

II.

The next question is: How about the future?

I must say to you, in all gravity, that in spite of both the present overall strength and the forward momentum of our defense, it is entirely possible that in the years ahead we could fall behind. I repeat: we could fall behind -- unless we now face up to certain pressing requirements and set out to meet them at once.

I address myself to this problem knowing that for every American it overcomes any division among us of whatever kind. It reminds us once again that we are not partisans of any kind; we are Americans! We will close ranks as Americans, and get on with the job to be done.

According to my scientific friends, one of our greatest, and most glaring, deficiencies is the failure of us in this country to give high enough priority to scientific education and to the place of science in our national life.

Of course, these scientists properly assume that we shall continue to acquire the most modern weapons in adequate numbers as fast as they are produced; but their conviction does expose one great future danger that no amount of money or resources currently devoted to it can meet. Education requires time, incentive and skilled teachers.

They believe that a second critical need is that of giving higher priority, both public and private, to basic research.

As to these long range requirements, I shall have something to say next week.

Tonight I shall discuss two other factors, on which prompt action is possible.

The first is the tragic failure to assure the great benefits that would flow from mutual sharing of appropriate scientific information and effort among friendly countries.

Most great scientific advances of the world have been the product of free international exchange of ideas. There is hardly a nation that has not made some significant contribution to modern science.

There instantly comes to mind the contribution of Britain to jet propulsion, radar, and infra-red rays; Germany to rocketry, x-rays, and anti-drops; Italy to wireless telegraphy; France to radio activity; and Japan to magnetism.

In the free world, we all have a lot to give and a lot to gain in security through the pooling of scientific effort. Why should we deny to our friends information that we are sure the Soviets already have? -- information our friends could use toward our mutual security.

Why, for want of the fullest practicable sharing, should we waste American research funds and talent struggling with technological problems already mastered by our friends?