

FDR: America's Goals and Purpose in WW II

The December 7, 1941 attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor ended any hope that America could avoid fully joining the fight. A month after the attack, FDR made a report on the war situation to Congress. This is a condensed selection.

January 1942: First War Address Before Congress

I am proud to say to you that the spirit of the American people was never higher than it is today. The response of the American people has been instantaneous, and it will be sustained until our security is assured.

Japan's scheme of conquest goes back half a century. It is not merely a policy of seeking living room, but a plan which included the subjugation [conquering] of all the peoples in the Far East and in the islands of the Pacific.

A similar policy of criminal conquest was adopted by Italy. The Fascists first revealed their imperial designs in 1935. Their goal was the domination of all North Africa, Egypt, part of France and the entire Mediterranean world.

But the dreams of empire of the Japanese and Fascist leaders were modest in comparison with the aspirations of Hitler and his Nazis. Their plans called for the ultimate domination of the whole earth. When Hitler organized his Berlin-Rome-Tokyo alliance, all these plans of conquest became a single plan.

Our own objectives [goals] are clear: the objective of smashing the militarism imposed by warlords upon their enslaved peoples; the objective of liberating the subjugated nations; the objective of establishing and securing freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear everywhere in the world.

We know that modern methods of warfare make it a task not only of shooting and fighting, but an even more urgent one of working and producing. The superiority of the Allies in munitions [weapons] and ships must be overwhelming. We must strain every existing armament producing facility to the utmost. We must convert every available plant and tool to war production.



We are fighting today for security and progress and for peace, not only for ourselves, but for all men; not only for one generation, but for all generations.

Our enemies are guided by a brutal cynicism, by unholy contempt for the human race. We are inspired by a faith which goes back through all the years to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis [in the Bible]: "God created man in His own image."

We on our side are striving to be true to that divine heritage. We are fighting, as our fathers have fought, to uphold the doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God. Those on the other side are striving to destroy this deep belief and to create a world in their own image, a world of tyranny and cruelty and serfdom.

This is the conflict that day and night now pervades [completely fills] our lives.

Questions: *What does FDR say the three Axis nations want? What does he say are the objectives of the Americans? What does he say it will take to win the war? What moral value or belief is at the root of the conflict, according to FDR?*

Permission to Copy for Classroom Use

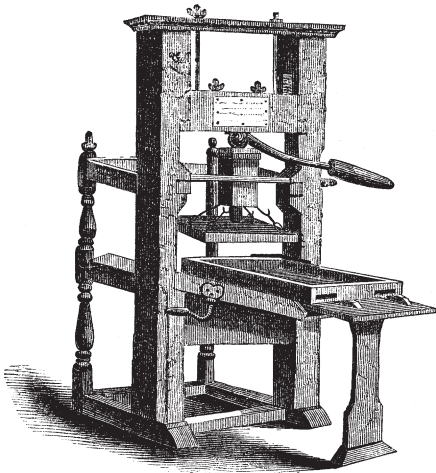
Teachers and students are welcome to download this **History in Their Own Words** selection, free of charge, for noncommercial, educational use. Teachers are welcome to make photocopies of these reading selection pages as needed for students in their own classes. We ask that:

- * You make no changes or additions of any kind to the pages.
- * You leave the copyright information visible on all pages and copies.

You may not post these materials in any form on any other web site or server, or copy their content for use in any other form or publication, whether print or electronic, without written permission from Fasttrack Teaching Materials.

Most of these primary source readings are condensed from the original texts to make them more easily accessible to students. They were chosen for the ideas, values, and insights they offer to young people seeking to understand America's past, the world they live in, and themselves. The selections use the original author's words except where condensation or modern usage requires very slight editing.

PDF files - downloading and printing tips



Internet browsers can print an open PDF file page directly, but the layout and spacing are not always exactly correct.

For best results, right click on a PDF file link that you want. Choose "Save Link As" or "Save Target As" to download the PDF file to your desktop or to a folder. Double click on that downloaded file, so it will open in the regular PDF reader that is on your computer.

Print it "actual size" (100%) from the PDF reader and it should look exactly right!

**For copyright questions, please contact Fasttrack Teaching Materials at
ftm.contact@verizon.net**