

This is a thematic guide to historical documents, both textual and graphical (photography, art, images of artifacts), available on the Internet. These excerpts are intended to acquaint history and library staff with the types and location of documentary material for curricular use. Suggestions for related activities are also included.

The theme for this issue is ...

DEFENDING NORTH AMERICA, 1940-44

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Franklin Roosevelt

Activity: These documents trace Roosevelt's changing attitude to the international violence in the late '30s and early '40s. Make yourself, or a sibling or friend you are close to, the subject of a brief history covering a period when major change caused a whole new way of thinking to develop.

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[The Canadian-American Permanent Joint Board on Defence, 1940-45](#)

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Activity: Create a cartoon satire of the Soo defence, using images from the history (communists lurking around Lake Superior, submarines approaching the locks, anti-aircraft guns firing at runaway balloons, etc.).

INTRODUCTION

Throughout their brief histories, Canada and the U.S.A. have involved themselves repeatedly in European conflicts. World War II however brought the first instance in modern times when North Americans were vulnerable to invasion

from Europe. The extremely rapid and violent nature of military attack in this period, most shocking in the blitzkrieg in Poland and the sudden fall of France, galvanized the governments of the U.S. and Canada into serious defence preparation.

U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt gave voice through the late 1930s to people's unease about the widespread warfare going on, and focused on the threat to North America. His warnings brought an end to American isolationism (the last time the U.S. would withdraw from world affairs) by convincing Americans that the havoc in Europe and Asia could very quickly arrive on their doorsteps. From a pre-war peace-seeking stance that advocated a "[quarantine](#)" of belligerents, Roosevelt shifted to seeking [funds from Congress](#) and [popular support](#) for war preparation and aid to beleaguered nations.

[Roosevelt emphasized the danger to America](#) that allowing the Axis to advance would produce, and secured, in a country officially at peace and neutral, substantial wartime legislation (such as the [Lend-Lease Act](#) for aid to Britain). [The occupation of Iceland](#) and other strategic moves worked out between the U.S. and U.K., indicative of the growing alliance between the two countries, show the connection between stopping the conquest of Europe and preserving North America from invasion. The Americans put themselves more and more on a war footing, until [the Pearl Harbor attack](#) brought immediacy to their military policy. Thereafter, America's best defence became a full offence, with the [president encouraging his people in the war effort](#).

By late 1943 the Allies had begun to push the Axis back, and [Prime Minister King urged Canadians](#) to concentrate on the fighting men overseas, rather than worry about an invasion at home. Yet concern about that possibility, which in 1940 had motivated the Ogdensburg Declaration ([quoted below](#)), became institutionalized in the [Permanent Joint Board on Defence](#). Its history traces the shifting importance of continental defence, and also the influence of American military might on Canadian policy. A case in point is the effort to (over?)[protect the strategic facilities at Sault Ste. Marie](#).

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT SETS THE DEFENCE AGENDA

Quarantine Speech

Franklin Roosevelt, Chicago, October 5, 1937

"[A]s I have seen with my own eyes the prosperous farms, the thriving factories and the busy railroads — as I have seen the happiness and security and peace which covers our wide land — almost inevitably I have been compelled to contrast our peace with very different scenes being enacted in other parts of the world. [T]he people of the United States, under modern conditions, must for the sake of their own future give thought to the rest of the world[...]

The political situation in the world, which of late has been growing progressively worse, is such as to cause grave concern and anxiety to all the peoples and nations who wish to live in peace and amity with their neighbors. [...] The present reign of terror and international lawlessness began a few years ago. It began through unjustified interference in the internal affairs of other nations or the invasion of alien territory in violation of treaties. It has now reached the stage where the very foundations of civilization are seriously threatened. The landmarks, the traditions which have marked the progress of civilization toward a condition of law and order and justice are being wiped away.

Without a declaration of war and without warning or justification of any kind, civilians, including vast numbers of women and children, are being ruthlessly murdered with bombs from the air. In times of so-called peace, ships are being attacked and sunk by submarines without cause or notice. Nations are fomenting and taking sides in civil warfare in nations that have never done them any harm. Nations claiming freedom for themselves deny it to others.

[...]

If those things come to pass in other parts of the world, let no one imagine that America will escape, that America may expect mercy, that this Western hemisphere will not be attacked and that it will continue tranquilly

and peacefully to carry on the ethics and the arts of civilization.

[...]

If those days are not to come to pass — if we are to have a world in which we can breathe freely and live in amity without fear — then the peace-loving nations must make a concerted effort to uphold laws and principles on which alone peace can rest secure. The peace-loving nations must make a concerted effort in opposition to those violations of treaties and those ignorings of human instincts which today are creating a state of international anarchy and instability from which there is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality.

[...]

There is a solidarity and interdependence about the modern world, both technically and morally, which makes it impossible for any nation completely to isolate itself from economic and political upheavals in the rest of the world, especially when such upheavals appear to be spreading and not declining. There can be no stability or peace either within nations or between nations except under laws and moral standards adhered to by all.

International anarchy destroys every foundation for peace. It jeopardizes either the immediate or the future security of every nation, large or small. It is therefore a matter of vital interest and concern to the people of the United States that the sanctity of international treaties and the maintenance of international morality be restored.

[...]

How happy we are that the circumstances of the moment permit us to put our money into bridges and boulevards, dams and reforestation, the conservation of our soil, and many other kinds of useful works rather than into huge standing armies and vast supplies of implements of war. Nevertheless my friends, I am compelled, as you are compelled, to look ahead. The peace, the freedom and the security of 90% of the population of the world is being jeopardized by the remaining 10% who are threatening a breakdown of all international order and law. Surely the 90% who want to live in peace under law and in accordance with moral standards that have received almost universal acceptance through the centuries, can and must find some way to make their will prevail.

[...]

It seems to be unfortunately true that the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading. **AND MARK THIS WELL:** When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease.

[...]

War is a contagion, whether it be declared or undeclared. It can engulf states and peoples remote from the original scene of hostilities. We are determined to keep out of war, yet we cannot insure ourselves against the disastrous effects of war and the dangers of involvement. We are adopting such measures as will minimize our risk of involvement, but we cannot have complete protection in a world of disorder in which confidence and security have broken down. [...] There must be positive endeavors to preserve peace.”

<http://www.nelson.com/nelson/school/discovery/cantext/wwii/1937roos.htm>

ALSO SEE:

Message to the Congress recommending increased armament for national defense

Franklin Roosevelt, January 28, 1938

“Adequate defense means that for the protection not only of our coasts but also of our communities far removed from the coast, we must keep any potential enemy many hundred miles away from our continental limits. We cannot assume that our defense would be limited to one ocean and one coast and that the other ocean and the other coast would with certainty be safe. We cannot be certain that the connecting link, the Panama Canal, would be safe. Adequate defense affects therefore the simultaneous defense of every part of the United States of America.”

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188-08.html>

The Neutrality Act

U.S. Congress Public Resolution No. 54

November 4, 1939

“To preserve the neutrality and the peace of the United States and to secure the safety of its citizens and their interests.”

<http://www.nelson.com/nelson/school/discovery/cantext/wwii/1939usne.htm>

Address before a joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives asking additional appropriations for national defense

Franklin Roosevelt, May 16, 1940

“These are ominous days — days whose swift and shocking developments force every neutral nation to look to its defenses in the light of new factors. The brutal force of modern offensive war has been loosed in all its horror. New powers of destruction, incredibly swift and deadly, have been developed; and those who wield them are ruthless and daring. No old defense is so strong that it requires no further strengthening and no attack is so unlikely or impossible that it may be ignored. [...] The clear fact is that the American people must recast their thinking about national protection.

[...]

Our own vital interests are widespread. More than ever the protection of the whole American hemisphere against invasion or control or domination by non-American nations has the united support of the twenty-one American Republics, including the United States. More than ever in the past this protection calls for ready-at-hand weapons capable of great mobility because of the potential speed of modern attack.

[T]he new element — air navigation — steps up the speed of possible attack to 200-300 miles an hour. Furthermore, it brings the new possibilities of the use of nearer bases from which an attack or attacks on the American Continents could be made. From the fiords of Greenland it is four hours by air to Newfoundland; five hours to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and to the Province of Quebec; and only six hours to New England. The Azores are only 2,000 miles from parts of our eastern seaboard, and if Bermuda fell into hostile hands it would be a matter of less than three hours for modern bombers to reach our shores. From a base in the outer West Indies, the coast of Florida could be reached in two hundred minutes.

The islands off the west coast of Africa are only 1,500 miles from Brazil. Modern planes starting from the Cape Verde Islands can be over Brazil in seven hours. And Para, Brazil, near the mouth of the Amazon River, is but four flying-hours to Caracas, Venezuela; and Venezuela is but two and one-half hours to Cuba and the Canal Zone; and Cuba and the Canal Zone are two and one-quarter hours to Tampico, Mexico; and Tampico is two and one-quarter hours to St. Louis, Kansas City and Omaha.

