1941, Roosevelt and his team of advisors worked toward the successful passage of the Lend-Lease bill. During this time, Harry Hopkins and Wendell Willkie traveled to Great Britain to visit the Prime Minister, which played a vital role in building up the American perception of confidence in the British people and military. President Roosevelt's Lend-Lease speeches were the other important factor during the critical anticipation of the bill, as well as Churchill's words of determination and resolve. The Lend-Lease bill officially passed Congress on March 11, 1941, and the US began to freely provide aid to Great Britain (and eventually to the Soviet Union, France, China, and other Allied nations). This act brought relief to the US economy and business, provided the mass amount of war matériel required to defeat the Axis, and set the precedent for future American aid to foreign countries.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Warren F. Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act: Lend-Lease, 1939-1941* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969); Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 102-132; David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937-1941: A Study in Competitive Co-operation* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 145-168; Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World, 1940-1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2007), 184-242; Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 241-244; Churchill, *Second World War, Their Finest Hour*, 488-508.

## Churchill's Speeches and Lend-Lease

Although Churchill is most importantly remembered for his famous and eloquent speeches from May and June of 1940, the addresses he delivered between November of 1940-March of 1941 offered reflections on Great Britain's survival of the blitz and increasing determination for victory. As Roy Jenkins stated, "These speeches varied a great deal both in length and in content. . . and were substantial and sober appraisals of the Battle of Britain. . . they did not attempt the high oratorical flights of the summer."<sup>78</sup> These sobering speeches served another purpose - to show Roosevelt and the American public that Great Britain would not give in to Hitler and Nazi Germany. Three speeches stand out as contributions to the support of Lend-Lease.

The first speech is Churchill's message at the Mansion House in London on November 9, 1940, often called the "A Long Road to Tread" address.<sup>79</sup> John Colville recorded that in usual fashion, "The P.M. spent most of the morning dictating a speech he is to make at a Mansion House lunch today and with the composition of which he was so behindhand that he asked to be allowed to be half an hour late for lunch."<sup>80</sup> A news article from *The Times* [London] called this a "confident speech" and said that Churchill's speech was received with ovations as

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<sup>78</sup> Jenkins, *Churchill*, 645.

<sup>79</sup> Churchill, *Complete Speeches*, 6304-6306.

<sup>80</sup> John Colville, *The Fringes of Power: The Incredible Inside Story of Winston Churchill During World War II* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 1985), 289.

he began, and the full text of the speech was printed in the paper.<sup>81</sup> In this speech, Churchill reflected on the survival and continued determination and resolve to win the war. He said, “But between immediate survival and lasting victory there is a long road to tread.” Statements, like this one, look back to the “blood, toil, tears, and sweat” speech, which showed the continued theme of hardship and sacrifice necessary for victory. But they also expressed Churchill’s concept of Britain “standing alone,” which permeated his *Second World War* memoirs and became one of the predominate post-war views of Great Britain’s role in the war.

Prior to this address, Franklin Roosevelt had just been reelected for an unprecedented third term in office against Republican candidate Wendell Willkie. Churchill took a moment in the luncheon address to commend Willkie, but offered his heartfelt congratulations to the “illustrious American statesman [Roosevelt] who has never failed to give us a helping hand.” Another theme of Churchill’s Lend-Lease rhetoric was an emphasis on how the fate of the United States’ defense was linked to the survival or defeat of Great Britain. Churchill explained that although Great Britain had built up its war production, the trial of the German blitz and threat of invasion caused distractions and took away from the British ability to build up their war matériel. This is Churchill’s main argument for why Britain needed US industrial support. In discussing England’s war production, Churchill mentioned that their production improved because of the assistance of British achievements in science and technology. Churchill

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<sup>81</sup> “Mr. Churchill Surveys the War, Confident Speech at Lord Mayor’s Luncheon,” *The Times* [London], November 11, 1940.

possessed a great fascination for science and technology and strongly supported these types of contributions to the war effort; these advancements in tanks, radar, jet engines, atomic research, intelligence, and enigma codes were another facet of the Anglo-American relationship and benefitted the Allies during the war.

Although Churchill looked at the state of Great Britain, he also argued that their cause or fight was not just selfish survival, but that their fight was to free those who were under oppression and mentioned each of the countries by name (e.g., Poland, Belgium, France, Greece). Even in their struggle, they would come to the aid of the other nations. This again implied that America should provide aid to Great Britain as they were not just fighting for their own survival but for the survival of democracy and freedom in Europe. These statements reflect how Churchill perceived the war as a significant historical event in which Great Britain and the United States played a crucial role.

