

Fifth Grade:

Raimah Reed, Boyette Springs Elementary, Riverview, FL

Arsenal of Democracy for Education

Arsenal of democracy. Powerful words, coined by Franklin Roosevelt on a 1940 radio broadcast. These words have significant meaning to the newest and future generations of the United States of America.

Arsenal of Democracy, from my viewpoint, means *resources of the politically free and how they can be used to help others, both in foreign and domestic regions*. Roosevelt said, "We must be the great Arsenal of Democracy. For us this is an emergency as serious as war itself."

Even now, being 77 long years since Roosevelt spoke these words, America, along with other countries are facing issues that are, indeed, as serious as war itself. One of these issues is education. For example, in the early 1900's, the United States had laws enforcing segregation in schools based on race. Even after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited racial discrimination in schools, some African-Americans, especially those in low socio-economic communities were unable to access quality education. This led to a disparity between the education of blacks and whites in this country.

Today, we as students often have our academic potential challenged due to some issues stemming from the early history of racial/educational discrimination. Many families cannot afford to send their children to private schools and many public schools lack the proper funding to provide better materials for the students enrolled in them.

The United States has unique, modern technology that can better educate those who can't afford it, or provide support to those who can just barely pay for the education that they deserve. We spend over \$600 billion on education annually. In my opinion it can be better distributed amongst schools, equally, so that each school, regardless of whether it's predominantly minority or if it's in a lower socio-economic community, can benefit from the funding.

I believe that America has much to offer to ourselves, and to countries outside of this great nation. We're a growing economy, a striving system, a country in dire need of more kind people that can change the world. Through our provisions, though we may not get involved in other's struggles, we can fulfill Roosevelt's dream and become the great Arsenal of Democracy by first bolstering our educational system through utilizing our resources to strengthen our schooling and expanding our reach to other countries to provide resources to those needing it.

Sixth Grade:

Barsha Parajuli, Poplar Tree Elementary School, Chantilly, VA

The Next Generation

America should always be a country worth protecting; nevertheless, we shouldn't only struggle for our own democracy, but should fight for other democracies, giving the next generation a chance to thrive. Being the Arsenal of Democracy is one thing, but how to become it, is another. America's role has been

and should be the primary source and idol to support democracy. America should step up for any country whose democracy has been undermined or attacked, as if it was their own. In addition to helping other democracies, America has to solve wide-ranging issues confronting us; one of which being poverty.

“We fought against poverty, and poverty won” announced Ronald Reagan on February 15, 1986. Ever since that war on poverty, we haven’t succeeded in any attempts to help the poor, because we haven’t focused on this critical issue. Some related issues that we should be addressing are low-wage and unemployment. Most people who are poor work as much as they can to get out of poverty. Some people have little to no work on a continuing basis, but they are in much worse situations and tend to pass poverty from one generation to the next. The numbers in both categories are stunning, leaving 43.1 million Americans today in poverty. The U.S. government *has to* take action, and let Americans be aware that this is a big issue that we have to start considering. We have to do something; even if it means decreasing tax cuts to the rich, and middle class. And having education be expensive is not going to ever let the next generation of poverty escape from where they came from. Education is to help the next generation become more successful than the last, and having fewer and fewer educated people, is not going to help. Who knows? The next Albert Einstein could be living on the streets. And although, poverty here in the United States is a big problem, this issue is even bigger in other parts of the world.

Around the world, either in poor or rich countries, poverty has been present for a long time; and in most nations, the gap between the rich and the poor is quite high. These high levels of inequality could affect social unity, which also affects economic growth. It doesn’t stop there either. In the present, there is less of a chance that the next generation of the poor will have the opportunity to become educated. Everyone should get a fair shot at every opportunity in life, regardless of their wealth status. America taking the title as the ‘Arsenal of Democracy’, and we as Americans, have to stand up for this cause, addressing it with any and every capability or effort we can put in. If poverty could stop the next generation from becoming more advanced, then we have to contribute everything we can to stop the war (mentioned in Ronald Reagan's quote) and win it.

Seventh Grade:

Kaliyah Garania, West DePere Middle School, DePere, WI

Divided Or United? The Choice Is Ours

As a thirteen year old girl in 2017, I find the biggest issue that is ‘*as serious as war itself*’ in our communities, our country, and the world is we are all divided. Race, gender, size, height, religion, background, these are all things that divide us from one another, and we have been struggling as a country with this divide for years. How do we solve this problem? First, we need to take a look at our history.