On the other side of the continent, Alaska, with a white population of only 30,000 people, is within four or five hours of flying distance to Vancouver, Seattle, Tacoma and Portland. The islands of the southern Pacific are not too far removed from the west coast of South America to prevent them from becoming bases of enormous strategic advantage to attacking forces.

Surely the developments of the past few weeks have made it clear to all of our citizens that the possibility of attack on vital American zones ought to make it essential that we have the physical, the ready ability to meet those attacks and to prevent them from reaching their objectives. This means military implements — not on paper — which are ready and available to meet any lightning offensive against our American interest. [...] An effective defense by its very nature requires the equipment to attack the aggressor on his route before he can establish strong bases within the territory of American vital interests.

[...]

For the permanent record, I ask the Congress not to take any action which would in any way hamper or delay the delivery of American-made planes to foreign nations which have ordered them, or seek to purchase new planes. That, from the point of view of our own national defense, would be extremely short-sighted.

[...]

There are some who say that democracy cannot cope with the new techniques of Government developed in recent years by some countries — by a few countries which deny the freedoms that we maintain are essential to our democratic way of life. That I reject. I know that our trained officers and men know more about fighting and the weapons and equipment needed for fighting than any of us laymen; and I have confidence in our officers and men.

[...]

Our task is plain. The road we must take is clearly indicated. Our defenses must be invulnerable, our security absolute. But our defense as it was yesterday, or even as it is today, does not provide security against potential developments and dangers of the future. Defense cannot be static. Defense must grow and change from day to day. [...]

[...]”

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188-16.html>

ALSO SEE:

Message to Congress announcing lease of British military bases in the Americas (including Newfoundland)

Franklin Roosevelt, September 3, 1940

“The value to the Western Hemisphere of these outposts of security is beyond calculation. Their need has long been recognized by our country, and especially by those primarily charged with the duty of charting and organizing our own naval and military defense. They are essential to the protection of the Panama Canal, Central America, the northern portion of South America, the Antilles, Canada, Mexico and our own eastern and Gulf seaboard. Their consequent importance in hemispheric defense is obvious.”

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188-19.html>

Fireside Chat on National Security and the Common Cause

Franklin Roosevelt radio broadcast, December 29, 1940

“My friends:

This is not a fireside chat on war. It is a talk on national security; because the nub of the whole purpose of your President is to keep you now, and your children later, and your grandchildren much later, out of a last-ditch war for the preservation of American independence and all the things that American independence means to you and to me and to ours.

[...]

Does anyone seriously believe that we need to fear attack anywhere in the Americas while a free Britain remains our most powerful naval neighbor in the Atlantic? Does anyone seriously believe, on the other hand, that we could rest easy if the Axis powers were our neighbors there?

If Great Britain goes down, the Axis powers will control the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia, and the high seas — and they will be in a position to bring enormous military and naval resources against this hemisphere. It is no exaggeration to say that all of us, in all the Americas, would be living at the point of a gun — a gun loaded with explosive bullets, economic as well as military.

We should enter upon a new and terrible era in which the whole world, our hemisphere included, would be run by threats of brute force. To survive in such a world, we would have to convert ourselves permanently into a militaristic power on the basis of a war economy.

Some of us like to believe that even if Great Britain falls we are still safe, because of the broad expanse of the Atlantic and of the Pacific. But the width of those oceans is not what it was in the days of clipper ships. At one

point between Africa and Brazil the distance is less than from Washington to Denver, Colorado — five hours for the latest type of bomber. And at the North end of the Pacific Ocean, America and Asia almost touch each other.

[...]

Frankly and definitely there is danger ahead — danger against which we must prepare. But we well know that we cannot escape danger, or the fear of danger, by crawling into bed and pulling the covers over our heads.

[...]

There are those who say that the Axis powers would never have any desire to attack the Western Hemisphere. That is the same dangerous form of wishful thinking which has destroyed the powers of resistance of so many conquered peoples. The plain facts are that the Nazis have proclaimed time and again that all other races are their inferiors and therefore subject to their orders. And most important of all, the vast resources and wealth of this American Hemisphere constitute the most tempting loot in all the round world.

[...]

The British people and their allies today are conducting an active war against this unholy alliance. Our own future security is greatly dependent on the outcome of that fight. Our ability to ‘keep out of war’ is going to be affected by that outcome. Thinking in terms of today and tomorrow, I make the direct statement to the American people that there is far less chance of the United States getting into war if we do all we can now to support the nations defending themselves against attack by the Axis than if we acquiesce in their defeat, submit tamely to an Axis victory and wait our turn to be the object of attack in another war later on.

[...]

The people of Europe who are defending themselves do not ask us to do their fighting. They ask us for the implements of war, the planes, the tanks, the guns, the freighters which will enable them to fight for their liberty and for our security. Emphatically we must get these weapons to them in sufficient volume and quickly enough so that we and our children will be saved the agony and suffering of war which others have had to endure. [...]

In a military sense Great Britain and the British Empire are today the spearhead of resistance to world conquest. They are putting up a fight which will live forever in the story of human gallantry.

[...]

We are planning our own defense with the utmost urgency; and in its vast scale we must integrate the war needs of Britain and the other free nations which are resisting aggression. This is[...]a matter of realistic, practical military policy, based on the advice of our military experts who are in close touch with existing warfare. These military and naval experts and the members of the Congress and the Administration have a single-minded purpose — the defense of the United States.

This nation is making a great effort to produce everything that is necessary in this emergency — and with all possible speed. [...] If our capacity to produce is limited by machines, it must ever be remembered that these machines are operated by the skill and the stamina of the workers. As the Government is determined to protect the rights of the workers, so the nation has a right to expect that the men who man the machines will discharge their full responsibilities to the urgent needs of defense.

The worker possesses the same human dignity and is entitled to the same security of position as the engineer or the manager or the owner. For the workers provide the human power that turns out the destroyers, the airplanes and the tanks. The nation expects our defense industries to continue operation without interruption by strikes or lock-outs. It expects and insists that management and workers will reconcile their differences by voluntary or legal means, to continue to produce the supplies that are so sorely needed.

[...]

In this great work there has been splendid cooperation between the Government and industry and labor; and I am very thankful. American industrial genius, unmatched throughout the world in the solution of production problems, has been called upon to bring its resources and its talents into action. Manufacturers of watches, farm implements, linotypes, cash registers, automobiles, sewing machines, lawn mowers and locomotives are now making fuses, bomb packing crates, telescope mounts, shells, pistols and tanks.

[...]

I want to make it clear that it is the purpose of the nation to build now with all possible speed every machine, every arsenal, every factory that we need to manufacture our defense material. We have the men — the skill — the wealth — and above all, the will.

[...]

As planes and ships and guns and shells are produced, your Government with its defense experts can then determine how best to use them to defend this hemisphere. The decision as to how much shall be sent abroad and how much shall remain at home must be made on the basis of our overall military necessities. 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.

[...]"

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188-21.html>

State of the Union Address ("Four Freedoms Speech")

Franklin Roosevelt, January 6, 1941

"To the Congress of the United States:

I address you, the Members of the Seventy-Seventh Congress, at a moment unprecedented in the history of the Union. I use the word 'unprecedented' because at no previous time has American security been as seriously threatened from without as it is today.

[...]

Every realist knows that the democratic way of life is at this moment being directly assailed in every part of the world — assailed either by arms, or by secret spreading of poisonous propaganda by those who seek to destroy unity and promote discord in nations still at peace. During sixteen months this assault has blotted out the whole pattern of democratic life in an appalling number of independent nations, great and small. The assailants are still on the march, threatening other nations great and small.

Therefore as your president, performing my constitutional duty to 'give to the Congress information of the state of the Union,' I find it necessary to report that the future and safety of our country and of our democracy are overwhelmingly involved in events far beyond our borders.

Armed defense of democratic existence is now being gallantly waged on four continents. If that defense fails, all the population and all the resources of Europe, Asia, Africa and Australasia will be dominated by the conquerors. The total of those populations and their resources greatly exceeds the sum total of the population and resources of the whole of the Western Hemisphere — many times over.

In times like these it is immature — and incidentally untrue — for anybody to brag that an unprepared America, single-handed and with one hand tied behind its back, can hold off the whole world. No realistic American can expect from a dictator's peace international generosity, or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion — or even good business. Such a peace would bring no security for us or for our neighbors. 'Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase the little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.' [...]