The second speech is Churchill's message in Glasgow, Scotland, on January 17, 1941, referred to as the "We Will Not Fail Mankind" address.<sup>82</sup> In this short address, Churchill said, "Here we look at facts with unillusioned eyes, because we are conscious of the rightness of our cause and because we are determined that at whatever cost, whatever suffering, we will not fail mankind at this turning point in its fortunes." This speech, in typical Churchillian fashion, evokes historical imagery and provides a historical framework for the war and Great Britain's participation in the war.

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<sup>82</sup> Churchill, *Complete Speeches*, 6329-6331.

Churchill and his entourage, which included Harry Hopkins from the United States, were touring defense plants in Glasgow, and the papers reported that his speech was a surprise to the city. Raymond Daniell from the *New York Times* commented on the surprise speech and said, “Mr. Churchill’s remarks were pointed and poignant. They were not addressed to that small audience that heard him unexpectedly. They were meant for the American audience. . . . There is more to this little tableau of Anglo-American friendship than met the eye.”<sup>83</sup> The speech was reprinted in the *Washington Post* and *The Times* [London], and both papers emphasized the impromptu nature of the occasion and Churchill’s confident attitude.<sup>84</sup>

A key person in the Lend-Lease ordeal was President Roosevelt’s friend, advisor, and confidant, Harry Hopkins. Hopkins was heavily involved in the workings of the New Deal policies and strongly supported the Lend-Lease act. During Roosevelt’s presidency, he relied on Hopkins for his honesty, insight, sincerity, and resourcefulness. In January of 1941, Roosevelt sent Hopkins to Great Britain, to act as Roosevelt’s “eyes and ears” and to report on the status of Britain. Roosevelt wanted a fuller understanding of Churchill and the British

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<sup>83</sup> Raymond Daniell, “Our Help Stressed,” *New York Times*, January 18, 1941.

<sup>84</sup> Associated Press, “Britain Needs Arms to Meet Invasion Threat, Leader Implies,” *Washington Post*, January 18, 1941; “Mr. Churchill’s Confidence,” *The Times* [London], January 18, 1941.

position in the war, and Hopkins made the perfect liaison between the two great leaders.<sup>85</sup>

Churchill immediately liked Hopkins' personality and understood that Hopkins' opinion mattered to Roosevelt. Therefore, Churchill and his advisors worked diligently to impress Hopkins and show him the strength and optimism of the British people and morale. John Colville wrote that Brendan Bracken said, "Hopkins was the most important American visitor to this country we had ever had. He had come to tell the President what we needed and to form an opinion of the country's morale. He could influence the President more than any living man."<sup>86</sup> Hopkins went with Churchill to Glasgow, and the Prime Minister referred warmly to the visit from Hopkins in this speech (as well as in a speech at Portsmouth on January 31). In anticipation for Lend-Lease, Churchill requested war matériel and supplies from the "Great American Republic" and insisted that this request did not imply the need for the American army.

Following this direct request for American aid, Churchill concluded his message with a look at Hitler's goal and intentions toward Great Britain. Churchill said, "Therefore, it is for Herr Hitler a matter of supreme consequence to break down the resistance of Great Britain and thus rivet effectively the shackles he has prepared for the people of Europe." In this statement, Churchill portrayed Hitler as desperate to make a move. As in other speeches, Churchill

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<sup>85</sup> Kimball, *Forged in War*, 77-79.

<sup>86</sup> Colville, *Fringes of Power*, 331.



possessed a unique way of pronouncing the words, “Hitler” and “Nazism,” as if to convey evil just in the sound of a word. At the end of the speech, Churchill called Hitlerism “the forces of evil,” and Churchill’s wartime speeches often reflect the theme of good versus evil, with good always prevailing. During the appeasement debate of the 1930s, Churchill was a lone voice against Hitler among British public opinion, but Churchill’s assessment of Hitler as a warmonger and dictator held true. Of all the weaknesses Churchill possessed, his understanding and deep perception of Hitler’s aims was one of Churchill’s major strengths.

In an effort to assure Roosevelt and the American people that Hitler’s plans would fail, Churchill responded with these words, “The reason why one feels a confidence that this man’s [Hitler’s] concentrated hatred will not be effective against our island is because every one of us is up and doing. . . . My one aim is to extirpate Hitlerism from Europe.” The goal of squashing Hitlerism or Nazism from Europe became the common goal in the Anglo-American alliance, the formal strategy known as the “Germany First” plan of taking on Germany in Europe before turning full attention toward the Japanese in the Pacific.

In the Glasgow speech, Churchill also compared the dictators of Nazism and Fascism with the regimes of the “Middle Ages,” which would remind people of a time in history where authorities totally disregarded individual freedom and well-being. This again promoted the democratic ideals of the west, especially for Britain and America, linking the common Anglo-American heritage and tradition. Throughout this speech, one sees Churchill’s philosophy of history as a

progression in which the British and Americans participate as a good and moralizing force in world affairs.

