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## Champion of Liberty: Winston Churchill and His Message to America

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### Abstract

*Political freedom does not occur naturally. Societies must fight to establish it, struggle to maintain it, and sacrifice to defend it. For Winston Churchill, the defense of freedom required manly firmness despite fear and difficulty—not only on the battlefield, but also in the realm of ideas. Churchill believed that a unified front of the nations dedicated to freedom was necessary for their security, both in times of war and in times of peace. He especially thought it crucial for the United States and England to maintain their special relationship. Americans should reflect on the life and career of the man whose name has become synonymous with struggle against tyranny and with hope in times of gathering shadows. His writings remind us of freedom’s unique value and fragility and of the means by which to defend it.*

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the death of Sir Winston S. Churchill. Dwight D. Eisenhower, fortified by memories of long association and collaboration with Churchill through cataclysmic events, wrote a remembrance for *National Geographic*: “When Sir Winston Churchill died on January 24, 1965, full of years and honors, the entire world quickened with emotions of grief and of pride. Grief for his passing; pride in this champion who had so gallantly upheld freedom in its darkest hour.”

Central to Eisenhower’s tribute is Churchill’s relationship with America. Eisenhower reports Churchill saying, “My mother was American and my ancestors were officers in Washington’s army, I am

myself an English-speaking union.” And Churchill behaved accordingly, working “tirelessly to cement the British–American alliance.”<sup>1</sup>

The United States is interwoven throughout Churchill’s story from start to finish. Indeed, the importance he placed on the Anglo–American relationship formed the final message to his Cabinet before his retirement in 1955: “Never be separated from the Americans.”<sup>2</sup> He embraced this message when he accepted honorary United States citizenship in 1963, and it shaped one of the laurels of victory that crowned his remarkable life when the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” was sung at his funeral at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Americans would do well to pause to meditate upon the life and career of the man whose name has become synonymous with struggle against tyranny and with hope in times of gathering shadow. His legacy reminds us that the political principles that form the root of freedom-loving nations must be adhered to, propagated, and defended.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <http://report.heritage.org/fp54>

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## Churchill's Journey

Churchill's life and career were colossal, and at every stage of his remarkable journey, there were connections to America. Over the course of 66 years, Churchill made 16 visits to the United States, beginning in 1895, when he was a 20-year-old second lieutenant embarking on his cobbled-together adventure in Cuba, and ending in 1961 when, now 86 and in less of a hurry, he sailed into New York Harbor aboard the Onassis yacht *Christina*. He traveled here as soldier, lecturer, politician, tourist, world leader, wartime ally, and elder statesman, and on every visit, the United States made as indelible an impression upon him as he did upon it.

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Throughout his many trips to America, Churchill met and befriended many influential Americans. In 1895, he met William Bourke Cockran, a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, who was to be his longtime friend and political mentor. In 1900, he met President William McKinley, was introduced as a speaker by Mark Twain, and made a poor impression on Theodore Roosevelt. In 1929, he traveled throughout the country, including a tour of Civil War battlefields, met press baron William Randolph Hearst and President Herbert Hoover, and witnessed the immediate effects of the stock market crash. In 1931–1932, he

delivered 40 lectures to packed houses across the country and was struck by a car on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

In late 1941, on the precipice of America's entry into World War II, he met with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and spoke to a congressional assembly as the head of an embattled nation and as an ally in deadly conflict. In 1942, he met Generals Eisenhower and Mark Clark and sought to settle questions of collaborative strategy. In 1943, he spoke at Harvard University on the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples. In 1944, he paid a brief visit to Hyde Park to confer with FDR in the wake of the Quebec Conference.

Returning to America, out of office but still influential, Churchill delivered the rhetorical opening shot of the Cold War, declaring that an "iron curtain has descended across the Continent," at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, in 1946. He would follow up this message of determined vigilance in 1949 at M.I.T., speaking on the eve of the signing of the NATO pact.