I have recently pointed out how quickly the tempo of modern warfare could bring into our very midst the physical attack which we must expect if the dictator nations win this war. There is much loose talk of our immunity from immediate and direct invasion from across the seas. [...] But we learn much from the lessons of the past years in Europe — particularly the lesson of Norway, whose essential seaports were captured by treachery and surprise built up over a series of years. The first phase of the invasion of this Hemisphere would not be the landing of regular troops. The necessary strategic points would be occupied by secret agents and their

dupes — great numbers of them are already here, and in Latin America.

As long as the aggressor nations maintain the offensive, they — not we — will choose the time and the place and the method of their attack. [...] The need of the moment is that our actions and our policy should be devoted primarily — almost exclusively — to meeting the foreign peril. For all our domestic problems are now a part of the great emergency.

[...]

Our national policy is this.

First, by an impressive expression of the public will and without regard to partisanship, we are committed to all-inclusive national defense.

Second, by an impressive expression of the public will and without regard to partisanship, we are committed to full support of all those resolute peoples everywhere who are resisting aggression and are thereby keeping war away from our Hemisphere. By this support we express our determination that the democratic cause shall prevail; and we strengthen the defense and security of our own nation.

[...]

Today it is abundantly evident that American citizens everywhere are demanding and supporting speedy and complete action in recognition of obvious danger. Therefore the immediate need is a swift and driving increase in our armament production.

[...]

Our most useful and immediate role is to act as an arsenal for [the the nations resisting aggression,] as well as for ourselves. They do not need manpower. They do need billions of dollars worth of the weapons of defense.

[...]

Taking counsel of expert military and naval authorities, considering what is best for our own security, we are free to decide how much should be kept here and how much should be sent abroad to our friends who by their determined and heroic resistance are giving us time in which to make ready our own defense.

[...]

The happiness of future generations of Americans may well depend upon how effective and how immediate we can make our aid felt. No one can tell the exact character of the emergency situations that we may be called upon to meet. The Nation's hands must not be tied when the Nation's life is in danger. We must prepare to make the sacrifices that the emergency — as serious as war itself — demands. Whatever stands in the way of speed and efficiency in defense preparations must give way to the national need.

[...]"

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188-22.html>

U.S. Lend-Lease Act

March 11, 1941

“Be it enacted that this Act may be cited as ‘An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States.’

Section 3.

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, the President may from time to time, 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 department or agency of the Government:

(1) To manufacture in arsenals, factories and shipyards under their jurisdiction, 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.

(2) To sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend or otherwise dispose of to any such government any defense

article; but no defense article not manufactured or procured under paragraph (1) shall in any way be disposed of under this paragraph, except after consultation with the Chief of Staff of the Army or the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, or both. The value of defense articles disposed of in any way under authority of this paragraph and procured from funds heretofore appropriated shall not exceed \$1,300,000,000. [...]

[...]

(b) The terms and conditions upon which any such foreign government receive any aid authorized under subsection (a) shall be those which the President deems satisfactory, and the benefit to the United States may be payment or repayment in kind or property, or any other direct or indirect benefit which the President deems satisfactory.

[...]

(d) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of convoying vessels by naval vessels of the United States.

(e) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of the entry of any American vessel into a combat area in violation of section 3 of the Neutrality Act of 1939.

Section 8

The Secretaries of War and of the Navy are hereby authorized to purchase or otherwise acquire arms, ammunition and implements of war produced within the jurisdiction of any country to which section 3 is applicable, whenever the President deems such purchase or acquisition to be necessary in the interests of the defense of the United States.

[...]"

<http://www.nelson.com/nelson/school/discovery/cantext/wwii/1941usle.htm>

Dispatch of Naval Forces to Iceland
Franklin Roosevelt, July 7, 1941

"I am transmitting herewith for the information of the Congress a message I received from the Prime Minister of Iceland on July 1, and the reply I addressed on the same day[....] In accordance with the understanding so reached, forces of the United States Navy have today arrived in Iceland in order to supplement and eventually to replace the British forces which have until now been stationed in Iceland in order to insure the adequate defense of that country.

As I stated in my message to the Congress of September 3 last regarding the acquisition of certain naval and air bases from Great Britain[...], considerations of safety from overseas attack are fundamental. The United States cannot permit the occupation by Germany of strategic outposts in the Atlantic to be used as air or naval bases for eventual attack against the Western Hemisphere. We have no desire to see any change in the present sovereignty of those regions. Assurance that such outposts in our defense frontier remain in friendly hands is the very foundation of our national security and of the national security of every one of the independent nations of the New World.

The occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

- The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the islands which lie off it.
- The threat against all shipping in the North Atlantic.
- The threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain — which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

It is therefore imperative that the approaches between the Americas and those strategic outposts, the safety of which this country regards as essential to its national security and which it must therefore defend, shall remain

open and free from all hostile activity or threat thereof.

[...]

This Government will insure the adequate defense of Iceland with full recognition of the independence of Iceland as a sovereign state. In my message to the Prime Minister of Iceland, I have given the people of Iceland the assurance that the American forces sent there would in no way interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of that country, and that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency all American forces will be at once withdrawn, leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full and sovereign control of their own territory.”

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188-27.html>

ALSO SEE:

Canadian Brigadier Page’s Reminiscences of Iceland (1941)

“I asked Brigadier Page how the Icelanders regarded the British occupation. He answered that they were far from enthusiastic. The limit of their warmth was the admission that it was perhaps better to have the British than the Germans in the country, but they would have greatly preferred to be left alone altogether. Brigadier Page added however that the Canadian troops undoubtedly made more progress in friendship with the Icelanders than did the British, and would have continued to make progress had they remained. This was due to Canada’s connections with the island, growing mainly out of the large Icelandic population found in Manitoba.”

<http://www.dnd.ca/hr/dhh/Downloads/cmhq/CMHQ004.PDF> (scroll down to “Iceland”)

Request for Declaration of War

Franklin Roosevelt, December 8, 1941

“To the Congress of the United States

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

[...]

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. [...] Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night the Japanese attacked Midway Island. Japan has therefore undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

[...]

I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again. Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.

[...]

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.”

<http://www.nelson.com/nelson/school/discovery/cantext/wwii/1941fdrd.htm>

ACTIVITY

The documents that are excerpted and referred to above trace Roosevelt's and his country's changing attitude to the level of international violence in the late '30s and early '40s. You can follow this graphically by creating a timeline of the increasing militarism, threats and attacks in Europe and East Asia during the period, and parallel to it a timeline of American reactions and responses to those events. A more analytical alternative is to describe the change in American thinking — how Americans listened less to the isolationists who supposed they were safe so far from the turmoil, and listened more to the realists who recognized the need to prepare for war, including attacks in the Western Hemisphere. Studying the evolution of a nation's opinions and policies during a time of great change can add a lot to your knowledge of history. You can do this with any country in any period (for example, Canadians' shift in attitude to free trade in the 1980s, or to deficit slashing in the '90s). Get a feeling for this kind of study by using personal history.

Make yourself, or a sibling or friend you are close to, the subject of a brief history covering a period (just a few months or years) when major change caused a whole new way of thinking to develop. Maybe this person (you or whoever) moved to a new place (whether physical, emotional or spiritual) where they had to give up old ways and work out new habits. Perhaps they learned or realized some information or concept that prompted new plans or a different set of goals. They might have lost or gained something important, leading to a new self-awareness or broadening of identity. With the required sensitivity and permission, find out how this change took place and write it down in a brief (2-3 page) description.

Start by identifying where the subject ended up in their thinking, and where they started from. Then try to learn the key elements (events/thoughts/steps) in that shift. Motivating factors (what caused the change of attitude) are critical, but so also is the personal motivation (what the subject found important in the factors that moved them to shift their thinking). See (again, with the subject's OK) if their family and friends can contribute to what you discover about the motives, feelings and opinions that make up this story.

As a follow-up to this activity, go back and reread Roosevelt's writings to gain more insights into the change in America's attitude to defence at the beginning of World War II.

Fireside Chat on the Home Front

Franklin Roosevelt radio broadcast, October 12, 1942

“My Fellow Americans:

[...]

This whole nation of one hundred and thirty million free men, women and children is becoming one great fighting force. Some of us are soldiers or sailors, some of us are civilians. Some of us are fighting the war in airplanes five miles above the continent of Europe or the islands of the Pacific — and some of us are fighting it in mines deep down in the earth of Pennsylvania or Montana. A few of us are decorated with medals for heroic achievement, but all of us can have that deep and permanent inner satisfaction that comes from doing the best we know how — each of us playing an honorable part in the great struggle to save our democratic civilization.

Whatever our individual circumstances or opportunities, we are all in it, and our spirit is good, and we Americans and our allies are going to win — and do not let anyone tell you anything different.

[...]