The third speech is Churchill's broadcast in London on February 9, 1941, entitled "Give Us the Tools."<sup>87</sup> By far the lengthiest of Churchill's Lend-Lease rhetoric, the broadcast was meant for American ears. Articles on Churchill's speech filled the pages of the *New York Times* the next day, February 10, and the *NYT* printed the full text of the speech. The Headlines read, "Hope Put in U.S. Aid, Prime Minister Pledges Britain Will Win if We Send 'Tools.'" Robert P. Post wrote, "It was, nevertheless, a different sort of speech from any of the others he has made to the British people and to the world. . . . You could tell from the faces around the room that each person thought Mr. Churchill was speaking to him or her."<sup>88</sup> Controversy also arose in an article about Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Senator Burton K. Wheeler. The article said, "Mr. Hull told his press conference that he listened with special interest to Mr. Churchill's broadcast yesterday and found it well worth listening to. . . . Wheeler of Montana said today that it was 'evident' that Mr. Churchill's address was 'arranged by Washington and London to disarm opposition' to the Administration's British aid bill."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Churchill, *Complete Speeches*, 6343-6350.

<sup>88</sup> Robert P. Post, "Hope Put in U.S. Aid," *New York Times*, February 10, 1941.

<sup>89</sup> "Hull Asks Increase in British Supplies," *New York Times*, February 11, 1941.

Churchill began the speech boastful and proud of British survival of the Battle of Britain and the German blitz. This survival and resolve was Churchill's evidence that the US should support Great Britain in its fight against Hitler and Nazi Germany. Churchill commends the police, firefighters, emergency volunteers, and British citizens for their bravery and resilience. He compares the citizens and the Battle of Britain with the British soldiers at Waterloo, and Churchill implied that the Battle of Britain is a far more important moment in British and World history. By commending the citizens for the Battle of Britain, he provided a moral victory.

Then Churchill moved on to explaining and praising the military and technological victories of the Greek army's defeat of Italian troops in Greece and the British army's defeat of the Italian army in North Africa. In his explanation of Britain's successes in North Africa, Churchill presented his perception of the grandness of the British Empire and colonies and described how the whole British Empire - Australia, New Zealand, and India - participated in the North African campaign.

Once again, Churchill thanked Harry Hopkins and Wendell Willkie for their good work and visits to England, and Churchill also briefly mentioned continuing to stay vigilant against the threat of German invasion. But Churchill shows a marked confidence and assurance that Lend-Lease would pass in the US Congress. Churchill said, "The fate of this war is going to be settled by what happens on the oceans, in the air, and – above all – in this Island. It seems now to be certain that the Government and people of the United States intend to supply

us with all that is necessary for victory.” And Churchill assured the American audience listening to his address that what Britain required was not an American army but simply war matériel.

Churchill concluded his speech with the Longfellow quotation that FDR sent him a few weeks earlier. Although the Prime Minister read the verse to uplift the British, the response and conclusion to the verse pertained to the American president and people. In John Colville’s entry for February 9<sup>th</sup>, he said, “After dinner we listened to Winston’s first-rate broadcast, triumphant and yet not over-optimistic, addressed very largely to American ears. . . . I am confident that we have won.”<sup>90</sup> Churchill ended the broadcast saying, “Put your confidence in us. Give us your faith and your blessing, and, under Providence, all will be well. We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle, nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools, and we will finish the job.”

When the Lend-Lease Bill passed Congressional approval on March 11<sup>th</sup>, Churchill delivered a brief address to the House of Commons in London on March 12<sup>th</sup>.<sup>91</sup> He expressed the deep gratitude of the British government and people for the new bill and called the act “a New Magna Carta.” His message meant to show the shared belief in freedom and justice between the British and Americans, and Churchill said that this bill would provide all industrial and

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<sup>90</sup> Colville, *Fringes of Power*, 355.

<sup>91</sup> Churchill, *Complete Speeches*, 6360.

financial assistance to Britain for the war. John Colville recorded that he heard this message at the House of Commons and said “He described it as a second Magna Carta (using words suggested by Professor Whitehead of the F.O.).” Colville added a footnote to that statement saying, “This was the only occasion I remember during the war when Winston Churchill used somebody else’s draft, or at any rate a portion of it, in making a speech to the House of Commons. In all other cases the test was entirely his own.”<sup>92</sup> *The Times* [London] reported that “every sentence of his statement was warmly cheered. . . There was an ovation at the end of every sentence, and it was loudest when at the end, Mr. Churchill offered gratitude to the United States for an ‘inspiring act of faith.’”<sup>93</sup> And James M. Minifie from the *Washington Post* wrote, “In tones heavy with emotion, Churchill expressed the ‘deep and respectful appreciation’ of this nation. . . . The press hailed the passage of the lease and lend law as a momentous step forward in American foreign policy, ending the period of American isolation.”<sup>94</sup>

#### Roosevelt’s Speeches and Lend-Lease

Returning from his vacation on the *USS Tuscaloosa*, President Roosevelt was refreshed and ready to meet Great Britain’s financial and material needs with his Lend-Lease plan. Roosevelt recognized the complications the plan would

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<sup>92</sup> Colville, *Fringes of Power*, 365.