In 1952, Prime Minister once again, he attended President Harry Truman's State of the Union Address, spoke to Congress a third time, and strove to maintain Britain's importance and active role in NATO. In an attempt to keep the fires of Anglo-American cooperation burning steadily, he met with President Eisenhower in 1953 and 1954. In 1959, now effectively retired, he simply wished to visit the remaining old comrades, politicians, and military men, with whom he had been through so much. Eisenhower took three full days out of his schedule to show him hospitality.<sup>3</sup>

While Churchill's relationship with the United States spanned his extraordinary life, it reached its apex during the Second World War. Before America's entry into the war, he worked mightily to secure the support Britain so desperately needed. That aid came in the form of the Lend-Lease program, which Churchill referred to as "the most unsordid act in the whole of recorded history."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Dwight D. Eisenhower, "The Churchill I Knew," *National Geographic*, Vol. 128, No. 2 (August 1965), pp. 153–157.

2. Quoted in Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (New York: Owl Books, 1991), p. 939.

3. Robert H. Pilpel, *Churchill in America, 1896–1961: An Affectionate Portrait* (London: New English Library Ltd., 1977), p. 274. This survey of visits draws on Pilpel and on Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and America* (New York: Free Press, 2005).

4. "A Warning to Japan," November 10, 1941, in *Winston Churchill: His Complete Speeches 1897–1963*, 8 vols., ed. Robert Rhodes James (London: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974), Vol. VI, p. 6505. Lend-Lease provided Britain with resources for the war against Germany while deferring payment in exchange for non-monetary considerations such as 99-year leases on territory to be used for U.S. bases.

When the United States entered the war, Churchill was profoundly relieved: “I went to bed and slept the sleep of the saved and the thankful.”<sup>5</sup> He lost little time in traveling to Washington, where he proclaimed before a joint session of Congress in late December 1941 that “the best tidings of all is that the United States, united as never before, have drawn the sword for freedom and cast away the scabbard.”<sup>6</sup> But Churchill’s appeal to America was not merely the product of necessity; its wellspring was a common devotion to the principles of freedom.

### The “Gettysburg Ideal”

Churchill was already known to many Americans when he spoke to Congress in December 1941, and despite lingering isolationist sentiments in the U.S., he was favorably received. His “finest-hour” radio speeches, rebroadcast in the United States and published here under the title *Blood, Sweat, and Tears*, were given great attention. *The Saturday Review of Literature* proclaimed that “if British democracy wins the war, Winston Churchill will rank with Abraham Lincoln in the annals of freedom.” The *Yale Review* praised Churchill’s oratory for encapsulating patriotism “which burns with such intensity that it has transcended the boundaries of a state until it has become the beacon of the Western way of life.”<sup>7</sup>

This increasingly intense popular appreciation was an encouraging addition to the crucial support offered by FDR, both in the form of matériel and in expressions of like-mindedness, reaching an apex with the Atlantic Charter in August 1941, which defined Allied goals for the post-war world. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and Germany’s declaration of war on the United States on December 11, 1941, cemented the alliance. When he spoke before Congress, Churchill was now speaking to Americans as partner in an all-consuming contest between competing ways of life.

Churchill’s first concern was to remind his listeners of the beliefs and traditions shared by Britain and

America, for they were the basis for the joint action of which he was about to speak. Yet despite common belief, he knew that common action would involve difficulties of planning and execution, including disagreements over strategy, command, logistics, diplomacy, and—the greatest divergence—the preservation of the British Empire in the post-war world and thus Britain’s status as a world power. Yet through it all, common action was made possible by common purpose sprung from common principle.

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Churchill was a self-described partisan of democracy, and he expressed his political devotion by referencing its British and American lineage:

I am a child of the House of Commons. I was brought up in my father’s house to believe in democracy. “Trust the people”—that was his message.... Therefore I have been in full harmony all my life with the tides which have flowed on both sides of the Atlantic against privilege and monopoly, and I have steered confidently towards the Gettysburg ideal of “government of the people by the people for the people.” In my country, as in yours, public men are proud to be the servants of the State and would be ashamed to be its masters.<sup>8</sup>

Churchill believed himself to have much in common with Lincoln, specifically regarding our common belief in the sovereignty of the people. He wished always to dwell on the essential political harmony of the two nations, insisting that “our differences are more apparent than real, and are the result

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5. Geoffrey Best, *Churchill: A Study in Greatness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

6. “A Long and Hard War,” December 26, 1941, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VI, p. 6539.