One of the principal weapons of our enemies in the past has been their use of what is called ‘The War of Nerves.’ They have spread falsehood and terror; they have started Fifth Columns everywhere; they have duped the innocent; they have fomented suspicion and hate between neighbors; they have aided and abetted those people in other nations — including our own — whose words and deeds are advertised from Berlin and from Tokyo as proof of our disunity. The greatest defense against all such propaganda, of course, is the common sense of the common people — and that defense is prevailing.

[...]

The United States has been at war for only ten months, and is engaged in the enormous task of multiplying its

armed forces many times. We are by no means at full production level yet. But I could not help asking myself on the trip [I took across the country recently], where would we be today if the Government of the United States had not begun to build many of its factories for this huge increase more than two years ago, more than a year before war was forced upon us at Pearl Harbor?

We have also had to face the problem of shipping. Ships in every part of the world continue to be sunk by enemy action. But the total tonnage of ships coming out of American, Canadian and British shipyards, day by day, has increased so fast that we are getting ahead of our enemies in the bitter battle of transportation.

[...]

As I told the three press association representatives who accompanied me, I was impressed by the large proportion of women employed — doing skilled manual labor running machines. As time goes on and many more of our men enter the armed forces, this proportion of women will increase. Within less than a year from now, I think, there will probably be as many women as men working in our war production plants.

[...]

In order to keep stepping up our production, we have had to add millions of workers to the total labor force of the Nation. And as new factories come into operation, we must find additional millions of workers. This presents a formidable problem in the mobilization of manpower. [...] There are many other things that we can do, and do immediately, to help meet this manpower problem.

The school authorities in all the states should work out plans to enable our high school students to take some time from their school year (and) to use their summer vacations to help farmers raise and harvest their crops, or to work somewhere in the war industries. This does not mean closing schools and stopping education. It does mean giving older students a better opportunity to contribute their bit to the war effort. Such work will do no harm to the students.

[...]

In some communities, employers dislike to employ women. In others, they are reluctant to hire Negroes. In still others, older men are not wanted. We can no longer afford to indulge such prejudices or practices.

[...]

Perhaps the most difficult phase of the manpower problem is the scarcity of farm labor in many places. I have seen evidences of the fact, however, that the people are trying to meet it as well as possible. In one community that I visited a perishable crop was harvested by turning out the whole of the high school for three or four days. And in another community of fruit growers the usual Japanese labor was not available; but when the fruit ripened, the banker, the butcher, the lawyer, the garage man, the druggist, the local editor, and in fact every able-bodied man and woman in the town left their occupations, went out gathering the fruit and sent it to market.

[...]

And I want to say also a word of praise and thanks to the more than ten million people all over the country who have volunteered for the work of civilian defense — and who are working hard at it. They are displaying unselfish devotion in the patient performance of their often tiresome and always anonymous tasks. In doing this important neighborly work they are helping to fortify our national unity and our real understanding of the fact that we are all involved in this war.

[...]

The objective of today is clear and realistic. It is to destroy completely the military power of Germany, Italy and Japan to such good purpose that their threat against us and all the other United Nations cannot be revived a generation hence. We are united in seeking the kind of victory that will guarantee that our grandchildren can grow and, under God, may live their lives free from the constant threat of invasion, destruction, slavery and violent death.”

DEFENCE IN CANADA

Four Years of War

W.L.M. King broadcast, September 10, 1943

“Today Canada enters the fifth year of war. When I spoke to you a year ago, the Axis powers had reached the extreme limits of their conquests. [...] Today the world picture has changed. The Axis dream of world domination has been transformed into a nightmare of defeat and destruction. On every battlefield around the globe, the United Nations have seized and kept the initiative. [...]

[...]

In the present struggle, the industrial strength of the United Nations — and particularly of the North American continent — is now being applied decisively. Yesterday the Minister of Munitions and Supply made public an astounding account of Canada’s industrial contribution in this war. [...] By your work, by your self-denial, by your purchases of bonds and war savings certificates, you have helped to make that record. To the extent of your contribution in any of these particulars, you are entitled to share in the credit for this splendid achievement. You may also be proud that in doing your part to help win the war, you have helped to develop Canada into a great industrial nation. Through your contributions to a total war effort, you have aided in revolutionizing our national economy. The very exertions which Canada has made to do her utmost in the winning of the war have won for our country a place among the leading powers of the world.

[...]

In 1940 and 1941, when the enemy was winning battles on nearly every front, the soldiers, sailors and airmen of the United Nations were just as brave as they are today. Today the allied forces are winning battles because they have the armour: the guns and tanks and ships and planes. We have kept the fighting away from our own shores because hundreds of thousands of young Canadians were ready to risk their lives to defeat the enemy on the other side of the seas. They have been able to take the splendid part they have because the people at home were willing to work harder, to practice self-denial and to contribute of their means in taxes and loans, in order to provide the implements of war.

As the British, American, Canadian and other allied forces come to closer grips with Germany, the struggle will continue to increase in intensity and violence. The speed with which the war will be won will depend on the speed with which the factories and mines and forests of North America furnish the weapons and munitions of war. That is a sobering thought which I should like to bring home to every worker, with hand of brain [sic], everywhere on the production lines of the new world. To the extent of your contribution, you have made the weapons that destroyed the power of Mussolini and his Fascist minions. The lives you have saved, the agony you have helped to spare the world — these will be the measure of your reward. It is going to take all the weapons you can make, as quickly as you can make them, to destroy the power of Hitler and his Nazi gangsters, and the fanatic militarism of Japan.

The farmers and the fishermen of Canada have helped to sustain the fighting forces everywhere and the workers on the home front. By their contribution they too are saving human lives and sparing the world untold agony.

The food produced on this continent not only is helping in the winning of the war; it will have a large part in shaping the peace to follow. The liberation of European territory will make greater demands than ever upon the food resources of the United Nations. In its early stages, the supply of food will, for the underfed and starving peoples of the world, be the real test of liberation.

[...]

There is no hard and fast line between the fighting forces and the working forces. Both are essential to total victory. [...] What it is necessary for every one of us to realize is that no individual can escape the consequences of his own contribution or of his own failure. If he does his best, he is helping to rid mankind of the scourges which beset it; if he fails to serve, or impedes the service of others, he is furthering throughout the world the ends of carnage and of death. A flagging of effort on the home front or any avoidable interruption of effort will

prolong the struggle and increase its cost in human lives.

[...]

I would not be true to myself, nor to you, did I not say that I believe Canada's fifth year of war will demand more fortitude, greater efforts, heavier sacrifices than any we have yet faced. To be worthy of our fighting men we must work more intensely, accept heavier burdens, cooperate more fully in a united effort.

As I said when the news was announced, by all means let there be rejoicing and thanksgiving from one end of Canada to the other at the unconditional surrender of Italy, which our efforts, joined to those of others, have helped to bring about. But as Canada enters upon her fifth year of war, let our rejoicing and our thanksgiving be accompanied by a resolve on the part of each that from now on, as never before, the minds, the wills, the energies of all shall be united in a determination to encompass in the quickest possible time the defeat also of Germany and Japan. On their defeat depends the future well-being of mankind."

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/2/4/h4-2240.1-e.html> (pp 1, 7-11)

ACTIVITY

This speech of encouragement to Canadians by Prime Minister King, and the one before it broadcast by President Roosevelt to Americans, are fine examples of using radio to rally the civilian population in each country's war effort. Even as early as Roosevelt's broadcast in October 1942 (less than a year after the U.S. entered the war), the danger of physical attack on North America seemed fairly minor. (In his speech, Roosevelt mentions defending only against propaganda, and King notes that the fighters keep the fighting "away from our own shores.") Rather than home defence, each leader assures his listeners that they are really participating in the war overseas ("This whole nation[...]is becoming one great fighting force"; "no hard and fast line between the fighting forces and the working forces").

Both leaders make clear to listeners the purpose of all their hard work and sacrifice: "The objective[...]is to destroy completely the military power of Germany, Italy and Japan [so that it] cannot be revived a generation hence." / "On their defeat depends the future well-being of mankind." The formula is clear: the harder you work, the better the men fight and the sooner we totally defeat the enemy.

Today though, civilians in Canada and the U.S. don't have nearly as big a role in war as they did in the intense, sustained production needed to fight World War II. The military campaigns that both countries joined in the late 20th century were so limited that they required little more national will and spirit than any other controversial government program. The opponents (Iraq, Serbia) that we fought in these mini-wars certainly posed little or no threat to our homeland. The current "war on terrorism" might seem more of a true defence of North America than the fighting in Kuwait or the Balkans did. But the late-2001 fighting in Asia has been much less clearly an effective defence of North America than has guarding borders, airlines and the mail system. How would you convince Canadians they can help defeat the forces of terrorism?

