

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

April 6th, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about how politicians misuse congressional immunity. In the interview segment, ER's guest is Elizabeth Impellitteri, the wife of Mayor Vincent Impellitteri of New York City. ER also plays a segment from her Sunday afternoon television show, *Mrs. Roosevelt Meets the Public*, featuring a discussion about the branches of the military working together.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Elizabeth Impellitteri, Thomas K. Finletter, Frank Pace, Jr., Charles P. Matthews, Jack Anderson

[ER:] How do you do. This is Eleanor Roosevelt. Every Monday through Friday, my son Elliott and I have the opportunity to visit with you here in my living room, at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. Each day it is our desire to bring interesting guests that we are hopeful you will enjoy meeting. Elliott, will you tell our listeners today's plans?

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Thank you, Mother. It's a very great pleasure to welcome New York City's first lady, Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vincent Impellitteri to the program today. Mrs. Roosevelt will introduce the wife of New York City's mayor a little later on. But first, we have some mail to go over and a message to hear from the sponsors who make this recorded program possible.

(Break 00:52-01:11)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Our mail today, Mother, brings a letter from someone who signs it merely "a citizen". The question reads uh: "My question to you is one I hope you will answer for us. Many people whom I know are deeply interested in the immunity given to senators and congressmen. We have heard it grossly misused. Behind closed doors, it may be necessary to have secrecy, of course. But in open session, we have seen it used to smear and even in vicious attack of important persons with nothing proved against that person or department. If these politicians so misuse these privileges, use it to smear and vilify, it seems to some of us there should be a limit to its use."

[ER:] Well, uh I think of course the use of immunity has been abused. Um there was a reason for it, originally. It was um [coughs] set up so that you could not attack or really harm a representative who was uh telling the truth in the interest of some particular um bringing out in the open some particular [Elliott Roosevelt: Abuse.] abuse. But uh it has been misused, there's no question about it, and I think misused in a very cowardly way by a number of people. And um I-I think probably the way to do it would be to define more clearly-y how one should use congressional immunity, and then bring within the ordinary processes of law um people uh on uh many other uh-who use it in any other way.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well now, would you advocate -- for instance, when an attack is made on an individual which impugns that individual's character and uh brings it definitely into the category of uh that that person has done a crooked act or something that was beyond the-the law, uh that then that the-the individual congressman or senator who makes that attack on the floor must uh, if it is repeated in the newspapers, that then uh that individual is subject to prosecution under the law. Because the only time that it hurts is when it becomes widespread and is believed because the paper's headline is what congressman so-and-so said about so-and-so.

[ER:] Well I-I would not -- I don't think that I would do quite that. What I would do is to say that a congressman, before he makes an accusation, must be prepared to prove it. Um that when he is unable to prove it, then he must be subject.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well who's going to judge whether he is able to prove it? His fellow congressmen?

[ER:] Oh no, it must be judged uh in a court of-in a court of law. I mean if um-um if uh he makes an accusation against an individual, an individual should be able to take that accusation into court and require uh proof.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] In other words, you'd do away with immunity completely.

[ER:] I'd do away with immunity where it is an accusation against an individual's character or --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] All right, what happens when a-a criticism is made uh of an organization, a group of people, uh and they are accused of being -- well we'll say communists. If they belong to that organization, what would you do in that case? Will you give them any recourse if they wanted to prove that they were not communistic -- [ER: In court.] All right, but suppo-if they have the right to go to court, to hail that individual into court, that congressman, then you are saying now any individual or any group of individuals can uh wipe out the immunity of that senator o-in any attack that he makes against the character of those people.

[ER:] Well I-I think that is so because I don't think that is a function of Congress. I think that is a function um of FBI, uh the regularly constituted people, and they have to produce evidence in court. And if Congress is going to undertake to do that work, [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] then I think Congress should be under the same rules and should have to have the evidence before they make accusations. (6:30)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] All right, now um there have been in the past -- I remember um-uh several pamphlets that uh were gotten out uh by people who attacked the patriotism of-of individuals, that called them agents of -- sometimes they were agents of the-of the Pope, and other times they were agents of the Kremlin, and other times they were agents of Germany. Uh and these attacks went on and were distributed by congressional frank out of certain congressmen's offices. So that they were distributed free at the uh cost of the American taxpayer.