7. John Ramsden, *Man of the Century: Winston Churchill and His Legend Since 1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 333–334.

8. “A Long and Hard War,” December 26, 1941, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VI, p. 6536.

of geographical and other physical conditions rather than any true division of principle.”<sup>9</sup>

Even the Declaration of Independence, he noted, “was in the main a restatement of the principles which had animated the Whig struggle against the later Stuarts and the English Revolution of 1688.”<sup>10</sup> The principles of the Declaration, while shaped to meet the particular needs of America, according to Churchill, lost thereby none of their historical or philosophic integrity: They retained the fundamental nature of the British sources from which they were drawn.

Churchill’s account of the Constitution of the United States in *A History of the English Speaking Peoples* is built around this same understanding of the centrality of governmental responsibility to the people. One does not find there a detailed apologia for the specific constitutional forms and operations adopted by the Framers of America’s Constitution, largely because the specific constitutional forms are not as important to him as the principles that animate them:

At first sight this authoritative document presents a sharp contrast with the store of traditions and precedents that make up the unwritten Constitution of Britain. Yet behind it lay no revolutionary theory. It was based not upon the challenging writings of the French philosophers who were soon to set Europe ablaze, but an Old

English doctrine, freshly formulated to meet an urgent American need. The Constitution was a reaffirmation of faith in the principles painfully evolved over the centuries by the English-speaking peoples.<sup>11</sup>

Written or unwritten, Prime Minister or President, Churchill stressed that the two constitutional structures were animated by the same principles of political freedom. Part of Churchill’s purpose in speaking to Congress was to remind its Members and all Americans that, despite differences in political forms, the same principles shaped politics on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>12</sup>

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This emphasis on principle is not to say that Churchill was not aware of the differences in political forms or did not understand them. He was quite capable of discussing them and applying them to

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9. “Liberty and the Law,” July 31, 1957, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VIII, pp. 8682–8683. This speech echoes his long-held beliefs. See Winston S. Churchill, “This Age of Government by Great Dictators,” in *The Collected Essays of Sir Winston Churchill*, 4 vols., ed. Michael Wolff (London: Library of Imperial History, 1975), Vol. IV, pp. 393–394: “The forms were often varied, but the idea was the same. Sometimes, as in the United States, through historical incidents, an elected functionary replaced the hereditary king, but the idea of the separation of powers between the executive, the assemblies and the courts of law widely spread throughout the world in what we must regard as the great days of the nineteenth century.”
  10. Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English Speaking Peoples*, 4 vols. (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1993), Vol. III, p. 189. See also “‘The Third Great Title-Deed’ of Anglo-American Liberty,” July 4, 1918, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. III, p. 2614: “The political conceptions embodied in the Declaration of Independence are the same as those expressed at the time by Lord Chatham and Mr. Burke and handed down to them by John Hampden and Algernon Sidney. They spring from the same source; they come from the same well of practical truth, and that well is here by the banks of the Thames, in this island which is the birthplace and origin of the British and American race.”
  11. Churchill, *A History of the English Speaking Peoples*, Vol. III, p. 256. See also “America and Britain,” April 7, 1954, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VIII, p. 8559: “Law, language, and literature unite the English-speaking world, and all other sorts of things are happening which fortify these mighty traditions with ever-growing practical considerations of safety and survival. The rule of law, calm, without prejudice, swayed neither to the right or to the left however political tides or party currents may flow, is the foundation of freedom. The independence of the judiciary from the executive is the prime defence against the tyranny and retrogression of totalitarian government. Trial by jury, the right of every man to be judged by his equals, is among the most precious gifts that England has bequeathed to America.”
  12. See “Anglo-American Unity,” September 6, 1943, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, p. 6824: “Law, language, literature—these are considerable factors. Common conceptions of what is right and decent, a marked regard for fair play, especially to the weak and poor, a stern sentiment of impartial justice, and above all the love of personal freedom, or as Kipling put it; ‘Leave to live by no man’s leave underneath the law’—these are common conceptions on both sides of the ocean among the English-speaking peoples. We hold to these conceptions as strongly as you do.”
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the problems of practical politics. For example, he brought detailed structural knowledge to his criticism of FDR's New Deal for violating constitutional restraints.<sup>13</sup>