The objective of the present war is much like the one presented in the 1940s speeches: wipe out the threat so thoroughly that we will not need to worry about it again. There may be few parallels between the facts of the current situation and the history of World War II, but the intensity of feeling is quite comparable. Look for the emotional parallels:

- what about Axis aggression and modern terrorism that frightened/frightens Canadians;
- what in the ideologies of Hitler and bin Laden that Canadians found/find intolerable;
- what personal stake or commitment ordinary Canadians had/have in the struggle (e.g., what is at risk).

With a good idea of what people's deepest concerns are, you can decide what they want and need to hear to feel confident against the threat. You might want to see what encouraging words you can find in the King and Roosevelt speeches.

Addressing people's anxieties won't help, however, if you don't give them something to do. The sort of mass, organized effort launched in Canada to help win World War II won't be appropriate here. Decide what actions ordinary Canadians can take to feel confident against the threat of terrorism. Some would say make terrorism impossible by strengthening security. Others would strengthen democracy too, for example with increased communication between

mainstream society and Muslims, Arabs and Asians in general. Another recommendation could be to replace fear with trust — in airport security, in police surveillance, in the government's overall response to the threat. You can probably find lots of suggestions in the news media from late 2001; you may have your own ideas. Combine the most inspiring ones into a message to help people go confidently ahead in their lives.

The Canadian-American Permanent Joint Board on Defence, 1940-1945
Colonel C.P. Stacey, Director, Historical Section, Department of National Defence
International Journal, Spring 1954

“The Permanent Joint Board on Defence was an experiment in international organization and an innovation in both Canadian and American external policy. It was formed at a moment of desperate peril, and could perhaps scarcely have come into existence in any other circumstances. [...] Today, fourteen years later, it is an established and important element in Canadian-American relations and in the defensive organization of the West. [...]

During the years of growing tension in Europe and the Far East which followed the outbreak of war in China in 1931 and Hitler's seizure of power in Germany in 1933, there was a gradual and very limited military rapprochement between Canada and the United States. That it took place at all was due to a common sense of danger; that it was so limited was the result of the inhibiting conditions of the time and the desire of both countries to avoid commitments.

[T]he two countries' Chiefs of Staff [met in Washington in] January 1938 [and] discussed problems both general and particular. [...] During the summer and autumn of 1938 the European situation grew worse, and Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. King exchanged public assurances concerning their countries' military relations. In August Mr. Roosevelt made the famous speech at Kingston in which he declared that the United States would 'not stand idly by' if Canada was threatened; and a few days later Mr. King at Woodbridge spoke of Canada's obligations as a good friendly neighbour' [sic: quotation marks] to the United States. [...]

The relations thus established were to develop under the influence of still more threatening common danger in 1940. [...] On May 10 Germany invaded the Low Countries and within a fortnight the Allies had suffered a disastrous reverse. Steps were taken to enlarge the Canadian forces. On May 23 the War Committee of the Cabinet, answering an appeal from London, [decided] to send every available RCN destroyer (there were only four in immediate readiness) to help protect Britain. It decided to inform the United States that Canada's Atlantic coast had thus been stripped of naval defence. [...]

As the campaign in Europe moved rapidly towards its tragic end, alarm in North America grew. On 14 June the Acting Minister of National Defence (Mr. C.G. Power) reported to the Cabinet War Committee that concern was being felt for the security of Newfoundland. No large-scale attack was considered likely, but raids were possible. Measures were in train for action in the Island in cooperation with the Newfoundland authorities (small Canadian ground and air forces moved there shortly); but Mr. Power recommended, and the War Committee agreed, that there was an immediate need for staff talks between Canadian and United States officers on the problems involved in the defence of the Atlantic coast. [...]

[...] By mid-August, [p]ublic opinion in both countries had been deeply stirred by the collapse of France, and there was widespread anxiety for the security of North America. [On August 16 the President telephoned] Mr. King at his summer home near Ottawa. He told him that the following day he would be attending military manoeuvres near Ogdensburg, New York, and invited him to join him there. Mr. King accepted and next day drove to Ogdensburg [for] long discussions. Mr. King spent the night on the President's train. On the 18th the two statesmen issued to the press the now celebrated statement announcing the formation of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence.

[...] The discussions had ranged over a wide area. The President described to Mr. King the negotiations in

progress between the United States and the United Kingdom on the question of destroyers for Britain and island bases in the Western Hemisphere for the United States, of which King had already been informed by Mr. Churchill. Roosevelt promised Canada certain guns and other vital equipment.

It appears that on the question of military relations between the two countries Mr. Roosevelt took the initiatives, and that it was he who proposed the immediate creation of a joint Canadian-American board. Since this was evidently the direction in which Mr. King's own views, and the articulate public opinion of Canada, had for some time been tending, the Prime Minister accepted at once.

Although the Ogdensburg 'press release' given out by Roosevelt and King on August 18 has often been published, it may be worth while to quote the text again here:

The Prime Minister and the President have discussed the mutual problems of defence in relation to the safety of Canada and the United States. It has been agreed that a Permanent Joint Board on Defence shall be set up at once by the two countries.

This Permanent Joint Board on Defence shall commence immediate studies relating to sea, land and air problems, including personnel and material. It will consider in the broad sense the defence of the north half of the Western Hemisphere.

The Permanent Joint Board on Defence will consist of four or five members from each country, most of them from the services. It will meet shortly.

What makes this release of special interest is the fact that it constituted the only formal expression of what came to be called the Ogdensburg Declaration. [...] No paper was signed, and the release remained the basis of the new Board. Canada published its text in her Treaty Series and included it in an order-in-council. The United States regarded it as an executive agreement not subject to ratification by the Senate, and it was never submitted to that body. No international arrangement of comparable importance has ever been concluded more informally. [...]

The announcement of the Board's formation met with remarkably unanimous approval on both sides of the border. There was really no effective criticism from any quarter, and it was clear that the President and the Prime Minister had accurately estimated the state of public opinion on the question.

[...]

The Board's basic procedure was to present formal Recommendations to the two governments. Thirty-three such Recommendations were made during the war. [I]t is worthwhile to list them as an indication of the Board's scope and achievement:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 26 Aug 1940 Complete exchange of military information between the two Sections of the Board, each being free to convey such information to its government.

2 26 Aug 1940 Strengthening defences of Newfoundland, measures to include increasing Canadian garrisons and preparing bases for U.S. aircraft; also installation of port defences.

3 27 Aug 1940 Strengthening the Maritime Provinces, including defences at Halifax, Sydney, Gaspé and Shelburne; improvement of aircraft-operating facilities; and preparation in Canada and U.S. of strategic reserves for concentration in the Maritimes if required.

[...]

5 27 Aug 1940 Communications between Newfoundland, Maritime Provinces and other portions of Eastern Canada and the U.S. require to be examined (railways, water, roads and air); additional commercial airways essential.

[...]

7 27 Aug 1940 The service members of the Board to proceed at once with preparation of a detailed plan for the joint defence of Canada and the United States and keep the Board informed of the progress of the work.

[...]

10 14 Nov 1940 That to implement recommendation in the Board's First Report, suitable landing fields be provided on route across Canada between the U.S. and Alaska.

[...]

12 17 Dec 1940 That a war industry member be appointed to the Board by each of the two governments.

13 20 Jan 1941 That each government constitute a single authority, clothed with necessary powers, to be responsible for safety of navigation through the Sault Ste. Marie Canals and St. Marys River, and to cooperate in this matter as required.

14 21 Jan 1941 That most urgent priority be given provision of facilities for at least one U.S. squadron of patrol planes at Halifax and one U.S. squadron in Botwood area (Newfoundland).

[...]

17 29 Jul 1941 That Canada construct an air base in the vicinity of North West River, Labrador, providing specified facilities as quickly as possible (Goose Bay).

[...]

19 29 Jul 1941 In view of Far Eastern situation, completion of both Canadian and U.S. sections of the airway to Alaska now very important.

[...]

23 30 Dec 1941 That Canada and U.S. consider advisability of arranging a meeting of representatives of U.K., Canada and U.S. to make recommendations for coordinating the entire aviation training programme to be conducted in Canada and U.S.

24 25-6 Feb 1942 That a highway to Alaska be constructed following the general line of the existing airway.

25 25-6 Feb 1942 RCAF to make further study of danger of air attack on Sault Ste. Marie area; Canadian Army to assign a heavy anti-aircraft battery to this area, to serve under operational command of Commanding General, Sault Ste. Marie Military District, Michigan.

26 9 Jun 1942 That airfields in Canadian territory be constructed to improve ferrying facilities across the North Atlantic (North-East Staging Route).

27 6 Jul 1942 That Canada and U.S. eliminate or suspend, for duration of the war, customs formalities etc. interfering with the free flow between the two countries of munitions and war supplies and of persons or materials connected therewith.

[...]

31 6-7 May 1943 Principles governing defence, maintenance and control of airfields on Canadian territory (U.S. normally to be responsible where airfield is used principally or exclusively by U.S. forces; Canada to be responsible in all other cases unless some special arrangement has been made).

