



Pass the Lend-Lease Bill: We Must Aid Great Britain

Sen. Tom Connally (D-TX)

February 17, 1941

The history of the centuries is dotted by outstanding events that have profoundly affected the course of human civilization. In the Christian era the invasion of Europe by Attila, the Hun, in 451; the fall of the Roman Empire in 476; the crusading campaign of the Saracens which ended at Tours in 732; the conquests of Ghengis Khan in the 13th Century; the American Revolution and the establishment of the United States; the Napoleonic Wars, and the World War of 1914-18 are classic examples. Fundamental forces and far reaching and elemental powers met and struggled for mastery in grim and bitter battle.

Democracy and free government, toward which mankind has been groping and advancing through the ages, is now face to face with a similar challenge to its continued existence. Powerful and militant forces now arrogantly decree the extinction of freedom and democracy wherever their armies of conquest and plunder can march, wherever their navies can float, and wherever their swarming fleets of the skies can fly.

The dictators, Hitler and Mussolini, and their totalitarian governments, after conquering peaceful and neutral nations in Europe and enslaving their people, have proclaimed their determination to establish a "new world order". Nazism and Fascism have leagued their might to enforce with fire and the sword, their wills upon the existing world. The United States is a part of that world. Japan has become a member of the Axis. This compact of aggression and conquest is an armed threat to the security of the United States. If Germany prefers Nazism and Italy embraces Fascism, that is their right. They have no right to impose their systems by force upon us.

Great Britain, with superb gallantry, in a solemn pledge with fate, is pouring out the blood, not alone of her soldiery, but of her civilian population, in stemming the tide of world dominion.

Our country tempts the ambition and lust of military tyrants. Our resources of raw materials, the fertility of our soils, our mineral riches and our vast wealth are alluring to their greed and hunger for conquest. Our democratic institutions and system of free government are opposed to their concept of a "new world order", of totalitarianism and personal tyranny. The dictators speak of Democracy and free government in America with scorn and arrogant contempt.

The Lease-Lend Bill proposes to furnish supplies and munitions, but not men, to Great Britain, and other free governments who are resisting the aggressors.

There has been disseminated through the press and over the radio much misleading information respecting the provisions and the effects of the Lease-Lend Bill. It has been charged that it constitutes a blank check to the President and that Congress abdicates its authority.

Let us see just what the bill does authorize the Executive to do. It first defines "defense articles" as any weapon, munition, air craft, vessel, or boat; or any other commodity or article for defense. The bill then provides that the President may "when he deems it in the interest of national defense" authorize the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, or the head of any other government department to manufacture or otherwise procure any defense article for the government of any country "whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States", and "to sell, transfer, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of, to any such government any defense article". However, it is specifically provided that no such disposition of a defense article shall be made by the President "except after consultation with the Chief of Staff of the Army or the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, or both". The Congress will control the purse strings.

The measure also directs that the terms and conditions upon which any such foreign government receives any aid shall be those which the president "deems satisfactory" and that the benefit to the United States may be payment or re-payment in kind or property, or any other direct or indirect benefit which the President deems satisfactory. It will thus be noted that the President has the power of negotiation and control of the terms and conditions upon which such aid may be extended.

I want to emphasize that before the President may extend aid to any government, he must make a specific finding that the defense of such country is "vital to the defense of the United States". When it is remembered that the President must also consult the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, or both, it may be clearly perceived that the action taken will be in truth and in fact in the defense of the United States itself.

The President is required, from time to time, but not less frequently than every ninety days, to transmit to Congress a report of operations under the Act, with the exception of such information as he deems incompatible with the public interest to disclose. It will thus be observed that the power given to the President in the limited language of the bill is particularly limited in these respects:

1st: With the exception of \$1,300,000,000 of supplies out of appropriations already made, the President may not spend a dollar until after the Congress shall have authorized and appropriated for such expenditure.

2nd: He must find that the defense of the country to whom aid may be extended, is vital to the defense of the United States.

3rd: He must, before taking any action, consult with the Chief of Staff of the Army or the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, or both.

4th: His authority is limited to June 30, 1943, or it may be terminated at any prior date upon the passage by the Congress of a Concurrent Resolution.

5th: The President must report to Congress at least once every three months respecting action taken under the bill.

In the face of these limitations and restrictions, the charge that the bill confers unlimited power upon the President is overwhelmingly refuted.

There is nothing in the bill which modifies the Neutrality Act with respect to merchant vessels going into combat or war zones. It has been widely asserted that the bill would have that effect. That is a misconception.

There is nothing whatever in the bill authorizing the employment of convoys of merchants' ships by Naval vessels. Under the Constitution, the President is Commander in Chief of the Navy and Congress has no control over that power except through the denial of appropriations.