Nor did he think that political forms were of no importance. While battling the Parliament Bill of 1947—in his view an attempt by the Labour Party to “exercise unlimited legislative power” to impose socialist programs on the British people without consulting them—he delivered a historical-political survey of the desirability of a second deliberative chamber in any constitutional arrangement. While many different arrangements have been tried, he noted, all such constitutions “have the same object in view, namely, that the persistent resolve of the people shall prevail without throwing the community into convulsion and disorder by rash or violent, irreparable action and to restrain and prevent a group or sect or faction assuming dictatorial power.”<sup>14</sup> To stress the key point of governmental responsibility, he again referenced Lincoln:

Democracy is not a caucus, obtaining a fixed term of office by promises, and then doing what it likes with the people. We hold that there ought to be a constant relationship between the rulers and the people. Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, still remains the sovereign definition of democracy.<sup>15</sup>

Churchill recognized excellence in the constitutional forms of other nations—particularly the United States—in attaining the ends for which they were created. Addressing the question of constitutional separation of powers in 1951, he noted that different arrangements can be directed at the same object:

The great men who founded the American Constitution embodied this separation of authority in the strongest and most durable form. Not only did they divide executive, legislative, and judicial

functions, but also by instituting a federal system they preserved immense and sovereign rights to local communities, and by all these means they have preserved—often at some inconvenience—a system of law and liberty under which they have thrived and reached the leadership of the world.<sup>16</sup>

Churchill's reference to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address evokes similarities in both the task and the message of the two statesmen. Both were leaders of democracy in wartime and had to make the case that the cause was worth fighting for, that resistance was both sensible and praiseworthy, and that citizens should prefer struggle and sacrifice over capitulation. Each faced complexities that the other did not—Lincoln was dealing with a divided people, and Churchill faced the necessity of securing allies—but both Lincoln and Churchill had to connect the life of the regime compellingly to a noble cause.

The Gettysburg Address is a poignant and beautiful reminder that the life of the nation has meaning so long as the meaning of the nation has life.

### The Cause of Freedom

Churchill had the deep conviction that Britain was also worth fighting for, not only because of a simple desire for self-preservation, but because Britain meant something to the world. It stood for something larger than itself. He expressed both of these sentiments in the first line of his first broadcast speech as Prime Minister: “I speak to you for the first time as Prime Minister in a solemn hour for the life of our country, of our Empire, of our Allies, and, above all, of the cause of Freedom.” The conflict to come would decide whether that cause could endure: “After this battle in France abates its force, there will come the battle for our Island—for all that Britain is, and all that Britain means.”<sup>17</sup>

The meaning of Great Britain was its proof to the world that a freedom-loving nation could also be strong: that liberty was a viable political principle.

13. See Justin D. Lyons, “Winston Churchill's Constitutionalism: A Critique of Socialism in America,” *Heritage Foundation First Principles Series Report No. 25*, May 18, 2009, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/05/winston-churchills-constitutionalism-a-critique-of-socialism-in-america>.

14. “Parliament Bill,” November 11, 1947, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, p. 7569.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 7565.

16. “Election Address,” October 15, 1951, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VIII, p. 8268.

17. “Arm Yourself and Be Ye Men of Valour,” May 19, 1940, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VI, pp. 6221–6222.

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Accordingly, Churchill believed that Britain's fate might well determine whether freedom could survive elsewhere. The Second World War was a test that would determine whether a free people could marshal the material and moral resources for victory in a contest with totalitarianism, and it was therefore a struggle not for themselves alone but also for all who aspired to freedom:

Prepare yourselves, then, my friends and comrades in the Battle of London, for this renewal of your exertions. We shall never turn from our purpose, however sombre the road, however grievous the cost, because we know that out of this time of trial and tribulation will be born a new freedom and glory for all mankind.<sup>18</sup>

His wartime rhetoric braced the people of Britain for the struggle they must face by reminding them that their sacrifices served the cause of freedom not for Britons alone, but for all mankind. By referencing Lincoln, Churchill extended that appeal to the United States, seeking to call forth again that historic devotion to action in the name of freedom that had always been the hallmark of the American spirit.