[ER:] I think that is a misuse of the frank in any case.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Uh well, how would you correct that? How are you going to govern what a congressman sends out under the use of his frank?

[ER:] Well I have seen that criticized a number of times, and so it must be possible to find out about it. And there must be rules as to what you use your frank for. Now for instance, if-y the rules are very carefully laid down as to um what you use frank-a frank-a government frank for.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm. Uh Evidently the rules uh are rather all-inclusive though, so that uh there may be some loopholes in the rules.

[ER:] Well, I think that's when they take a risk, the-I mean, I don't know that they are laid down for congressmen and senators, but I think they could be quite easily. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And made much clearer and to prevent a thing of that sort.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well now, supposing uh we have uh now come to the point where you advocate the uh doing away with the immunity given to congressmen on attacks that they make on the floor of the

house or the floor of the senate against individuals or organizations. And you advocate that uh if there are to be uh attacks made against the characters of these people on political questions, such as communism, that that must rest with the FBI.

[ER:] It seems so to me.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] All right, now what about uh a President? Uh when a President goes out of his way to vilify and to humiliate another individual, should he have immunity?

[ER:] Well I don't think presidents ordinarily do that. I don't know of any cases when that's been done.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, um -- I'm going a long ways back now, but uh there have been -- uh I-I remember one case that uh a certain president uh took a certain columnist apart and said that he was uh playing in -- [ER: Said he lied.] said he lied, and said that he was playing into the hands of the enemy and awarded him an iron cross.

[ER:] That was not done though, as a public thing. He did not uh do that except as a private uh thing.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But it was done at a press conference.

[ER:] No, at the end, uh after a press conference was over, it was handed to another correspondent who was asked to-to hand it. I don't think that was done as a public thing at all.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm. Well I-I'm thinking uh, for instance, I know that Theodore Roosevelt uh sued uh a newspaper uh for slander when he was President of the United States, and he collected one penny in damages and uh a public retraction of the newspaper for what they had said. Uh our laws, don't you think, are rather weak [ER: They are.] on these-on these things, [ER: They are.] uh and certainly they operate to a much greater degree of to the protection of the individual in Great Britain.

[ER:] Yes, we have always been more careful um and more fearful um to take away the freedom of speech uh which allowed people to [ER and Elliott Roosevelt overlap] say anything about anyone else.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, but would you say in Great Britain they have freedom of speech and freedom of the press? (11:06)

[ER:] Yes I would, but they are much more careful because their libel laws are much stricter.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, but why can't -- uh why is it that Americans and American newspapers would fight a-a uh s-set of libel laws similar to those of Great Britain?

[ER:] Well, because they've become accustomed to being, um -- going pretty freely and-and without having to prove much of what they said, and it would mean a tightening of all their rules of procedure. I think it would be a good thing, personally, but um I can understand why they would fight it.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] So now we have you against immunity on the floor of the senate and the house, against misuse of the frank to vilify and to smear and advocating libel laws similar to those of Great Britain. Does that answer the question of today?

[ER:] Well I w-I don't know that the libel laws of Great Britain would fit into our um --

[Elliott Roosevelt and ER overlap]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] No, but along the same lines.

[ER:] -- Picture here, but along the same lines.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Okay, well I think that answers the letter from "a citizen."

(Break 12:14-12:22)

[ER:] There are so many things I want to learn from my guest today that without further ado, I introduce to you the wife of the mayor of the city of New York, Mrs. Vincent Impellitteri. And I'm very happy to have you with us.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Thank you Mrs. Roosevelt, I consider it quite an honor to have been invited here today by you.

[ER:] Well now the first thing I'd like to know, Mrs. Impellitteri, is about the calendar of the wife of the mayor of New York City. What-what does it look like? Everyone always seems to think that I'm a fairly busy person, but I think I've found someone who's busier than I am! And I think people would be interested if you'd just tell us about a typical day.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] My days are rather crowded. [clears throat] I have quite a few engagements starting at about nine o'clock each morning, and they run through until sometimes after midnight at night. The reason for that now, particularly, is my heart fund. I'm General Chairman of the New York Heart Fund, and this is our most important time so that I'm busy constantly on that, and there are a few extracurricular duties that I must take care of as the wife of the mayor.

