

Austria has been overrun. Czechoslovakia had been raped, the fairest portion of its resources appropriated, and its people reduced to mere existence under the military over-lords of Germany. The ambition of such rulers of ruin, however, creates the condition it feeds upon. The history of such, makes it plain that they never cease in their ravage upon the peace and safety of peoples and nations until they are stopped by force.

In September 1939 came the onslaught upon Poland—next the usurpation of Norway—then followed the overrunning of Denmark—Holland—Belgium—and France,—all within the year. Then it was that the average of us began looking the situation in the face. The Atlantic Ocean, we found, was not for practical purposes as wide as we thought it was; modern invention had narrowed it—as in fact it had narrowed the world.

We saw not only this evidence of colossal military power loosed sneakingly upon the world in defiance of international decency, but behind that power we saw hundreds of millions of peaceful, industrious, God-fearing men and women, who had either been led or as a result of devilish ingenuity forced into a new kind of enslavement. Throughout large portions of the old world we saw that century-old individual rights and privileges had been either surrendered or taken away; that the right to speak, write, print, and travel had been limited; that the method of religious worship had been infringed upon—and often outraged; that even the privilege of listening to what came over the radio had been, in many instances, made a penal offense. In addition, the choice of employment, the right of purchase and sale as we know it, had been taken away. We saw further that the imposition of this same sort of system was determined upon for the peoples of the countries so recently overrun.

With these examples of ravage and international holdup confronting us, the fearful conclusion was forced that no free nation in any part of the globe was any longer safe except to the extent that it might by force protect itself. Thus it was that the leaders of our Nation came to advise us that we must arm ourselves—and arm ourselves completely and quickly—if we wished to continue to be free.

But what are we to do about it. Obviously, primary responsibility rests upon the National Government for the fullest development of a Nation-wide program guaranteeing National Defense. However, it is equally clear that our Nation is simply the total of forty-eight separate sovereignties and, unless each state does its part adequately, and successfully, the whole program is not satisfactorily completed.

It is for this reason that I think it will be of interest to you to discuss briefly the plan now in process of development for the creation of a Maryland State Guard. Only a few days ago, Secretary of War Stimson urged that the respective states proceed to form these units. He went further and, after emphasizing the need for their creation, offered equipment and supplies from the War Department to the various states. Fortunately, we were not caught unprepared by the recently enacted Federal law authorizing the states to form these units. Maryland has been quietly but definitely projecting plans for such a unit and we will lose no time in completing this set-up just as soon as the time arrives and legal authority justifies it.

Maryland's plan is to form a regiment to be distinguished from the National Guard and to be identified as a State Guard. It is planned to have the unit under the supervision of a well-qualified officer, possessed of military