The United States answered the call to action, not only bringing its massive industrial productive

capacity and combat power to bear on the war effort, but also committing to a "Europe-first" strategy in which the preponderance of Allied resources would be devoted to the defeat of Germany before they were directed toward Japan. But even after this commitment was firmly established and its rewards realized, Churchill did not cease to appeal to the unity of mind between the two countries that made their unity of action possible. Speaking at Harvard University in September 1943, he reiterated their common cause:

Tyranny is our foe, whatever trappings or disguise it wears, whatever language it speaks, be it external or internal, we must forever be on our guard, ever mobilized, ever vigilant, always ready to spring at its throat. In all this, we march together. Not only do we march and strive shoulder to shoulder at this moment under the fire of the enemy on the fields of war or in the air, but also in those realms of thought which are consecrated to the rights and dignity of man.<sup>19</sup>

American and British forces marched forward into the dominion of the enemy armed not only with bullets and bombs, but with ideas as well. Every mile marched was an advance of the principles of freedom and an opportunity for the tides of liberty to wash them clean of despotism and servitude.

Churchill viewed the common political faith of Great Britain and the United States both as a fighting faith and as a ministering faith. Liberated peoples were not meant merely to see the symbols of freedom emblazoned upon the banners of the victors: They must be encouraged to adopt the principles of political freedom themselves.

Churchill had long advocated military action in the Mediterranean, especially the invasion of Italy, to reluctant American military planners as a way of striking the vulnerable "underbelly" of the Axis. Even as the invasion of Sicily progressed, Churchill argued continuously for landings on the mainland as soon as possible, seeing it as an operation worthwhile not only in itself, but as providing vital encouragement for Yugoslav, Greek, and Albanian partisans struggling for the liberation of the Balkans.

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18. "The 'Grit and Stamina' of London," July 14, 1941, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VI, p. 6452.

19. "Anglo-American Unity," September 6, 1943, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, p. 6824. OK

When Mussolini resigned, Churchill telegraphed FDR that he would deal with any non-Fascist government that would welcome Allied forces into Italy and provide a platform for striking against Germany and the Balkans.<sup>20</sup> Not long afterward, he went to Italy to see Allied progress against German defenses for himself. Demonstrating once again that he believed that ideas can be as explosive as the material weapons of war, he issued a message to the Italian people that served as both encouragement and warning. It was one of Churchill's teaching moments; he wished to discuss a vital question: "What is freedom?"

Is there the right to free expression of opinion and of opposition and criticism of the Government of the day?

Have the people the right to turn out a Government of which they disapprove, and are constitutional means provided by which they can make their will apparent?

Are there courts of justice free from violence by the Executive and from threats of mob violence, and free of all association with particular political parties?

Will these courts administer open and well-established laws which are associated in the human mind with the broad principles of decency and justice?

Will there be fair play for poor as well as for rich, for private persons as well as Government officials?

Will the rights of the individual, subject to his duties to the State, be maintained and asserted and exalted?

Is the ordinary peasant or workman who is earning a living by daily toil and striving to bring up a family free from the fear that some grim police organization under the control of a single party, like the *Gestapo*, started by the Nazi and Fascist parties, will tap him on the shoulder and pack

him off without fair or open trial to bondage or ill-treatment?<sup>21</sup>

Thus did Churchill seek to lay out for the Italian people in the starkest terms the choices that lay before them: to continue to fumble and scrabble about in political darkness or to raise for themselves the flag of freedom.

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### **Duty and Destiny**

Churchill's second address to the U.S. Congress recalled the first, when the United States was "afire with wrath" at the attack on Pearl Harbor. He confessed that he had felt a sense of relief that their two nations were then linked together in common cause, bound together by "solemn faith and high purpose."