<sup>93</sup> “A Magna Carta for Free Nations,” *The Times* [London], March 13, 1941.

<sup>94</sup> James M. Minifie, “Prime Minister Deeply Moved, Thanks America for ‘Act of Faith,’” *Washington Post*, March 13, 1941.

bring and the opposition it would meet; the president set out to gradually persuade his opposition, the US House of Representatives and Senate and the public that Lend-Lease would benefit the United States. Between December of 1940-January of 1941, FDR delivered three addresses that introduced, promoted, and defended the Lend-Lease Act.

The first message Roosevelt gave was during his 702<sup>nd</sup> Press Conference at the White House on December 17, 1940.<sup>95</sup> Two themes emerge from this press conference that permeate Roosevelt's Lend-Lease rhetoric: (1) the survival of democracy depends on the survival of Great Britain, and (2) American national defense also depends enormously on the defense of Great Britain. Roosevelt said, "The best defense of Great Britain is the best defense of the United States."

Roosevelt eased into the discussion on the idea of "Lend-Lease" and carefully described the first two options for providing aid to England. The first option was to loan England the money to pay for the goods and supplies, like the US had done in the First World War. This would, as Roosevelt admitted, break the Neutrality Acts. The second option was the possibility of considering the loan of goods as a gift to the British government and people, but Roosevelt speculated that Britain would deplore the idea. After mentioning the two "bad" possibilities first, Roosevelt moved on to the possible third idea of lending the supplies to Britain. Roosevelt stated, "Now, what I am trying to do is to eliminate the dollar sign." He also stated that he did not want to discuss the details or legalistic side

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<sup>95</sup> Roosevelt, *PPA, 1940*, 604-615.

of the bill since those details were not completely settled between Washington, D.C. and London.

Roosevelt expounded on the Lend-Lease concept with a simple, commonsense, non-detailed illustration. Roosevelt said,

“Suppose my neighbor’s home catches fire, and I have a length of a garden hose. . . If he can take my garden hose and connect it up with his hydrant, I may help to put out his fire. . . .What is the transaction that goes on? I don’t want \$15 - I want my garden hose back after the fire is over. . . . If it goes through the fire all right, intact, without any damage to it, he gives it back to me and thanks me very much for the use of it. But suppose it gets smashed up. . . He says, ‘All right, I will replace it.’ Now, if I get a nice garden hose back, I am in pretty good shape.”

This illustration recalled the “good neighbor” image that FDR used during the early years of the Great Depression, and Roosevelt implied in this illustration that the US should consider Great Britain as its neighbor in trouble. His logical explanation showed how America would benefit either way, and he removed the dollar bill from the equation. It would be Great Britain’s “gentleman obligation to repay in kind.”

Finishing the illustration, Roosevelt took questions from the press. During his presidency, FDR gave 999 press conferences, and he knew how to use the press to his benefit and political advantage. Although his conferences did not always go the way he intended, Roosevelt tried to control information that went out in the newspapers (e.g., allowing certain reporters, off-the-record incidents). In the case of the “garden hose” press conference, reporters came at him with a variety of reasonable questions such as who would own the war matériels, would this act amend the Neutrality Acts, would it be presented before Congress, and –

most importantly – would this bring us closer to military involvement in war? Roosevelt said that this act would not bring us closer to war, and with the other questions Roosevelt reminded them that he had not worked out all of the details. Occasionally, the president responded to the questions with other day-to-day analogies, like owning a mortgage.<sup>96</sup> Roosevelt also reminded the reporters that they could rely on his past experience from the “Great War.”

The second speech Roosevelt delivered on Lend-Lease was a Fireside Chat, called the “Arsenal of Democracy” chat, given on December 29, 1940, over the radio to the American public.<sup>97</sup> FDR’s opening remark in his chat connected the conflicts in Europe and Asia with the security of the American people, claiming that it was not a Fireside Chat on the war but on national security. He compared the gravity of the economic and banking crisis of the Great Depression with the gravity of the current foreign crisis, and reminded people how everyone had to pull together and be a “good neighbor” to improve the economy. The people would need to bring back that teamwork spirit to overcome this “new crisis.”