[...]

33 6-7 Sep 1944 Disposition of defence facilities constructed or provided in Canada by U.S. or in U.S. by Canada.

All these 33 Recommendations were unanimously approved by the Board. The members did not reach decisions by voting — which would scarcely have been practicable in such an international body — but by discussion which proceeded until a basis was found on which unanimity could be achieved. Naturally the two Sections and individual members of them were not always equally enthusiastic about every Recommendation. For example, some at least of the Canadian members were not convinced that the Alaska Highway would have great military

value, but in view of the importance which their U.S. colleagues attached to the project they did not oppose it. This project had in fact received President Roosevelt's blessing before it came to the Board at all; and the Canadian Government had in effect committed itself by granting approval for a survey nearly a fortnight before the Board made its Recommendation. [...]

[...]

Following the line indicated in the 7th Recommendation, the service members of the Board prepared during the war two Basic Defence Plans. The first of these was the 'Joint Canadian United States Basic Defence Plan - 1940,' [which] was designed to meet the urgent needs of that moment: in particular, the situation that would arise if Britain were overrun by the Axis or the Royal Navy lost control of the North Atlantic. It also took account of possible aggression by 'an Asiatic Power.'

[...] The service members of the Board [in the spring of 1941] drafted a 'Joint Operational Plan No. 1' specifically intended to implement Basic Plan No. 1. The Canadian service members accepted on April 15 a version of this plan which vested the 'strategic direction' of the two countries' land and air forces in the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, subject to prior consultation with the Canadian Chief of Staff concerned. ('Strategic direction' was briefly defined as 'the assignment of missions and the allocation of the means required to accomplish them.')

[Soon 'Joint Canadian United States Basic Defence Plan No. 2' was developed. It was] designed to meet a situation in which the United States and the Commonwealth would be partners in a war whose object was to defeat the Axis, and not merely to prevent the Axis from conquering North America. [...]

The American view naturally enough was that Canada should as part of the new plan concede the strategic direction of her forces to the United States in the same manner as the service members had agreed should apply to Plan No. 1. The Canadian Section of the Board and the higher authorities to whom it reported were not prepared to do this. The Canadian Chiefs of Staff were ready to accept U.S. strategic direction in the circumstances visualized in the 1940 plan, which as explained above was a defensive plan designed to meet the desperate situation which would arise if Nazi Germany were in complete control of Europe, including the British Isles. They saw no need for accepting it in the circumstances envisaged in [the new plan]. This plan, they pointed out, was essentially offensive, designed to meet circumstances in which the primary object would not be to defend North America but rather 'to assist in the destruction of the enemy in any part of the world where Allied Forces may be sent to operate.' North America was not a theatre of operations or likely to become one. Accordingly the Canadian Chiefs of Staff[...] strongly advised 'against the acceptance by Canada of any proposal giving the United States unqualified strategic control of Canadian Armed Forces' [and the Cabinet War Committee agreed].

Unfortunately in the correspondence that followed between the Chairmen of the two Sections of the Board, the distinction between the Canadian attitudes on the two plans was not made as clear as would have been desirable. There was a rather uncomfortable exchange. [Chairman of the U.S. Section, New York] Mayor LaGuardia wrote to [Canadian Chairman] Colonel Biggar[...], 'I fear we are getting dangerously apart,' and added, 'It seems to me that it is far better to trust to the honor of the United States than to the mercy of the enemy.' Colonel Biggar replied that he fully appreciated the necessity of reaching cordial agreement, but that LaGuardia's letter had disturbed him. 'Canada,' he wrote, 'is all out in the war: the United States is not — yet. The time is therefore a very unpropitious one for it to be suggested that Canada should surrender to the United States what she has consistently asserted vis-à-vis Great Britain.' [Soon] the matter was cleared up[; in Basic Plan No. 2 the] passage ran, 'Coordination of the military effort of the United States and Canada shall be effected by mutual cooperation, and by assigning to the forces of each nation tasks for whose execution such forces shall be primarily responsible.'

[...]

After the Japanese attack in December 1941[, when] the two countries engaged in all-out war as allies, direct military liaison between their Chiefs of Staff tended to become more important and the functions of the permanent Joint Board on Defence somewhat less so. The Board met often during 1942; from then on meetings

became less frequent, and recommendations less frequent still.

[...]

The work of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence[...]afforded the United States a useful precedent in its dealings with other American nations, which was followed in the United States-Mexican Joint Defence Commission, agreed on in December 1940 and finally established early in 1942, and the United States-Brazilian Joint Board for Northeast Brazil, set up in December 1941. [...]

[...]

On February 12, 1947 the [Canadian and U.S.] governments issued a statement on the continuance of military cooperation between them which emphasized the importance of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence and incidentally reaffirmed an underlying principle which it had always observed: 'all cooperative arrangements will be without impairment of the control of either country over all activities in its territory.' Since that time the Board has continued to function as a valuable and indeed vital element in the pattern of Canadian-American relations."

<http://www.dnd.ca/hr/dhh/Downloads/ahq/ahq070.PDF>

Canadian-American Cooperation in the Defence of Sault Ste. Marie, 1941-1944

Major R.B. Oglesby

Historical Section, Army Headquarters, 1950

"The object of this report is to discuss the defence plans and measures undertaken by Canada and the United States for the protection of the canals and waterway at Sault Ste. Marie during the Second World War. [...]

IMPORTANCE OF THE SOO

Controlling all shipping entering or leaving Lake Superior, the St. Marys River and the canals at Sault Ste. Marie constitutes a 'bottleneck' in every sense of the word. During the relatively short navigation season they handle a vast amount of shipping for the grain-carrying trade and the movement of iron ore to such American industrial centres as Chicago and Detroit. In 1929 more traffic passed through the Soo than through the Panama and Suez canals combined; in 1942, due to heavy war requirements for iron ore, the total freight exceeded 120,000,000 tons.

[...] Placed side by side[, four locks on the American side] are served by two canals[...] The present Canadian canal[...]consists of a single lock 900 feet by 60 feet, with a minimum depth of water on sills of 19 feet.

[T]he population of the American city is approximately 15,000, that of the Canadian over 25,000. Many of the latter are employed by the Algoma Steel Corporation, whose plant at nearby Steelton has a capacity of about 720,000 tons annually and is Canada's chief producer of heavy structural shapes. Navigation and steel therefore cause Sault Ste. Marie to be of double importance in the North American economy.

During the First World War the inland position of Sault Ste. Marie provided absolute security from the danger of attack, except by possible saboteurs. The development of long-range bombers however produced in the Second World War very realistic fears of a sudden air raid, particularly from the North. A study of a globe or a polar projection map indicates that the air distance from Norway to the Soo is practically the same as to New York, and that the direct route of approximately 3000 miles passes over terrain where observers would be few and winter nights long. There was also a definite possibility that this route need not be traversed by a non-stop flight. During the winters of 1942-43 and 1943-44 the Germans were able to set up weather stations on the north-east coast of Greenland and maintain them for some months; a refuelling base in the same area might conceivably have been established and maintained without much greater difficulty. There was also the possibility that during the summer months underwater and even surface vessels, such as aircraft carriers, might have been able to enter Hudson Bay, if not James Bay, to set up a second and ultimate base for attack on North American industry.

[...]

AMERICAN CONCERN BEFORE PEARL HARBOR

Well before entering the war, the United States showed an obvious interest in the defence of the Soo. The Journal of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence records that a full discussion on the subject took place[...] on January 20, 1941. [...] On June 10, 1941 Colonel F.E. Sharpless, officer commanding Fort Brady[, Michigan], at his own request visited the headquarters of the local Reserve unit of the Canadian Army to confer with Lt-Col William Maybin, [whose] synopsis of what transpired [reads] as follows:

Col Sharpless has been asked by [U.S. Army] Corps H.Q. for a defence plan against any form of attack on the waterway system of the St. Marys River and the Soo Canal, which it is considered is vital to all industry in the United States.

The grave danger is believed to be from the large communistic element in the districts bordering Lake Superior, from the numerous fifth columnist elements, and other subversive groups also organized in those localities. It is pointed out that 85% of all the iron ore used in Canada and the United States passes through this bottleneck, and that the interruption of this trade for even a week would seriously hamper the war effort of both countries.

The possibility of a sacrifice attack by parachute troops as an incentive to these elements and in conjunction with them is taken into account. This would come from the North.