That was the hour of passionate emotion, an hour most memorable in human records, an hour, I believe, full of hope and glory for the future. The experience of a long life and the promptings of my blood awoke in me the conviction that there is nothing more important for the future of the world than the fraternal association of our two peoples in righteous work both in war and peace.

Yet passion by itself would not suffice to defeat their enemies. Above all, he stressed the need for ongoing practical and thoughtful collaboration between the two nations. The emotions that raged at the beginning of the war had to be taken up into steady but relentless determination and persistence,

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20. See Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life*, pp. 733-734, 750.

21. "Encouragement for the Italians: A Message Issued by the Prime Minister at the End of His Visit to Italy," August 28, 1944, in *The Dawn of Liberation: Winston Churchill's War Speeches*, 5 vols., comp. Charles Eade (London: Cassel And Company Ltd., 1947), Vol. V, p. 170.

because the aim of their actions went beyond mere revenge: “By singleness of purpose, by steadfastness of conduct, by tenacity and endurance such as we have so far displayed, by these, and only by these, can we discharge our duty to the future of the world and to the destiny of man.”<sup>22</sup>

Churchill struck very similar themes in his speech at Harvard some months later. Reflecting on the “long arm of destiny” that had twice pulled the United States into the deadly storms and struggles of world war, he reminded his audience that “[t]he price of greatness is responsibility” and that the best rewards come to those who serve great causes: “Let us rise to the level of our duty and of our opportunity, and let us thank God for the spiritual rewards he has granted all forms of valiant and faithful service.”<sup>23</sup>

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## **Churchill was opposed to tyranny in any form, and at the core of his understanding of statesmanship was his unceasing call to the world to found itself upon healthy political principles, especially those that are the legacies of the Anglo–American political tradition.**

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Churchill’s desire to promote political freedom did not end in 1945. He was opposed to tyranny in any form, and at the core of his understanding of statesmanship was his unceasing call to the world to found itself upon healthy political principles, especially those that are the legacies of the Anglo–American political tradition.

Speaking to his own people in 1948, he strove to resist the natural human tendency, after the immediate peril has passed, to withdraw from the field of action: “It is not as if the existence of our country

alone were at stake, because the cause of freedom, the resistance to tyranny in all its forms—whatever livery it wears, whatever slogans it mouths—is a world cause, and a duty which every man and woman owes to the human race in all its circumstances.”<sup>24</sup> But Britons did not bear this duty alone, and Churchill repeatedly reminded them of their like-minded brethren across the sea:

The key thought alike of the British Constitutional monarchy and the republic of the United States is the hatred of dictatorship. Both here and across the ocean, over the generations and the centuries the idea of the division of power has lain at the root of our development. We do not want to live under a system dominated either by one man or one theme.<sup>25</sup>

Even after the war, these principles loomed large for Churchill in his understanding of political unity between nations, believing that our hatred of tyranny, which was reflected in our separation of powers, was our common cause.

In 1946, the world was weary of war, but there was a new threat to world peace: the Soviet Union. Churchill again proved to be prophet and counselor, again warning of danger and calling for renewed effort. In March of that year, Churchill delivered what is often called “The Iron Curtain” Speech. In this address—which, revealingly, he titled “The Sinews of Peace”—he argued that only by achieving and preserving unity among the nations dedicated to freedom and justice could the Soviet threat be met effectively and the peace of the world set on solid foundations.

While Churchill was always determined that Britain’s role in the world not be undervalued, the United States was clearly emerging as a dominant power, and he delivered his call in an attempt to

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22. “To the U.S. Congress,” May 19, 1943, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, pp. 6775, 6784. It is worth noting that Churchill referenced Gettysburg again in this second address to Congress—though this time he spoke of the battle itself, noting that while it was the decisive point of the war, “far more blood was shed after the Union victory at Gettysburg than in all the fighting that went before.” He counseled continued vigilance and effort in the modern war lest the Allies’ favorable position be lost.