One of the next comparisons Roosevelt made compared the settlements of Jamestown and Plymouth to this “new crisis” as decisive moments in the nation’s history, and he claimed that the European war was more important than the difficulties of the colonies. This historical reference resembles Churchill’s

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<sup>96</sup> Ryan, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 33-36.

<sup>97</sup> Roosevelt, *PPA, 1940*, 633-644.



colorful use of historical imagery, and Roosevelt certainly enjoyed the study of history as well. Roosevelt then moved onto explaining the Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan, signed in 1940, that threatened democracy in Europe and Asia. Roosevelt, like Churchill, listed all of the nations experiencing aggression and oppression. Roosevelt also quoted Hitler and argued that America did not remain safe from Axis aggression. FDR said, “The Axis not merely admits but proclaims that there can be no ultimate peace between their philosophy of government and our philosophy of government.”

Throughout Roosevelt’s Lend-Lease rhetoric, FDR employed images of destruction and fear, which sound similar to other speeches, like the “Quarantine” Speech (Chicago, 1937). And in this speech the president insisted that Germany posed an imminent threat to the US people, and they also were brutal and cruel to the oppressed nations. Unlike previous speeches dealing with the war in Europe and Asia, Roosevelt’s “Arsenal of Democracy” that called for action rather than just a change in attitude or thought. The primary action that the President required in this speech was sending aid to Great Britain and supporting the Lend-Lease act.

Roosevelt brilliantly bracketed his speech, addressing four arguments from the isolationists. He first challenged the faction that said foreign wars did not concern the United States. Roosevelt reminded the American people of the Monroe Doctrine, and FDR appealed to the historical relationship (“the unwritten treaty”) between the United States and Great Britain. Roosevelt directed his second argument to the group that said the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans would

protect the US from foreign wars and attack. Like Churchill, Roosevelt also emphasized the advancements in technology and how these advancements brought the outside world closer to America's door. The government and people could no longer rely on the geographical isolation to protect the US. The third view that Roosevelt dismantled was the thought that the Axis would not attack America. Roosevelt described this as wishful thinking and pointed out that appeasement of Hitler and Mussolini failed; FDR listed the countries that had appeased Hitler and were now under oppression and occupied. The fourth group Roosevelt addressed harshly was the group of German supporters or sympathizers who were bringing internal strife to America. Roosevelt said that these supporters were aiding evil forces that brought destruction to American national defense.

After challenging these four views, Roosevelt added the extra push in his argument for Lend-Lease. Roosevelt raised his argument to the higher moral ground, saying that the Nazis may promote good things in their regime, but these promises are only false illusions. Roosevelt said, "They may talk of a 'new order' in the world, but what they have in mind is only a revival of the oldest and the worst tyranny. In that there is no liberty, no religion, no hope." This statement reflects Churchill's vocabulary about the "Middle Ages"; not that Churchill and Roosevelt discussed these speeches ahead of time with each other, but these two leaders had a common interest in history and a shared belief in the goodness of democracy and freedom. Roosevelt also called the Axis powers an "unholy alliance."

FDR directly stated that the only way to avoid war was to provide support immediately, emphasizing the urgency and necessity of the matter. Roosevelt's Lend-Lease speeches, like Churchill's, emphasized that England needed supplies and war matériel not an American Expeditionary Force of soldiers. Great Britain would continue the fight, and Roosevelt commended the British saying, "They [the British] are putting up a fight which will live forever in the story of human gallantry."

In Roosevelt's conclusion, the President laid out America's new foreign policy and action toward the war in Europe. Roosevelt said, "We must be the great arsenal of democracy. For us this is an emergency as serious as war itself. We must apply ourselves to our task with the same resolution, the same sense of urgency, the same spirit of patriotism and sacrifice as we would show were we at war." Equating production and labor with patriotism and sacrifice, Roosevelt again appealed to the moral high ground and placed value and worth on war production and the ordinary American factory worker. This encouragement meant to build up the confidence of the average workers and give them purpose and meaning in their work. Roosevelt's conclusion was hopeful and full of certainty for peace and the future. The speechwriters were not clear about who coined the phrase "Arsenal of Democracy," but it quickly became a powerful image of American foreign policy. Roosevelt's chat also hit hard at the isolationists and those who opposed US aid to Britain.

