

Franklin D. Roosevelt: The first 'modern' President?

1932 – President: Video transcript

Swept into office by the greatest landslide in history, his first words were fearless, prophetic.

[Franklin D. Roosevelt]

I am prepared, under my constitutional duty, to recommend the measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require.

These measures, or such other measures, as the Congress may build out of its experience and wisdom I shall seek, within my constitutional authority, to bring to speedy adoption.

But in the event that the Congress shall fail to take one of these two courses, and in the event that the national emergency is still critical, I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me.

I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis – broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.

Extract from FDR obituary courtesy of Prelinger Archives and Getty Images