In World War II, race and background divided our country from within, forcing Japanese, German, and Italian Americans to leave their lives and relocate to Internment camps and Enemy Alien Confinement Camps. Throughout the 1900s, but especially in the 1960s and 70s, segregation was an issue on everyone's mind. Martin Luther King Jr. marched and made speeches about segregation, how blacks and whites were divided, along with Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. History shows that we have been divided for years, and we still face this problem today.

Today, in school I still see kids being made fun of because of their differences. In the hallways I hear the mean comments, and I hear the nasty jokes. “Burnt toast” and “Dumb blonde” are two examples of these vile comments. When I hear these things, I wonder if our generation will ever be able to stop this divide.

If we want to become a nation united, and we want to stop the divide, it all has to start with me. *I* have to be kind and look past the differences. *I* need to be the leader in my school, and be kind and loving to everyone. *I* have to set the example if I want to see the change. After I can fix myself, I can leave a lasting legacy in my school and community.

We can become a nation united if we stop worrying about others, and take a good look at ourselves. In the words of Michael Jackson, *'If you want to make the world a better place then take a look at yourself and make a change'*. After we make ourselves the best version we can be, we then need to focus on others' needs instead of ours. Volunteering, having empathy, even just simply asking, "How can I help you?" are all ways to practice being selfless. We need to switch from being a self centered society, to a selfless society, directing our focus on the people around us.

To become the great *'Arsenal of Democracy,'* our country needs to reunite its people to become the example of unity to the rest of the world. We have to end the war in our country before we can support other countries in their wars. We have to fix our country's problems before we can fix other countries' problems. We have to unite our country before we can ally with other countries. For after all, we are the United States of America.

Eighth Grade:

Andrew Cupps, Ridgely Middle School, Lutherville-Timonium, MD

What America's Role as The Arsenal of Democracy Should Be Today

In 1940, President Franklin Roosevelt dubbed the United States the "Arsenal of Democracy" and promised aid to the United Kingdom to defend democracy from the continuing conquest of Europe by Nazi Germany. When looking at the effects of this decision of America becoming the Arsenal of Democracy, I believe this is possibly one of the most important decisions made by the United States.

The United States becoming the Arsenal of Democracy ended a period of isolationism, grew the American economy, started an era of American dominance in international politics, and continues to have lasting effects on the mindset of America today. Ever since the United States took the role of the Arsenal of Democracy, we have been the dominant force in defending our democratic ideologies from tyranny. In WWII, being the Arsenal of Democracy meant helping the United Kingdom defend against Nazi Germany. During the Cold War, being the dominant force in defending the "free world" against communism. However, in the early 1990s, communism fell with the collapse of the Soviet Union and most other communist regimes. So, what should the role of the Arsenal of Democracy mean today?

I think one of the greatest challenges our world today faces is the challenge of terrorism. Terrorism has become a new international, global conflict. There are many terrorist groups all over the globe, especially those in the war-torn areas of the Middle East. I think that if America wants to continue to be the Arsenal of Democracy, our goal should be to contain and destroy the spread of terrorist groups and terrorism in general.

However, in defending democracy, it is possible that we may have to ally with, fund, and/or protect nations which may not share democratic ideologies, or which may be our enemies. For example, during World War 2, we had to ally with the Soviet Union, despite them definitely not being a free democratic nation, especially under Stalin's rule. Because of how complicated the world is, many times in defending democracy we may have to ally with those who could be enemies of our nation and/or ideologies and

morals in order to defeat a worse group. While it can be risky, it is sometimes necessary to help the lesser of two evils in order to defeat the greater evil.

I think that Franklin Roosevelt's decision to mold America into the Arsenal of Democracy was an extremely important decision in the history of the United States. It changed the course of our nation, and we continue to hold the idea that we are the Arsenal of Democracy. I believe we need to use our position as the Arsenal of Democracy to defeat evil in our current world such as terrorism, even if it means helping those who may not agree with our morals and ideologies. If we are to continue to hold the position of Arsenal of Democracy, we need to use it for good and to destroy evil.

Middle School Honorable Mentions:

Anya Ambarish, Stone Hill Middle School, Sterling, VA (8th Grade)
Arielle Bunce, Harrisburg Academy, Harrisburg, PA (7th Grade)
Thomas Finnegan, Saint Jain's Homeschool, Washington, NJ (8th Grade)
Edward Harrison, Sperrung Middle School, St. Louis, MO (6th Grade)
Chloe Meyer-Gehrke, Harrisburg Academy, Harrisburg, PA (7th Grade)
William Morgan, First Presbyterian Day School, Jackson, MS (5th Grade)
Christine Roegner, Heritage Classical Academy, Stow, OH (6th Grade)