In the *NYT*, the headline read, "President to Act, He Considers Concrete Steps to Speed and Increase Help to Britain, Almost Unanimous Approval of His

Speech Pleases the Chief Executive.” Reporter Turner Catledge wrote in this article, “President Roosevelt was represented as being ‘tremendously pleased’ at the response to his fireside chat. . . . Steve Early, White House Secretary, said that within forty minutes . . . 600 messages were received and they ran 100 to 1 in favor of the general tenor of his remarks. . . . All in all, it was the greatest response that Mr. Roosevelt has ever had to any speech.”<sup>98</sup> Certainly Roosevelt would have received positive responses to his message, and this response would be the one that the White House would promote. The polls showed that Americans were willing to provide Great Britain with aid as long as these were actions short of war. In a special cable from London to the *NYT* read, “London Heartened But Urges Speed. . . . President Roosevelt’s speech Sunday night has overshadowed the Nazis’ fire raid on London the same night as a topic of conversation. . . . The British could not help being bucked up by the whole tone of Mr. Roosevelt’s speech.”<sup>99</sup>

The third speech Roosevelt delivered that argued for the Lend-Lease Act came through his Annual Message to Congress, in Washington, D.C., on January 6, 1941, often referred to as the “Four Freedoms” speech.<sup>100</sup> Roosevelt began his speech describing how the Axis threat was the greatest threat of security in

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<sup>98</sup> Turner Catledge, “President to Act,” *New York Times*, December 31, 1940.

<sup>99</sup> “London Heartened But Urges Speed,” *New York Times*, December 31, 1940.

<sup>100</sup> Roosevelt, *PPA*, 1940, 663-672.

American history. He compared this threat and decision with previous US engagements in war like the Civil War, the War of 1914, and “undeclared” wars of the Pacific and Mediterranean. He said that the Axis powers sought world domination. This objective was not an aim of aggressors in past European wars, such as the Napoleonic wars. Therefore, the Nazis approached this war from a totally different ideology. They were rolling over democracies with brute force and “poisonous propaganda.”

In this speech, Roosevelt directly challenged those who said that isolation protected the US. Roosevelt turned the argument around on the isolationists, saying that political isolation prevents America from participating in the promotion of democracy and civilization. The President urged the American people to be realistic, mature, sacrificial, and hard-working. Roosevelt said, “I find it, unhappily, necessary to report that the future and safety of our country and of our democracy are overwhelmingly involved in events far beyond our borders.” With Congressional and public approval, Roosevelt stated that he would oversee and commit to three objectives: (1) to commit to building up national defense, (2) to offer full support to the people who are fighting on the front lines of aggression, and (3) to promote the principles of morality.

Along with these three commitments and the progress of war production, Roosevelt boldly asked the government for unrestricted authority to oversee this progress and decision-making about national defense and security. An increase in executive power was one of the reasons some politicians were hesitant to fully

support Lend-Lease. But in this Congressional speech, Roosevelt insisted that this authority was necessary for the security of the nation.

Then, Roosevelt reiterated that America should be the “arsenal of democracy,” providing the Allies with the materials of war, and FDR repeated some of the phraseology from the “Garden Hose” press conference. He said, “I do not recommend that we make them a loan of dollars with which to pay for these weapons. . . For what we send abroad, we shall be repaid within a reasonable time following the close of hostilities, in similar materials.” While increasing US war production, Roosevelt assured the people that the government would continue to maintain the basic needs of the people and closely monitor domestic issues, like the spending of tax dollars. In this Congressional speech, Roosevelt implied that America’s response to the war situation in Europe and Asia was tied to domestic issues in the US.

Concluding, FDR gave the American public a picture of what the world should look like and what Americans should strive to defend. Roosevelt illustrated this picture with his famous four freedoms: (1) freedom of speech and expression, (2) freedom to worship, (3) freedom from want, and (4) freedom from fear.<sup>101</sup> These freedoms formed the “moral order” and “good society” that were so important to the American ideal of democracy. Roosevelt finished the speech saying, “Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them.

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<sup>101</sup> Roosevelt says that one way to bring about freedom from fear is to disarm nations of their weapons, removing their ability to obliterate free governments.

Our strength is our unity of purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory.” Although the United States did not formally join the Allies until December, 1941, it was the Allied “unity of purpose” – to rid Europe of Nazism – that ultimately brought them victory.<sup>102</sup>

On March 11, 1941, the Lend-Lease Bill received Congressional approval. The early 1941 Gallup polls surveyed the American public with questions such as “Do you think our country’s future safety depends on England winning this war?” “If the United States stopped sending war materials to England, do you think England would lose the war?” “Which of these two things do you think it is more important for the United States to try to do – to keep out of the war ourselves, or to help England win, even at the risk of getting into the war?” and “If the British are unable to pay cash for war materials bought in this country, should our Government lend or lease war materials to the British, to be paid back in the same materials and other goods after the war is over?”<sup>103</sup> In each of these cases the survey reported sixty percent approved or agreed with these questions and thought it was important to send aid to Britain. Around eighty percent of the people polled, however, still agreed that America should stay out of the war in Europe.

Newspapers reported on the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill and provided the details of aid to Great Britain and Greece. In the *Washington Post*, an article

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<sup>102</sup> Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 245-281.