Lt-Col Maybin further reported that the existing defence arrangements on the Canadian side consisted of 'a guard of twenty-three men (veterans mostly) under the RCMP, of company arrangements for the defence of their own plants by the Algoma Steel Corp. and the Chromium Mining and Smelting Corp., which are not considered adequate, and by what help the local regiment could give.' Although 'fully informed' of these preparations and in close touch with the RCMP, the American commander admittedly had a much more ambitious project in mind. The report said in conclusion:

His plan, not fully formulated, calls for a perimeter defence of the whole area, the establishment of a bridgehead about forty miles long on this side of the river, occupied of course by Canadian troops, and a coordinated plan worked out by representatives of the armies of both countries, this to include:

- (a) A Radio Warning Net
- (b) A Bridgehead on the North side of the river
- (c) Aircraft Defence
- (d) Actual occupation of sensitive areas by armed troops.

[...]

INCREASED CONCERN AFTER PEARL HARBOR

Subsequent to the entry of the United States into the war, the [Permanent Joint Board on Defence recommended] 'the perfection of preparation for the common defence, including but not limited to the installations of accessory equipment in the territory of either[...]'

[...]

[The Canadian] Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence[...], in view of the slight risk of enemy attack, the distance inland and the shortage of anti-aircraft equipment, [recommended] that 'no allotment of A.A. guns should be made to Sault Ste. Marie at the present time but that the matter should be reviewed in six months time.' [...]

[...]

[O]n February 25-26, 1942, the PJBD again discussed the defence of the Soo. The threat to this area was considered to be from Europe or from a possible air base in the Hudson-James Bay region, although the RCAF stressed that air attack could not take place from these bays until after the opening of navigation, normally about July 25. The RCAF had reconnoitred that area the previous year and had linked all radio facilities with the Aircraft Detection Corps, and a more extensive reconnaissance was planned for the danger period. The U.S. members declared that their country intended to take more definite steps with regard to Sault Ste. Marie. The Board was informed that United States defensive forces in the Military District would be augmented in the

immediate future by an anti-aircraft regiment (less one gun battalion) and by a squadron of pursuit planes and a battery of barrage balloons as soon as equipment becomes available[....] In view of this extensive programme, the PJBD [recommended:]

(a) That the Royal Canadian Air Force undertake to make an immediate and comprehensive further study of the data available regarding the danger of air attack to the Sault Ste. Marie area.

(b) That the Canadian Army assign a 4-gun, heavy anti-aircraft battery to Sault Ste. Marie to protect the Canadian locks and to tie in with the United States forces in order that all-round zone defences may be established. In the event of Canada being unable to provide this equipment within the near future, the United States Army endeavour to lend the necessary guns and stores for manning by the Canadian Army until such time as Canada can meet this commitment from her own production.

(c) That the said Canadian anti-aircraft battery come under the operational command of the Commanding General, Sault Ste. Marie Military District (Michigan).

The Department of National Defence at once proceeded to form a battery to man four 3.7-inch guns [and] the unit was sent at the end of May to Atlantic Command for training[....]

AMERICAN 'OCCUPATION' OF THE CANADIAN SOO

[...]

Previously, Lt-Col J.H. Jenkins of the Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence had informed the Private Secretary to the Minister of National Defence that 'in the discussion at the Board meeting and in any subsequent correspondence there has been no mention at any time of U.S. army personnel being stationed in the Canadian section of the Sault Ste. Marie for the purpose of manning A.A. guns.' He stated however that there was a possibility that if the United States made a temporary loan of four A.A. guns in accordance with the [PJBD recommendation], 'they may be accompanied by a small party who will assist in maintenance duties until the Canadian personnel are familiar with the U.S. equipment.' [...]

[S]tartling developments were brought to the attention of Lt-Col Jenkins, who has recorded the following:

At 1630 hours 26th March, Dr. Keenleyside External Affairs telephoned to advise that he had been informed by Immigration that the U.S. Army Commander at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan had requested permission to obtain suitable sites and accommodation for approximately 600 members of the U.S. Army who would be manning A.A. guns, searchlights and lookout posts in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

He also stated that this matter had not been arranged by consultation between the State Departments in Washington and Ottawa respectively. [...]

The following day Mr. G.E. Nixon, M.P. (Algoma West), asked whether the U.S. Army would be manning A.A. defences in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, which was in his constituency, and if the whole area was to be under command of their [colonel] in charge of A.A. defences in Michigan. [...]Lt-Col Jenkins [said] that the 40th A.A. Battery RCA would come under the operational control of the U.S. Commander, 'as it was essential that the A.A. defences of the Soo area be co-ordinated, and that to ensure all-round defence it was possible that the U.S. might wish to mount some of their guns and lookout posts on the Canadian side.' [...]

Lt-Col Jenkins also had a visit from a representative of the Bell Telephone Company, who stated that the U.S. Army were arranging for special telephone circuits in Michigan, a submarine cable across the river to be installed by the United States Coast Guard, and 'a system of radiating circuits to be made available by the Bell Telephone Co. in the Ontario Soo for the U.S Army to connect their battery and other communication lines.'

[...]

[Lt-Col Jenkins received further information that day from Washington, saying] the U.S. War Dept had been subjected to strong pressure from the U.S. steel industry and Congress to take immediate steps to provide adequate defences for the Soo. As a result they had moved a regiment of Infantry to the Michigan Soo in addition to the A.A. defences which were discussed at the last Board meeting. [I]t was not the intention to ask Canada to man more than the four Heavy A.A. guns dealt with in the recommendation. However, the U.S. War Dept was extremely insistent that there should be no delay in proceeding with the siting and manning of the U.S.

manned equipment on the Canadian side[...]

[...]

[T]he PJBD [met] on April 7-8, 1942, [when the] measures which had already been taken for the defence of the Soo and Arvida [Quebec] were reviewed in detail and it was concluded that appropriate provisions were being made by both governments, considering the requirements elsewhere. [Canadian member] Maj-Gen Pope [noted that] Captain Forrest P. Sherman, U.S. Navy Member, '[...]observed that possibly our Joint plans might with advantage be related to the needs of other theatres, thereby intimating that in respect, say, of the Soo and Arvida, we might be in danger of assigning too much equipment sorely needed farther afield. While he had no criticism to make of the provision reported, I think his word of warning was very welcome, as it shows that to his mind our arrangements are adequate and that overseas requirements should not be lost to view.'

Although the urgency of Pacific defences was far from being on the wane, these remarks are of special interest as probably the first American suggestion to the PJBD that North American defences should be subordinated to the global strategy of the United Nations.

[...]

FURTHER MEASURES OF PROTECTION BY THE U.S. ARMY

Throughout the summer of 1942, the Americans continued to show a very keen interest in the defence of the Soo. [When in July] the Department of Transport [reported] that the U.S. Army had moved additional infantry personnel to the Canadian side for the purpose of mounting armed guards on the Canadian locks, the [regional Canadian army staff informed headquarters] that 'Infantry Detachments must be established on the perimeter as well as within the vulnerable area, [and it] is therefore the opinion of the Commanding General, Fort Brady, that the occupation of the ground about the Canadian ship canal is vital to the security of the vulnerable areas... It should be added that the Commanding General, Fort Brady, anticipates that personnel of the RCMP on the Canadian ship canal will continue to function in respect of those duties which can better be performed by Canadian police than by soldiers. All American ships passing through the canal zone carry United States Coast Guardsmen. It is desirable therefore that United States personnel should guard all locks for better cooperation.

[...]

[In July] the United States District Headquarters at Fort Brady proposed to establish Radar Aircraft Detector equipment at Cochrane, Hearst, Nakina, Armstrong, and Sioux Lookout, Ontario. [...] Detachments were to be sent out within a fortnight and to be quartered under canvas until huts were constructed. Advising Dr.

Keenleyside of this, Air Commodore Heakes wrote 'I am unaware of permission having been given to the United States for this purpose, and am wondering if it should be dealt with through the Permanent Joint Board on Defence. In reply, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, finding the relevant sections of the PJBD Journal 'not entirely explicit,' gave his opinion that...it would not be unreasonable for the United States to interpret them as authorizing the United States to go ahead with the establishment of the aircraft detection equipment and personnel.' [...] Early in August 1942, U.S. Army Engineers visited Northern Ontario and made satisfactory arrangements for sites. The PJBD meeting on September 1, 1942 expressed general agreement.

[...]

ARRIVAL OF 40 A.A. BATTERY RCA

The problem meanwhile was to prepare the Canadian Battery to take up its duties at the Soo, for prior to May none of its personnel had even seen a 3.7-inch A.A. gun fired. Pointing out that the Americans had a coloured unit there, the [regional staff] wrote:

...Partly for this reason and partly for the prestige of the Canadian Forces generally and the 40th A.A. Bty. RCA in particular, it is considered very necessary that this Battery should not proceed to the Sault until it is fully trained and ready to take over equipment from a Battery of the United States Army.

[...] Arrangements were[...]made for the battery to leave Halifax for the Soo on August 6, 1942.

[...]