23. “Anglo-American Unity,” September 6, 1943, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, pp. 6823, 6827. See also *ibid.*, p. 6827: “If we are together nothing is impossible. If we are divided all will fail. I therefore preach continually the doctrine of the fraternal association of our two peoples, not for any purpose of gaining invidious material advantages for either of them, not for territorial aggrandisement or the vain pomp of earthly domination, but for the sake of service to mankind and for the honour that comes to those who faithfully serve great causes.”

24. “Avoiding Past Mistakes,” October 5, 1948, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, p. 7706.

25. “The Crown and Parliament,” May 27, 1953, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VIII, p. 8486.

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shape the course of the future toward preserving freedom in America:

The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American Democracy. For with primacy in power is also joined an awe-inspiring accountability to the future. If you look around you, you must feel not only the sense of duty done but also you must feel anxiety lest you fall below the level of achievement.

But it was not power alone that mattered: Power must be joined with unity of purpose with a view to preserving political freedom by fighting tyranny at home and abroad. Churchill laid heavy emphasis on Anglo-American unity as the foundation of any hope for future peace:

I come to the crux of what I have travelled here to say. Neither the sure prevention of war, nor the continuous rise of world organization will be gained without what I have called the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples. This means a special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States.<sup>26</sup>

Much of what Churchill had to say at Fulton touched upon hopes for the recently formed United Nations and the duty that freedom-loving nations had to support it. In Churchill's view, however, common understanding and traditions were the only sure basis of organization that would help to ensure peace in the world, because common principles and common purposes are essential to constructive action.

Churchill was adamant that regional groupings of like-minded nations would not be inconsistent with the idea of the United Nations. Indeed, he insisted that such groupings were the only way for such an organization to be effective.<sup>27</sup> To articulate this, he juxtaposed the image of the Tower of Babel with that of a true temple of peace:

We must make sure that [the U.N.'s] work is fruitful, that it is a reality and not a sham, that it is a force for action, and not merely a frothing of words, that it is a true temple of peace in which the shields of many nations can some day be hung up, and not merely a cockpit in a Tower of Babel. Before we cast away the solid assurances of national armaments for self-preservation we must be certain that our temple is built, not upon shifting sands or quagmires, but upon the rock.<sup>28</sup>

The image of the Tower of Babel indicates the problem of division. Its builders are struck with an inability to communicate: They do not speak the same political language.<sup>29</sup>

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**Churchill's main concern is that the United Nations be built on a shared language: shared political conceptions and understandings. The tradition in which to find the healthy political principles that could serve as the strong supports of the United Nations was especially the Anglo-American political tradition.**

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This is the key point. Churchill's main concern is that the United Nations be built on, so to speak, a shared language: shared political conceptions and understandings. The tradition in which to find the healthy political principles that could serve as the strong supports of the United Nations was especially the Anglo-American political tradition. It is only by building on this shared understanding and these shared goals that the United Nations could be a true temple of peace.

Churchill spoke of the "message of the British and American peoples to mankind" and had no

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26. "The Sinews of Peace," March 5, 1946, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, pp. 7286, 7289.

27. See *ibid.*, p. 7289: "There is however an important question we must ask ourselves. Would a special relationship between the United States and the British Commonwealth be inconsistent with our overriding loyalties to the World Organization? I reply that, on the contrary, it is probably the only means by which that organization will achieve its full stature and strength."

28. See *ibid.*, p. 7287.

29. Genesis 11: 1-9.

hesitation in advocating the extension of their political principles to the rest of the world:

But we must never cease to proclaim in fearless tones the great principles of freedom and the rights of man which are the joint inheritance of the English-speaking world and which through Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, trial by jury, and the English common law find their most famous expression in the American Declaration of Independence.<sup>30</sup>

Yet Churchill came to the conclusion fairly quickly that the United Nations was failing to embody healthy political principles effectively. As early as 1949, he was leveling serious criticisms against the international organization:

In spite of the faithful efforts that have been made by the representatives of many countries, great and small, the new organization, to which we had looked for guidance in our problems and guardianship in our dangers, has already been reduced to a brawling cockpit where taunts and insults may be flung back and forth. An institution in this condition cannot have the authority to prevent the approach of a new war and is in danger of losing the confidence and even the respect of those who were most ardent for its creation.<sup>31</sup>

The United Nations had become a Tower of Babel not only because there were so many voices speaking at once, but also because they were speaking different political languages. The U.N. was split between members who pursued different political ends and therefore would never be a united force for securing freedom and peace.