<sup>103</sup> George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1935-1971, Vol. 1, 1935-1948* (New York: Random House, 1972), 257-270.

read, “Few historic measures have been put on our statute books than the bill which the President signed yesterday. . . . A new attitude, accordingly, had to be adopted in place of the cash-and-carry system based upon a rigid neutrality. Mr. Roosevelt expressed it pithily in his address to Congress on January 6. . . . he outlined a policy in place of an attitude.”<sup>104</sup> Roosevelt and Churchill’s speeches contributed to the success of Lend-Lease and appealed to the positive response in polls toward Lend-Lease.<sup>105</sup> They provided reasonable arguments that made sense to the people and helped the public think about the state of foreign affairs.

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<sup>104</sup> “Lend Lease Authority,” *Washington Post*, March 12, 1941.

<sup>105</sup> Ryan, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 148-149.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Between November of 1940-March of 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill's correspondence and speeches offered guidance and directed Allied conduct. When the US Congress approved and passed the Lend-Lease Act on March 11, 1941, American industry expanded and provided Great Britain (and other Allied nations) with the "tools" that they required to effectively defeat Hitler and Nazi Germany, Mussolini and Fascist Italy, and Tojo and Militaristic Japan. Their Lend-Lease rhetoric argued that the defense of the United States relied on the survival of Great Britain, that the Axis powers presented a terrible threat to the free and democratic world, and that this new crisis was a significant turning point in world history. Their speeches called for courage, hard work, sacrifice, discipline, and perseverance. American public opinion supported these arguments and indicated that providing Britain with "actions and aid short of war" would prevent their military involvement and stop Axis aggression and brutality. This bill also broke the intense American isolationist sentiments and set a precedent for future American foreign aid bills. Roosevelt's and Churchill's words and speeches, however, produced two unintended consequences: (1) the transference of power from Great Britain to the United States, and (2) Hitler's certainty and anticipation of America's entry into the war.

#### Unintended Consequences

Churchill's speeches always promoted the image of a confident and capable American nation and people, ready to come to the aid of the "English-

speaking world” with war matériel and rescue the “Old World” from destruction and despair. Churchill, however, was acutely aware of the power that Roosevelt and his advisors possessed, and the Prime Minister was sensitive to the disagreements between Roosevelt and himself concerning the British colonies, the European post-war outcome and governments, and the role of Russia as a world leader. Historian David Reynolds argues that America’s “bases for materials” deal (in the Fall of 1940) and the insistence on repayment for Lend-Lease materials presented the first signs of growing American independence and power, which worried British officials and the Prime Minister.<sup>106</sup>

Although Roosevelt stayed well-informed and active with the situations in Europe and Asia, his experience and activity in the Wilson administration convinced him of the importance of maintaining peace in the post-war world. In the Summit Meetings of the “Big Three,” Roosevelt worked for greater American influence in the post-war world, especially with the plans for the United Nations.<sup>107</sup> A constant criticism of Churchill, both before and after the war, was that he had no vision for Britain’s future in the modern world. Churchill grew up as a member of the “glorious” British Empire, and as a young soldier he served abroad in the British colonies of India and Africa. Churchill wanted to maintain

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<sup>106</sup> Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 116-132; see also Kimball, *Forged in War*, 75-77.

<sup>107</sup> Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Visions of Victory: The Hopes of Eight World War II Leaders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 177-210, 227-233.

the empire that he knew and admired as well as their values and morals.<sup>108</sup>

Churchill's alliance with Roosevelt and the United States ensured that the US would take the lead in the wartime alliance, especially pertaining to military strategy (like the prominent role of American Generals George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower in the European theater).

Roosevelt and Churchill were united in their resolve and determination to eliminate Nazism and Fascism from Europe, but they had different ideas about what they hoped to produce in their victory. Churchill saw Hitler and Nazism as a threat to the important values and morals of Western Civilization, and his speeches encouraged the British Empire and English-speaking world to be the moralizing force that would defeat Nazi Germany. Roosevelt's speeches, however, promoted the American ideals of democracy, freedom, and equality. Even though Roosevelt's and Churchill's speeches supported the Lend-Lease bill and assured the people of ultimate victory over Hitler and Nazism, the two leaders drew from two different worldviews and traditions for their inspiring words.

