

Franklin Delano Roosevelt  
Fireside Chat (excerpts)  
Delivered May 26, 1940

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... There are many among us who in the past closed their eyes to events abroad—because they believed in utter good faith what some of their fellow Americans told them—that what was taking place in Europe was none of our business; that no matter what happened over there, the United States could always pursue its peaceful and unique course in the world.

There are many among us who closed their eyes, from lack of interest or lack of knowledge; honestly and sincerely thinking that the many hundreds of miles of salt water made the American Hemisphere so remote that the people of North and Central and South America could go on living in the midst of their vast resources without reference to, or danger from, other continents of the world.

There are some among us who were persuaded by minority groups that we could maintain our physical safety by retiring within our continental boundaries—the Atlantic on the east, the Pacific on the west, Canada on the north, and Mexico on the south . . . a defense policy based on that is merely to invite future attack. . . .

Source: Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940, 230–231.