I consider it an honor to be the closing speaker at this Forum which was opened by one of the most distinguished Americans of our time, Mr. Bernard Baruch.

His message was an inspiring vision of a future in which miracles long dreamed of would come to pass by the use of atomic energy, and other miracles never dreamed of before would seem to be within the realm of probability.

It was deeply gratifying to me to observe the wise balance drawn by your first speaker between the hard necessity of guarding our atomic secrets for military purposes and the glowing prospect of the use of atomic power for a fuller, better life. We can all pray that we shall rapidly approach the time when this new giant which now helps to keep the peace of the world, will also be lifting burdens from the backs of men and in countless directions enriching the lives of human beings everywhere.

Even when that time comes the conservation of our other physical resources will still be a matter of primary concern. With unlimited power at the disposal of men, we will still need water, minerals, timber, food and fiber. Even then we have learned to convert the elements into basic foods, we shall still need products of the soil.

For these reasons the discussion at this Forum of our natural resources is particularly timely and I have much with interest the summaries of the discussions in this vital field of conservation. It is a curious thing how men who seem to disagree as sharply on many other issues can be fundamentally right. For example, it is an alarming fact that we have been losing millions of tons of top soil a year.

On this subject I speak with a good deal of personal interest. On my own farm, when I first went there, I had a ten acre field of corn washed out by rains twice in one Spring. To get one crop of corn we had to make three plantings. Similar conditions still exist all over the country and this very year I have seen heartbreaking erosion in wheat fields, corn fields, and even in greenlands from Kansas to Oregon.

But there is a bright side to this picture, too. The field which some years ago was washed out twice in one Spring on my own farm has now been contoured and in several succeeding years there has not been a vestige of erosion. The practice of contour planting, strip cropping and terracing is spreading so rapidly that I
believe we can look forward to the day, not long hence, when these practices will be universal. As I travel around the country I have seen the thrilling spectacle of good soil conservation practices from one end of the country to the other, I can resort to you that the farmers of America, in fact, now engage in saving the soil of our country, and for that they are entitled to the warm thanks of the best fed nation in the world.

We are doing more than that in this country of ours. We are already moving from spoil storage to spoil building. For some years the prophets of gloom have been forecasting that before long our soil would be worn out that we would not be able to raise enough food for the needs of our expanding population. Against these gloomy forecasts the farmers of our country have within the past two years grown the largest crops in history. A other appraisal indicates that this production can be immensely increased.

Though we have lost soil by erosion and are still losing it, modern scientific developments have demonstrated that soil can be rebuilt faster than ever believed until recently. It can be built to a point where it is infinitely more productive than when the first sod was turned.

Nature has a wonderful way of keeping her house in order. Her forces interplay and depend upon each other. When man unwise interferes, she often strikes back with a vengeance. But when we work with nature, she rewards us with ever growing abundance. This is not just a job for government, state or local. It is not just a job for the farmers or the conservationists. It is a job in which every American has a great interest.

Too often in the past we have failed to realize how closely our resources are related to each other. Our forests serve to hold and slowly release water. Wholesale cutting of timber land has contributed to the tragedy of floods in the spring and to a shortage of water at later seasons. The same wholesale cutting of timber has destroyed fish and wild life habitats. It has upset nature's natural balance in a thousand directions.

In all that we do the most important need is for balance. We need to conserve our timber resources. But obviously we cannot stop cutting timber for the immense timber needs of our Nation. By wise conservation practices and constructive tax policies, we can speed the increasing practice of selective cutting of timber, encourage sustained yield programs and develop increased numbers of tree farms. We can wage a better fight against the menace of fire, tree diseases, and destructive pests. Against an unhappy history of reckless and improvident use of forest resources it is possible to say that we can foresee before long the achievement of a new and fine balance in the conservation and growth of timber.

The same balance can be achieved in the use of our range lands. Obviously, we
cannot turn their backs to the buffalo and the antelope. We need the immense production of sheep and beef cattle which contributes so heavily to feeding the Nation.

If government, ranchers, conservation experts, and scientists work together and with the land, its grasses can be improved and enriched, its water resources increased and it will serve the Nation with an ever increasing productive fertility.