TROUBLE WITH BARRAGE BALLOONS

By the end of May 1942 the U.S. Army had installed a number of barrage balloons [(large, bulletproof balloons tethered by cables, designed as barriers to enemy aircraft)] at the Soo, but during storms that month as well as in August and October some of these broke away from their moorings and caused short circuits in the local power system through trailing steel cables across transmission lines. One such balloon even interrupted power to the Michipicoten mine some 100 miles north. Considerable concern was felt over the effect upon the war effort of the Canadian Soo, particularly through shut-offs at the steel works, paper mills and chromium plants. The October incident, the most serious, caused an estimated loss of 400 tons of steel and 10 tons of ferro-alloys. Fearing a possible breakdown of 20-year-old transformers and dynamos, one of the company officials even asked if something could be done about shooting down loose barrage balloons with A.A. fire.

The matter was taken up at the November meeting of the PJBD, when the U.S. Army undertook to consider the adoption of the British Army procedure of not putting up balloons until an 'alert.' [The major-general in command at the Soo reported later] that 'all balloons heretofore flown are being replaced by a superior type of British balloon which is far less subject to breakaway.' The files mention no further incidents.

CANADIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS AT THE SOO

An indication of the far-reaching plans of the Americans is found in the report of a visit to the Soo in September 1942 by the [Canadian] Inspector-General. In this he stated that the Canadian-American forces defending the Soo already totalled about 6000 on both sides of the border. [...] The following extracts from his report are of interest:

[...]

The forces are disposed to meet air attack from the north, east, or west, and airborne troops landed south of the position...

Recent wet weather has made the positions reminiscent of the Passchendaele battlefield.

I was informed that it is the intention to install anti-submarine nets at the entrances to the locks.

[...]

The 100th Coast Artillery A.A. Regt. is a Negro Regiment and it is expected that they will feel the winter weather very severely. It may be necessary to replace them with a white regiment...

[...]

The impression I obtained was that the U.S. Army authorities exaggerate the possibilities of hostile attack but that the operational dispositions in this area are in an experimental condition. [The American regional commander] expressed the opinion that he considered hostile attack unlikely but "nothing is impossible." It is not recommended that any additional troops or equipment be allotted to this area.

Apart from brief references to visits and inspections by U.S. officers, the War Diary of 40 A.A. Bty. gives very little indication that the unit was under American operational control. There is frequent mention of close cooperation in sports and entertainment however, USO shows being particularly enjoyed. The Canadian city, being the larger, usually provided the greater number of partners for dances held on both sides of the river. [I]n October 1942 an intelligence officer[...]reported having attended a security meeting at Fort Brady on October 5, when problems caused by the presence of coloured troops were explored. He later commented on this conference as follows:

Local resentment has slowly been rising against these troops. This has been fed to some extent by idle gossip, none of which seems to be founded on fact. There have been cases where it is stated that they follow white women but no case in which they have molested Canadian women has been proven. Young girls are stated to be attracted toward these troops and thereby cause race resentment...

In general, insofar as Canada is concerned, it is stated that these troops have actually been no trouble at all. In fact, one prominent authority states that they have been of less trouble than an equal number of white troops would have been.

The coloured troops were replaced by whites in April 1943[....]

[...]

FURTHER PLANS FOR DEFENCE

[...]

At the February meeting of the PJBD it had been agreed that [its previous recommendations for defence of coastal areas should extend to interior areas.] It was further agreed that[...]the making of such plans would not obligate either Government to implement them with equipment or personnel. [...] A resulting draft plan prepared by U.S. officers proposed no less than 23 radar installations extending from Prince Edward Island to the Ontario-Manitoba border. With minor amendments the Canadian Chiefs of Staff Committee approved in principle but took no steps to implement its extensive requirements. In these discussions the measures already in force at the Soo appear to have been satisfactory to both parties.

[...]

[In July 1943,] newspapers were permitted to disclose that the Canadian city had been incorporated into an American military area and that U.S. troops were stationed there. Stating that on the authority of [the American regional commander] this news was revealed for the first time, an article in the Toronto Globe and Mail included photographs of barrage balloons and of American sentries on guard.

WITHDRAWAL OF 40 A.A. BTY.

To meet heavy demands upon manpower for overseas services, however, Canada was at that very time considering reducing to the absolute minimum the number of personnel employed on A.A. defences in view of the improved situation abroad. [Canadian military staff] proposed in July to withdraw the A.A. defences completely from certain areas, including the Soo[, arguing that] ‘provision of the Canadian Bty. is only in the nature of a gesture of cooperation with U.S. in providing defences for the area, as the Canadian Soo would not in itself warrant any A.A. defences on the part of Canada...’

On being asked for his advice, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs wrote:

My inclination is to believe that while there might be some objection from the United States, the people of Canada, and even those of Sault Ste. Marie itself, would not now seriously object to the withdrawal of the Battery in question if the military authorities feel that the personnel and equipment in question could be used more effectively at some other place.

[The battery was withdrawn at the close of the shipping season on December 15, 1943.]

WITHDRAWAL OF REMAINING AMERICAN FORCES

The Americans on their part soon followed with further drastic reductions early in the new year. [...] On 22 Jan [the Commanding Officer at Fort Brady] informed the Canadian authorities as follows:

The Central Air Defence Region is being inactivated and the Signal Air Warning System is being withdrawn. Five radar stations now in operation in the Province of Ontario are to be inactivated and withdrawn as soon as arrangements can be made therefor. One long range radar located in the vicinity of Grand Marais, Michigan and one in the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie, supplemented by two short range radars in the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie, will be utilized to give warning of the approach of unidentified planes. ...the Barrage Balloon Battalion will probably be withdrawn during the week February 1-7. Anti-aircraft activities on the Ontario side of the St. Marys River have been discontinued this date. [...]

[On] January 28, 1944[...]the War Department [issued instructions] to withdraw the A.A. and Signal Warning equipment from the Soo and to keep troops there only as guards. [...] U.S. troops on guard duty at the Canadian Soo left the country [by] February 29, 1944.

[...]”

<http://www.dnd.ca/hr/dhh/Downloads/ahq/ahq034.PDF>

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE:

The Difference in Race Relations

from "Canadian Relations with the People of the United Kingdom, and General Problems of Morale, 1939-44"
Report No. 119, Historical Officer, Canadian Military Headquarters, June 30, 1944

"[...]

One distinction between the Canadian and American armies is worth noting. It is best expressed in the words of a coloured Canadian soldier quoted in the 78th fortnightly report of the Field Censors [(who read all mail sent by soldiers)]:

Most of the negro Americans here can't seem to understand just why we are not separated from the whites like they are. It is a difficult question to answer, but in short it adds up to just one thing. There is no racial prejudice in the Canadian Forces. We eat, sleep, play and fight together, and each gun crew is a well trained fighting unit with everybody protecting the other man. It is a wonderful army, this army of ours. Only one out of every 150 coloured are servants, the rest are qualified soldiers: infantry, tank, artillery, air force, navy, and last but not least the paratroops.

(Gunner, 2nd H.A.A. Regt., RCA)"

<http://www.dnd.ca/hr/dhh/Downloads/cmhq/CMHQ119.PDF>

ALSO SEE:

Photograph of the Canadian Soo Lock

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/ssm/images/common/pict/transpo/lock4.jpg>

Submarine Warfare in the St. Lawrence, 1942

http://collections.ic.gc.ca/stlauren/hist/hi_subwar.htm

Headline of first sub attack (The Halifax Herald)

http://collections.ic.gc.ca/stlauren/hist/hi_subwar.jpg

Japanese Paper Balloon Bombs

These were World War II incendiary bombs delivered by huge balloons made of mulberry paper and released to drift across the Pacific to where they would start forest fires in North America. See:

The Mission

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/balloons/mission.htm>

List of bombing sites in North America

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/balloons/related.htm>

Map of sites and sightings in North America

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/balloons/north.htm> (text)

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/balloons/namap.JPG> (image)

Map of drift routes across Pacific

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/balloons/travel.htm> (text)

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/balloons/map1.jpg> (image)

Guardians of the North

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/superheroes/>

Especially see war-time Canadian comic book heroes:

Nelvana of the Northern Lights

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/superheroes/t3-302-e.html>

Canada Jack

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/superheroes/t3-303-e.html>

ACTIVITY

Though very serious at the time, we might look back on the defence of the Soo locks as being fairly humorous. Create a cartoon satire of the Soo story, picking out the ridiculous images in the military history report and putting each one in a separate frame. Have fun with images like communists lurking around Lake Superior, submarines approaching the locks, anti-aircraft guns firing at runaway balloons, etc. Give your series of frames continuity by following the story's development (initial concern - American build-up - Canadian compliance - Canadian withdrawal - American withdrawal). Make fun of the U.S. Army, the Canadian military and the civilians living with them.

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