[ER:] And um what, for instance, before we come to the discussion of the Heart Fund, what um other duties as the wife of the mayor do you have?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] I'm working on the civil defense program, too. And I have a great interest in the Girl Scouts of America; I'm a member of the board of directors in the New York Council.

[ER:] Now all these things are things for the good of the public. Uh-Are there any social things that you have to do as the wife of the mayor?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, there are a great many of them. They're not too crowded these days.

[ER:] So you're having a little holiday on those for the moment?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, just for a few weeks.

[ER:] They come at certain periods of the year, don't they? You have um special I suppose obligations, for instance, on Memorial Day, and on Fourth of July, and so forth.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, each of the holidays and the holiday seasons.

[ER:] Then-then you have more of the social things. [Elizabeth Impellitteri: Yes.] Well now let's get back to your main interest, which I think is the Heart Fund, isn't it?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes it is, today.

[ER:] Well now um, this uh is not a local organization; it's really a national setup, isn't it?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] It is in some respect, but my interest primarily, is in the New York Heart Association. We have a National -- the American Heart Association.

[ER:] Well now uh what um-uh is the purpose of the fund in New York City?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] We are trying to raise one million dollars this year. Uh practically all of that will be put into research.

[ER:] Practically all of it into research? [Elizabeth Impellitteri: Yes.] You don't need it for care, or is there sufficient care going on?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] No, there is not sufficient care; uh part of it will be earmarked for community service and education. But research is the most important item we have now.

[ER:] Uh do you feel that the research in the past few years has advanced the care very greatly and made it possible uh to im-to lengthen the life of people with heart trouble? (15:48)

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes I firmly believe we have made great progress, particularly in heart surgery, and in the care of the rheumatic heart fever child.

[ER:] Yes, of course that uh-that particular part of it, where children are concerned, is one of the most important research parts, isn't it?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, and great progress has been made there, of course we do need a lot of what we call bed hospitals. But we unfortunately have not enough of them now. That is one of the reasons why we want to use some of the money for community service and education of mothers whose children may be the victims of rheumatic fever.

[ER:] I see, well then um-uh that covers pretty well uh the objectives of the fund of New York City. Now would you tell me, too, uh about the civil defense program? What are your obligations to that?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] I'm working on the advisory committee. I have done television and radio work instructing people in the methods that we have devised for their own protection in the case of an attack.

[ER:] Well that's a tremendous job for you to-for you to undertake, because it must mean repetition of the same uh directions and um a good deal of time on the radio, doesn't it?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, but I believe that it's so important to the public that really it isn't hard work when you know you are accomplishing something.

[ER:] Well that's um a very good way to think about it. Now what about uh your interest in the City Center Theater? Aren't you interested in that, too?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, I've just been uh accepted as a member of their board of directors. And I want to get started on that right away.

[ER:] I've always thought that that, um if you had an interest in the arts, um was something to be very proud of because I think it's uh one of the rather few um theaters which a city is really responsible for in large measure.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, I think it's a fine thing for the city to provide the building for us. And I really want to go ahead as fast as I can after our first meeting.

[ER:] 'Cause that brings music and it brings the drama within uh the purse of the average person. And you have big audiences I think in City-in the uh City Center, don't you?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes we do, and I should be interested in having the younger element see some of the finer plays.

[ER:] Well that's a good idea, [Elizabeth Impellitteri: They can afford it.], I think to encourage that – [Mrs. Vincent Impellitteri: Yes.] that's a very good idea. Well now I also understand that you are the first woman to be elected to the board of directors of Mr. Grover Whalen's committee which is the Bureau of Visitors and Conventions.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, that also is on my chart.

[ER:] Well now, are you um -- does that require a good deal of business knowledge?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] I believe it will. I'm not entirely familiar of the duties that I will assume there. I'm having a meeting next week. (19:01)

[ER:] And um-uh I-it looks to me as if, um while one thinks very often of that committee as being largely a committee to greet people, that um the obtaining of conventions and the making of a convention in New York City worthwhile to all the different types of interest that uh come here, would require a tremendous amount of business knowledge.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, I believe it does, and I think I might try to become a super-salesman for the city of New York.