It has also been asserted that the measure is a war bill. No declaration of war can be made by any agency of the government except Congress. It is the intention of Congress to keep the war away from our shores-to make it impossible for conquerors and ambitious totalitarian masters, flushed with victory, and having at their command all the resources of Europe, to push their conquest into the western hemisphere. When the American colonies gained their independence and established the United States of America and later proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine, there was created a great zone of the earth's surface, known as this hemisphere, dedicated to free government and democratic institutions. The purpose of this bill is to make secure forever this hemisphere as a sanctuary of freedom into which no alien conqueror shall ever set his accursed footsteps. This morning's press carries a story of a conspiracy in Mexico directed by Nazi influences. No "new world order" shall, by the sword of conquest, be established in the continents of America.

To those who oppose the bill, I pose the question: If we follow your wishes and defeat this bill, what shall then be our course? Shall we do nothing? Shall we close our eyes to the tide of conquest which has already engulfed peaceful and neutral nations and condemned to enslavement their people? Shall we close our ears to the oft-proclaimed plans of the dictators to establish a “new world order”? Shall we close our minds to the coarse and brutal scorn with which Hitler and Mussolini speak of democracy? Shall we permit the rattle of sword and the roll of cannon to drown our own determination to defend and protect and preserve democracy and the western world?

The American people are united behind the program for national defense. The Congress, with the enthusiastic approbation of the American people, has appropriated billions of dollars for the strengthening of our Navy and for the increase of the Army and for the expansion of our air forces. Why the expenditure of all of these billions if there is not a threat to our safety? Why the sacrifice of all this treasure if there be not a pressing, a challenging and a menacing danger to our security and safety? Whence does that danger come? Whence are our liberties threatened? Do we fear Great Britain? No thrust is poised from that quarter. Do we fear conquered Norway or subjected Denmark or enslaved Holland or crushed Belgium? Is our safety threatened by prostrate France? — Where are those who say that the United States is in no danger, that it is invulnerable to attack, that no hostile force can assail or attack us? If that be true, why do we arm? Why do we build up a mighty Navy, mightier and stronger than any that in the long stretch of history has ever unfurled its flag upon the far-flung seas? If there be no danger, why do we call to the colors the young manhood of the nation?

There is danger. There is real danger. The cold-blooded dictators, intoxicated by conquest, with their ambitions fanned to fury by the lust for power and mastery of the human race, and backed by the most powerful and relentless military machine known to the annals of war, threaten the security and safety of democracies everywhere. They await only the moment of their choice to strike down freedom and constitutional government wherever they may exist on the face of the globe. This bill is America’s answer to their challenge. We propose to keep the war away from our shores. We propose to preserve our own freedom and that of the western world.

Those who would do nothing complain, and say they oppose any grant of authority to the President. Legislation must depend for its execution upon executive or administrative authority. Under the Constitution, the President is Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy and is in charge of the conduct of our foreign affairs. It is impracticable for Congress to execute the powers or functions of the bill. It follows that its execution must be entrusted to the President. No one would give such powers to a Cabinet Officer. The Supreme Court could not execute it; Congress, the legislative branch, could not execute it. In normal times, when we want to build a battleship, Congress appropriates and authorizes the Executive authority to have it built. There is the method here adopted. In ordinary times when the air force is increased, Congress appropriates and the Executive is authorized to procure planes. Why should that system be discarded? There is no other practicable or reasonable system. The pending bill does not repeal the Neutrality Act of 1939. But the neutrality or peacefulness of a nation has no effect whatever upon the ambitions of the Axis powers. Neutral and peaceful Norway was cruelly overrun, its

sovereignty ravished and its people enslaved. Peaceful and neutral Denmark, peaceful and neutral Holland and Belgium now lie crushed and broken under the heel of foreign dominion.

There are those who claim that such a course is violative of neutrality under International law. Germany, Italy and Japan are parties and signatories to the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Under that agreement, these nations renounced war as an instrument of national policy. Before the present war began, a council of distinguished international lawyers, meeting in Budapest, construed the Kellogg-Briand Pact as authorizing any neutral state to supply any belligerent state which might be attacked in violation of the Kellogg Pact, with financial and material assistance, including munitions of war. As a signatory to that pact, the United States, in adopting the Lease-Lend Bill, will be acting entirely within its rights and will not violate International Law.

The British fleet, still master of the seas, if conquered or destroyed would open the Atlantic to Axis Naval and air power upon Central and South America and the western world. It may be said that Great Britain has promised not to surrender her fleet. But Hitler has not promised not to conquer it. There is no prophet who can command events beyond the horizon.

As an essential step in our own national defense, to aid Britain in holding the line until we can be more adequately and thoroughly prepared, to keep the war away from our own shores, to furnish supplies and munitions and thus save calling of men to defend our own soil, to oppose and resist the establishment of world dictatorship and the destruction of free government in order that military masters may not establish a "new world order" on the ruins and ashes of liberty, I am supporting the Lease-Lend Bill. The voice of America demands that we act now. We must not wait until the invader sets his footsteps upon our soil or challenges us upon the sea and in the air.

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401 College Avenue | Ashland, Ohio 44805 (419) 289-5411 | (877) 289-5411 (Toll Free)
info@TeachingAmericanHistory.org

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