While he did not withdraw his support, Churchill ceased to speak of the U.N. as the best hope for

preventing war. He turned instead to NATO, an organization founded on a common political understanding and marshaled against Soviet tyranny. After returning to politics to become Prime Minister again in 1951, he said:

The policy of Her Majesty's Government is peace through strength, together with any contacts, formal or informal, which may be helpful. All this of course is founded, and can only be founded, upon the moral unity of the English-speaking world and its many allies who have vowed themselves to the cause of freedom, and have created the great alliance of N.A.T.O. All this stands and we stand by it, with no thought of aggression against any country in the world.<sup>32</sup>

As the division between the free world and the Soviet sphere deepened, Churchill repeatedly returned to the same themes, maintaining that the only way for Communism to be contained was for those nations that were devoted to liberty to stand up boldly for their own ruling principles. This message was one he had delivered repeatedly throughout his career. It differs little from the maxims of conduct he espoused while confronting tyranny before the Second World War:

Have we not an ideology—if we must use this ugly word—of our own in freedom, in a liberal constitution, in democratic and parliamentary government, in Magna Carta and the Petition of Right? Ought we not be ready to make as many sacrifices and exertions for our own broad central theme and cause, as the fanatics of either of these new creeds? Ought we not to produce in defense of Right, champions as bold, missionaries as eager, and if need be, swords as sharp as are at the disposal of the leaders of totalitarian states?<sup>33</sup>

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30. See "The Sinews of Peace," March 5, 1946, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, p. 7288.

31. "European Unity," February 26, 1949, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VII, p. 7792.

32. "Foreign Affairs," November 9, 1953, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VIII, p. 8508. See also "One Nation," July 6, 1957, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VIII, p. 8680: "Make no mistake. It is in the closest association with our friends in the Commonwealth, America, and N.A.T.O. that our hopes of peace and happiness lie. Neither we nor they can afford estrangements. The concept of the United Nations was a remarkable one, but in its present form it has shown itself impotent in a time of crisis and effective only against those who are prepared to respect its opinion. To rely solely on the United Nations Organization would be disastrous for the future."

33. "Arm, and Stand by the Covenant," May 9, 1938, in *Complete Speeches*, Vol. VI, p. 5959.

## Conclusion

Near the end of his remembrance, Eisenhower reflected on Churchill's meaning for America:

On that gray and moving winter day when his soul was committed to the hands of God amid stately pageantry, I knelt in St. Paul's Cathedral. Around me were old flags, old shields, old prayers—all the evidence of Britain's long continuity. And I wondered if we in the United States, with our devotion to the new at the expense of the old, to the future at the expense of the past, are not forsaking something precious. For only a nation steeped in history and pride could produce a Churchill.<sup>34</sup>

Churchill would say they are our flags too, our shields, our prayers, all dedicated to the defense of justice and of liberty: There is a common cause in the freedom of mankind. It is thus that America shares in Britain's long continuity by sharing its devotion to the principles of freedom, but the flags must be raised, the shields taken up, and the prayers sincerely offered.

This is the essence of Churchill's message to America: The conditions of freedom do not simply occur, and they do not simply persist. Humanity must fight to establish them, struggle to maintain them, and sacrifice to defend them. Churchill's statesmanship called forth a manly defense of Right despite fear and difficulty.

As Churchill's life was nearing its end, his youngest daughter, Mary, offered these words: "In addition to all the feelings a daughter has for a loving, generous father, I owe you what every Englishman, woman & child does—Liberty itself."<sup>35</sup> What greater tribute could be bestowed, encompassing, as it does, the range of Churchill's devotion—from his family to his country to the principles of freedom?

Churchill the man belonged to his family and his native country. The meaning of Churchill belongs to the world. He was not only Britain's champion; he was a champion of Liberty.

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34. Eisenhower, "The Churchill I Knew," p. 156.

35. Quoted in Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life*, p. 959.