[ER:] Well, I was interested in your husband's testimony um on the um can-Saint Lawrence uh canal development, because he f-uh pointed out that it might affect the port um uh facilities of New York and make them uh less important as-as an entry into this country or a departure from this country. I'm not quite sure uh that I agree with him, though I'm not going to enter into any arguments on this subject.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri laughs] But I was just interested because I've always had the feeling that um the more you developed, the more things came, and that um it would not take away from New York-ork in the way that he evidently feels might happen. So that I-I began at once to think seriously about what might happen and what might not, because-ause I-uh-I don't-I don't consider New York my home, but I've lived here s-off and on for so many years that I do take a very great interest in uh the development and the um-seeing what changes come, because I'm so old-- I've seen a great many changes in this uh [ER and Elizabeth Impellitteri laugh] city of New York. And I was born here, so I really -- you belong here too, don't you? Were you born here?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] No, [ER: No.] Not in New York City.

[ER:] Not in New York City. Well, I was born in New York City and you don't often find people who were born in New York City! [laughs] [Elizabeth Impellitteri: No, it's unusual.] Um so I-I do take a great interest. Now, the day that you were kind enough to ask us uh to come up to um Gracie Mansion, I was very much um interested in seeing the old house because um-uh connections of my family um belong to the Gracie family-y. And uh I had always heard a great deal about it; of course I have been in it before-

ore. But I think it has great deal of uh charm and uh the proportions are charming -- tell me, in living in it, what appeals to you the most? (22:02)

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] I like the house generally. I believe it has what I call a simple dignity that's easy to live with. I think it's one of the most delightful spots in the city. As you know, the rooms are charming, they're not elaborate, and it makes for a very fine, comfortable, happy home for the mayor and me.

[ER:] And I-I think the outlook is-is very charming too.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Oh, it's delightful there.

[ER:] I uh I thought in winter of course, I suppose you get a great deal of very -- a great deal of cold, but um uh in summer it must be lovely to be able to sit out there.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, in the winter you do have a great deal of cold wind; we're right on the East River. I have not been there in the summer. I'm looking forward to my first summer there.

[ER:] Uh do they do a great deal in the way of um gardens and that sort of-of uh development around Gracie mansion?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, the Park[s] Department is in direct supervision of the grounds and they have uh two or three men who supervise it each day; it's well taken care of. We have fruit trees and flowers.

[ER:] You have fruit trees?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes we do. I might plant a garden.

[ER:] Oh, a vegetable garden?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes.

[ER:] Oh, how wonderful! And what fun! I think-I think a vegetable garden in New York will be great fun! [laughs]

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] I'm looking forward to it.

[ER:] You have of course, not very far away -- or is it further away than I think, I don't think it's very far away -- where all those children's gardens are. Um where th um -- oh perhaps it's -- no, maybe further down-own. Maybe further down. It's uh near the Rockefeller uh Foundation that all those children's gardens are, where they grow vegetables in summer [Elizabeth Impellitteri: Yes.] and um -- so it's quite possible, I suppose, you might uh run a garden in competition with the children [Elizabeth Impellitteri laughs] and see what happens. Well now, we must stop for just a minute and let our announcer have words.

(Break 24:10-24:15)

[ER:] Now, we will come right back to the talk with Mrs. Impellitteri, the wife of the Mayor of New York City. And one of the things I wanted to ask you whether you knew how Gracie Mansion came to be the Mayor's residence.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, I have a rather complete history of the background of the mansion. Of course the very first verified recorded title to the ground was recorded in 1676, it goes back that far. [ER: My!] The house we are living in now was first constructed in 1800. There has been a great deal of alterations, of course, since then. The city purchased the house and the ground in 1891, and it then became the Museum of the City of New York. Uh during the last three years of Mr. LaGuardia's administration as mayor, it was converted into the Mayor's home, and he took over then.

[ER:] I see, well I didn't um-I didn't realize uh it -- how old it really was as a uh-as a residence, so to speak. What has happened to the Museum of the City of New York in the meantime? Where has it moved to now? I should know, but I don't.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] I believe it has quarters with the Metropolitan. [ER: Oh it has?] I believe so.

[ER:] Oh well that's very interesting because uh I'm sure they hated to leave.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Oh, I'm sure they did. We still have some original beams in the roof.