Roosevelt's and Churchill's Lend-Lease rhetoric produced a second unintended consequence – Hitler's certainty and anticipation of America's entry into the war on the Allied side. Adolf Hitler's experience from World War I greatly influenced his perception of politics and the German state. In the 1930s, the rise of nationalism in Europe took on different forms, and Hitler's nationalism pursued the concept of *Lebensraum* ('living space') for the German people and

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<sup>108</sup> Weinberg, *Visions of Victory*, 137-160, 224-226.

incorporated ideological and racial prejudices, most notably antisemitism and anti-Bolshevism. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler laid out his plan for the German state and racial hatred for the European Jews and Russian Bolsheviks. Hitler was determined to reverse the outcome of the Treaty of Versailles and lead Germany to total victory in Europe, incorporating ethnic Germans and ‘living space’ at the expense of the “weaker” and “inferior” races.

After Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, Hitler and the Nazis began implementing their plans for invasion, expansion, destruction, and occupation of Central and Western Europe, which included Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Holland, Belgium, and France. Initially, Germany’s successes came easily and swiftly. In the summer of 1940, however, Hitler faced his ultimate enemy and challenger – Winston Churchill. John Lukacs, John Strawson, and Andrew Roberts contributed three individual monographs on the lives, leadership, and conflict between Churchill and Hitler. These books recognize the tensions in revisionist history on Churchill and Hitler, but the authors conclude that despite Churchill’s weaknesses, the twenty-first century is indebted to Churchill’s stand against Hitler and Nazi Germany.<sup>109</sup>

Hitler’s previous war experience also taught him that timing was of the greatest essence. Even though the United States entered the First World War late on the Allied side, its participation brought the stalemate on the Western Front to

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<sup>109</sup> John Lukacs, *The Duel: The Eighty-Day Struggle Between Churchill and Hitler* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); John Strawson, *Churchill and Hitler: In Victory and Defeat* (New York: Fromm, 1997); Andrew Roberts, *Hitler and Churchill*.

an end. Germany surrendered, and it was forced to give into the stipulations and demands of the Treaty of Versailles. Therefore, Hitler knew that it was only a matter of time before the United States would join the war effort on the Allied side again. This time the Führer would make sure that the American Expeditionary Forces would not stop Nazi Germany from obtaining its goals.

While Roosevelt and Churchill spoke to the public to raise morale and promote the Allied cause, Hitler perceived their speeches as Allied political and military policy. The two leaders' Lend-Lease rhetoric acted as a sign to Hitler that America was coming closer to entering the war, and he believed that America would enter the war as soon as 1942. Therefore, Hitler turned his attention and energy to "Operation Barbarossa" – the invasion of Russia in the summer of 1941.<sup>110</sup> Germany's invasion of Russia did not bring a swift and easy victory; instead the campaign turned into a long, drawn-out campaign that wore down German military strength and resources. The invasion also brought Russia into the war on the Allied side and gave it significant American Lend-Lease aid.

Hitler was also a persuasive and powerful public speaker and politician. Roosevelt and Churchill's speeches constantly competed with Hitler's speeches and war propaganda; this war was just as much an ideological struggle as it was political. Their words and speeches added to the moral dimension at play during the war and urged that the Allies were fighting for a higher and better cause.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 54-90; Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1936-1945: Nemesis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 752.

<sup>111</sup> Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 282-313.

### Further Research

The scholarship on the relationship, correspondence, and speeches of Churchill and Roosevelt is already extensive, detailed, and controversial, but new research and writing appears every year on the subject. Further research in this area of study could look at Roosevelt's and Churchill's uses of biblical and classical references in their speeches, if and how they reflect President Abraham Lincoln or other great orators, other instances during the war where their words and speeches made an impact (e.g., Atlantic Charter, Washington conference, Summit Meetings), a look at American public response to the speeches that Churchill delivered in the United States, and a thorough investigation of the public's responses to their speeches (e.g., comparing and analyzing more newspaper reports, reading through letters written to Roosevelt or Churchill from the public). As mentioned above, the research reflected in this thesis would greatly benefit from a closer comparison and analysis between the wartime speeches of Hitler, Roosevelt, and Churchill.

### Comparison and Analysis

Roosevelt and Churchill's relationship came to an end with the death of President Roosevelt in April of 1945. Their working alliance encountered many tensions and disagreements, and it would be difficult to know how the situation would have turned out had Roosevelt survived his fourth presidential term. Their biographers are quick to point out their weaknesses, flaws, and controversies as well as their strengths, achievements, and successes. Their words and speeches, however, played a crucial role in their wartime leadership and friendship as well

as remain a significant part of their legacy. Roosevelt spoke in a conversational and informal manner over the radio to the public; Churchill spoke with a proper and formal rhetoric before Parliament and the people. FDR worked with a team of speechwriters, and Churchill composed his own eloquent messages with little help from advisors. Their oratory and speaking abilities came naturally from their personalities and were perfected through years of education and political experience. Politicians, historians, teachers, military leaders, athletes, and writers continue to quote and evoke the words of Roosevelt and Churchill today, proving that these two leaders left a lasting impact on the world through their *words* and deeds.

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