In short, it is important that we have the stimulus of those who view with alarm all practices which injure our natural resources. They make a very valuable contribution to an aroused and active public interest. It is equally important that we recognize the enormous contribution made by the people who do the practical day-to-day job of producing the food and fibre, the lumber and minerals for a Nation of 140 million people. With an increasing degree of mutual understanding, of good will and of give-and-take, we can save our soil and build it better, preserve our forests and make them greater. We can make waste and begin to build again.

Equally challenging is the problem of water. Throughout much of the country the water table has declined steadily and in some places seriously.

In the West, water is life itself. Millions of acres of land are just waiting for the magic touch of water to make them bloom with rich productivity.

Through all history, water has meant life or death in the lives of nations. For lack of water, there is nothing but desert today in the area where the Garden of Eden is believed to have flourished and where the entire Babylonian civilization once thrived. They have vanished into the winds of the desert.

Through all our conservation policies the value of our rivers and streams run like a thread of liquid gold. The rivers of our country men and should be brought increasingly to serve the needs of the Nation. With a constant regard for the role they play in the intricate patterns of nature, our rivers must be developed for recreation, irrigation, power, navigation and flood control.

Working again with nature as an unfailing ally and with a new respect for the bounty with which she has blessed our land, we can preserve the things by which we live. Our freedom and our land — these are our most priceless heritage. For a brief moment in time we are trustees. It is our solemn duty to preserve and strengthen them for generations to come.

It is equally our duty to preserve and strengthen them for the great purpose of maintaining a strong, free America in a troubled world. I understand discussions this evening were to be devoted to some of the problems of world peace. Nothing is more important in that cause as a strong United States of America.

In these days, millions of men and women all over the world are praying that the strength of America will not fail. Today's efforts are under no illusions about the value which free people place on freedom. They know that given a free choice no people anywhere will willingly submit to the icy yoke of the total state. The
essence of human freedom in this world can be the end only achieve their purpose by brute force. All history shows that they will not be held in check by weakness. Peace will never be bought by appeasement. The peace of the world will only be secure when the forces on one side of peace are stronger than the forces on the side of evil.

In the cause of peace and freedom, America is the decisive power in the world. We did not deliberately seek this decisive role, we have been reluctantly to accept its immense responsibilities and assume its heavy burdens. But the bitter sacrifice of two World Wars and the anxieties of a peace that is not peace have taught us that for all the future there can be no isolation for America. There can be no white house from a world where freedom and tyranny are locked in a deadly struggle for survival.

As a people we are resolved to accept the great world role which providence has marked out for us. We are resolved to win our stand on the side of liberty and peace, to make our position unmistakably and irrevocably clear.

We have not come to these decisions as Republicans or Democrats, but as Americans. War lays its tragedy on all of us. Peace is a blessing that we all share. Division and dissension are an invitation to the aggressor. We will put them behind us. The task of winning peace should be above partisanship. We must keep it above partisanship. America will stand before the world as one country and one people, believing deeply in the cause of peace.

Our strength for peace is spiritual as well as material. We are armed with the sure knowledge that our cause is a just cause. Throughout history, peoples men have fought that might make right. We live by higher principles than that. Over the years, the United States has given to the world an unequalled demonstration of a great nation using its great power for great purposes. In the whole length of human history, there is no parallel for what our country has done.

In America, the cause of human freedom, of justice and of peace has a mighty ally. For too long, we have taken count of our weaknesses and counsel of our fears. Let us now take inventory of our strength. Let us act decisively to arm and strengthen and solidify the free world so that the forces making for peace will be more powerful than the forces making for war.

We can once again lead from strength not from weakness. We can make it clear to all the world that America stands with the free peoples of Europe and of North and South America and elsewhere in the world, determined to uphold the cause of human freedom and able to back up its determination. If we can unite our strength and draw together with all the people who believe in peace with honor and justice, we can bring together such a great force that once again the cause of freedom will be a vital and expanding thing. We will again bring hope to millions all over the world. We will strengthen our purpose. We will strengthen our policies. We will reinforce our friends.

We shall build a peace so strong and so unbreakable that we can move on to a better and happier life for every American, a more secure and happier future for all our children.