[ER:] You do? [Elizabeth Impellitteri: Yes.] That were originally in the house?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] That's why I'm afraid to put a fire in the fire place. [laughs]

[ER:] Oh! [laughs] That's very interesting. Well now tell me, is there any furniture in the mansion that has a history?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, a great many pieces have been loaned to us by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I believe you'll find in each room, eh two or three paintings loaned to us, and pieces of furniture, desks -- I have a delighted desk in my sitting room. I can't use it, but it's very beautiful to look at.

[ER:] [laughs] You can't use it? You're afraid to use it?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes, it's too beautiful. I have another old desk that I use for myself.

[ER:] Um well, that's the awful part about owning uh historically interesting things, that-or having them around, you never do dare use them. I took certain historical things that were in the upstairs living part of the White House and put them back in the uh museum because I was so afraid that the children would tip the chairs and break them or do something they shouldn't do. [Elizabeth Impellitteri laughs] But, um do you have anything that has been in the mansion-uh in the Gracie family for a long time?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] No, we have not any of their furniture. (27:11)

[ER:] You have none of their furniture? [Elizabeth Impellitteri: No.] It would be interesting. I don't know that any exists, but it would be interesting to have something of that kind.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] I don't think that uh there is a piece of that left. I'm pretty sure.

[ER:] The um family, of course, uh still um exists and uh the way I happen to have been interested uh is that my Grandmother Roosevelt's half-sister who was a Bulloch of Georgia married James King Gracie, and um he was a direct descendant of the Gracie's that owned the mansion, you see. They've never lived in the mansion; [laughs] I don't want to mislead you in that way, but I remember um when I was a child, we saw a great deal of um what we called our Auntie Gracie. And she was our Great Aunt, and um was a most useful Great Aunt, as I look back, because she always took us on Saturday mornings. And um both

uh my cousins, little Theodore Douglas Robinson and I, and Alice Longworth, who was then Alice Roosevelt, [Elizabeth Impellitteri: Yes.] um she would take us to uh any disagreeable appointments, like the dentist, that were reserved for children on Sunday morning, and then as a reward, in rotation we could order whatever we wanted for lunch. And then she would read to us, and it was through her that I heard all the um plantation stories of Br'er Rabbit and all the things [laughs] and all the knowledge -- because I never went South 'til I was grown up, but all the knowledge of plantation life came to me through um Mrs. Gracie, Mrs. James King Gracie. And the portrait-her portrait, and her husband's portrait, um hung for a long time in the old Orthopedic Hospital on 59th Street, um because my Grandfather, Theodore Roosevelt, had help to found the Orthopedic Hospital in its original place and they had always had an interest and worked in it. So they were tied up with some New York history, even though they didn't live in your mansion. Now I want to ask you whether being the wife of the Mayor has changed your everyday life?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] It has considerably because before I became the Mayor's wife, I had a position downtown in a law office. And you may know that kind of work requires a very definite schedule: You're up at seven-thirty in the morning, you're at your desk at nine, and you close your desk at five, and then you're finished.

[ER:] Then you're finished. Now you're never finished.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] No, I'm not. But I have pretty much the same routine; I do get up out of bed each morning at seven-thirty and go on from there. (30:20)

[ER:] And you-you keep that up? You get up every morning at seven-thirty? I have known a good many women who um stayed in bed when they've had to work late at night, and I'm quite sure you often have to work late at night.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes I do, but I don't want to get out of my old routine, I may have to go back to it!

[ER and Elizabeth Impellitteri laugh]

[ER:] That is a very wise way to feel about it, because I used to say at the White House that um I didn't want to forget how to do things for myself because uh it was quite likely that I would have to do them again, and while it was very convenient at times to have everything done for you, um it was well not to completely forget how to do things for yourself.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] I agree with you.

[ER:] And um do you um-uh do you like the new life, or do you prefer the kind of routine that came to an end at five o'clock?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] No, I-I like my new life very much, because I feel that in my position, I am accomplishing things. uh The welfare of this city is really my first interest, and the people in it.

[ER:] Well, um I think that's a wonderful way to look at it. But in a way, when you undertake the kind of life you've now undertaken, um you give up an enormous amount as far as your personal life goes, because um when you closed your desk at five o'clock, um probably you and the Mayor had a good deal of time that was your own; now you don't have any.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] No, we have very little time together and it is an entirely different life, and sometimes a very hectic life. But I do like it, and I do feel that for the little sacrifices I have to make in my personal way, it's worth it.

