



3-17-1941

Memorandum in Rebuttal of Further Isolationism, March 17, 1941

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/fmhw_secondworldwar_documents



Part of the [Diplomatic History Commons](#), [Political History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

[Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.](#)

Recommended Citation

Huntington-Wilson, Francis Mairs, "Memorandum in Rebuttal of Further Isolationism, March 17, 1941" (1941). *World War II Era Documents, 1939-1945*. 40.
https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/fmhw_secondworldwar_documents/40

This Memorandum is brought to you for free and open access by the World War II Era (1939-1945) at Digital Commons @ Ursinus College. It has been accepted for inclusion in World War II Era Documents, 1939-1945 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Ursinus College. For more information, please contact aprock@ursinus.edu.

Memorandum in rebuttal of further isolationism

by F.M. Huntington-Wilson, 3/17/41

The American people, acting under their Constitution, through their representatives in Congress and their President, have decided that all-out help to Britain, and cooperation with Britain, are America's best defense. Consequently, that is the policy of the United States.

Before March 11, 1941, when H.R. 1776 became the law of the land, the propaganda of the isolationists and their supporters could, perhaps, be accepted as the work of a legitimate political organ, endeavoring to impose it's ideas upon the people, and its policies upon the Government.

From the moment the law for all-out help to Britain passed, the situation completely changed. Now, those who oppose all-out aid to Britain are placed in a new and quite different position. Now, if they continue their activities, they become an arrogant minority seeking to sabotage the method of American defense constitutionally adopted by the great majority of the American people.

The United States is not yet formally at war with Germany, but we are in a national emergency almost equal to a state of war. At a time like this, surely honor and patriotism should estop any American from exercising his legal right of free speech in a fashion that is detrimental to the national interest. For example, the head of the "America First" committee once made remarks that Hitler found it useful to quote in rallying the Germans against Britain. If they had been made since H.R. 1776 became the law of the land, such remarks would have been treasonable in effect, however innocent their intent, because they give comfort to the power against which we are arming.

In considering what is treasonable, we must bring our ideas up to date. At the foundation of the Republic treason was defined as "giving aid and

comfort to the enemy". Then it was succor, arms, or information by the slow way of sailing ships. Modern propaganda and the "war of nerves" were unknown. Then, loose talk in our country hardly mattered. Nevertheless, long ago there was enacted a law forbidding correspondence with foreign governments to the detriment of the foreign relations of the United States. This is still the law. Today every statement made by any well known person, however unqualified to express an opinion, is instantly known throughout the world, thanks to radio; and is equivalent to a communication to a hostile government.

Any continuance of agitation against our national policy of all-out aid to Britain tends to divide and confuse us, and so to weaken our defense effort. Therefore, whatever may be the sincerity of some elements in the minority pressure group of isolationists, and their supporters, they will, if they continue their activities, be doing, gratis, a work of propaganda that Hitler and Goebels would pay any amount of money to have done for them.

Americans should be on their guard against any energetic minority that seeks to sabotage the policy of defense we have adopted. We should remember that in Russia it was a determined (and unscrupulous) minority, the Bolsheviki, who overthrew the republic and brought dictatorship; that a small, clever, minority put the German people under Hitler's heel. We must be ready to stop, before it gains any headway, any and all attempts, malicious or innocent, to sabotage the national policy of defending America by cooperation with Britain.