[ER:] Do you try and -- even though you are in a-an official mansion and don't have your husband a great deal at home -- do you still try and give him the kind of food every now and then that he likes to have, and um uh try to keep up those little things that you'd have-ordinarily think about at home?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Yes I do, uh the staff at Gracie Mansion has two afternoons a week off, and I try to have the Mayor home for dinner those evenings and cook the dinner myself.

[ER:] Oh, that I think is great fun. I think that's really -- [laughs] that's doing something which uh does give you a little life of your own. And now, I want to ask you one short question because I didn't ask you the dates for the heart drive.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Our-our drive will extend to April 15th.

[ER:] It will, and can one contribute just by -- where do you send your contribution?

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] You can send them to me at the mansion, or to the Heart Office at 45 East Forty-Seventh Street.

[ER:] Well now I'm sorry to say that we've come to the end of our time, but I'm most grateful to you for being with me today, Mrs. Impellitteri, and can't tell you how much I've enjoyed talking with you.

[Elizabeth Impellitteri:] Thank you.

(Break 33:46-34:03)

[ER:] And now, Elliott, I see we have just enough time left to let our listeners hear a recording of something very interesting that was said on our NBC Sunday afternoon television program. During World War Two, the different branches of our armed services learned a great many lessons about working together as a single team. In both the Pacific Theater under General [Douglas] MacArthur, and the European Theater under General [Dwight D.] Eisenhower, we had not only all branches of our own services, but also the units of our allies integrated by one supreme commander. As a result of the lessons learned in World War Two, the United States has unified all branches of its services into a single Department of Defense. This was not accomplished without a bitter battle in the Halls of Congress and on the front pages of our Press.

But now with a hot war being waged in Korea, and a greatly expanded defense program, the public is beginning to find out what unification means and how it is working out. I know, from personal experience something about the keen rivalry between the services. My husband always considered himself a Navy man. My four sons were all on active duty in various branches of the service during the last war. But the one on the Air Force always said that he had a hard time because the others were in the Navy and the Marine Corps. So I think we have come a long way today where we can have the secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force sit down together peacefully to discuss their common problems and aims. I want to introduce my most distinguished guests: the Secretary of the Army, Mr. Frank Pace Jr., the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Charles P. Matthews, and the Secretary of the Air Force, Mr. Thomas K. Finletter. And I also have some members of the public who have questions that they want to ask of these gentlemen. And so, we will begin at once and ask Mr. Jack Anderson, who is a business man from New York City, to state his question. Mr. Anderson. (34:17)

[Jack Anderson:] Can we defend Europe chiefly with the support with our Navy and Air Force as claimed by Hoover, Taft, and others?

[ER:] Well I think that question -- we better begin uh with you, Mr. Finletter.

[Thomas K. Finletter:] No, Mr. Anderson, I don't think we can defend Europe just with the Navy and the Air Force. When you defend a land area, the brunt of the battle has got-got to be carried by the ground soldiers. Be sure air power, the air power of our allies, the air power of the Navy, and the air power of the Airforce are indispensable to the ground operation, but all three must be in it.

[ER:] Would you like to say something on that, [Charles P. Matthews: Well I --] Mr. Matthews?

[Charles P. Matthews:] I'd agree with Mr. Finletter that we couldn't defend Europe, or defend an attack against Europe, with just the Air Force and the Navy. But I'd say that we couldn't defend uh Europe without the Air Force and the Navy, either. It's necessary to have all three services in order uh to properly protect the interests of this country in the situation of that character.

[ER:] Would you want to say a word, Mr. Pace?

[Frank Pace, Jr.:] Well, only this Mrs. Roosevelt, I'm in complete accord with my colleagues. Obviously we feel in the ground forces in the army that it's an essential and integral part of any defense of Europe.

[Recording of television program ends at 38:17]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now it's time to close the program and to remind you that you've been listening to the Eleanor Roosevelt Program, which comes to you each Monday through Friday at this same time. And this is Elliott Roosevelt speaking and wishing you all good day.

Transcribed from holdings at Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL)
File(s): 72-30(128)

Transcription: Susanna Israelsson
First Edit: Jay Fondin
Final Edit: Andreas Meyris