Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Request for Appropriations to Relieve Civilian Distress in War-Torn Areas
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The following is submitted for possible inclusion in your Message to Congress:

The almost incredible events of the past two weeks in the European conflict, particularly as a result of the use of aviation and mechanized equipment, together with the possible consequences of further developments, necessitate another impulse for our military program. An investigation into manufacturing resources since my message of May 16th, to determine the practicability of placing additional orders with industry for special material, both to provide an early expansion of existing production facilities, and to obtain increased quantities of the special weapons concerned, has caused the War Department to submit to me an urgent recommendation that increased appropriations for the National Defense be secured before the adjournment of the present Congress.

And Harry

Over and beyond these requests for material is the evident requirement for the immediate creation of additional production facilities to meet present deficiencies in facilities for the manufacturing of munitions, such as guns, ammunition and fire control equipment, since they require a long time to create and to reach quantity production. The increased gravity of the situation indicates that action should be taken without delay.

The following supplemental estimates are therefore submitted to the Congress: For tanks and mechanized equipment - $90,000,000; for additional bombs and other ammunition for planes - $26,900,000; for storage facilities for additional bombs and ammunition - $2,500,000; for 105 mm guns and ammunition - $8,640,000; for antiaircraft material to equip eight additional regiments - $30,400,000; for 2,850 combat airplanes completely equipped to speed up existing production facilities and to provide for the further increase of the GHQ Air Force - $300,000,000. For further research and development of all airplanes and all types of munitions - $23,700,000; for the erection of additional production facilities for guns, ammunition and fire control equipment - $200,000,000.

Harry H. Woodring
The almost incredible events of the past two weeks in the European conflict, particularly as a result of the use of aviation and mechanized equipment, together with the possible consequences of further developments, necessitate another emphasis for our military program. An investigation into manufacturing resources since my message of May 16th, to determine the practicability of placing additional orders with industry for special material, both to provide an early expansion of existing production facilities, and to obtain increased quantities of the special weapons concerned, has caused the War and Navy Departments to submit to me an urgent and new recommendation that increased appropriations for the National Defense be assented before the adjournment of the present Congress.

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delay.

The problem of defending our national institutions
and territorial integrity is no longer a problem for men equipped
simply with an indomitable determination. Modern defense
requires this determination supported by the highly developed
machinery of our industrial productive capacity.

The expansion of our defense program makes it
necessary that we undertake immediately the training and
retraining of our people, and especially our young people, for
employment in industry and service in the Army and Navy.

The requirements of industry and the expanded armed
forces for persons with experience in mechanical and manual
fields are obviously going to be very great. We do not have

trained

such persons in the number that will be required for the tasks

that lie ahead of us if our defense is to be assured. We have,

therefore, the task of training a great number of persons in the

skills and semi-skills required by modern production in industry

and by a highly mechanized defense force in the Army and Navy.

A primary consideration in the training of skills must be, not the existing distribution of workers among skilled fields, but the distribution that would be required for our industrial machine and our defensive forces should be fully mobilized.

In the national effort for defense upon which we are now engaged, it is imperative that we make full and effective use of the mighty capacities that lie in our youth. Here as yet
undevoloped lie the strength needed in the building up of our armaments to provide a sure industrial foundation for the meeting of any and all defense requirements. Without the full development of these skills, our national defense will be less than it must be in the critical days which lie ahead. Without the full contribution of 

our defense cannot attain the invulnerability which the nation demands and which we are determined it shall have. 

Therefore, suggest the speedy enlargement of the program for training in the light of our defense needs.

I earnestly hope that your Committee can find it possible to include the appropriation required for a training program in a pending bill which can be considered by Congress at the earliest possible moment.
I have instructed the representatives of the War
and Navy Departments and the representatives of the several
agencies dealing with the training of young men, to make
available to the appropriate committees of Congress the plans
and proposals which they have already made to me.

The plans call for immediate
appropriations to carry forward
Congressional decisions to build
already pending for immediate
appropriations to add to the
program and for authorizations
enter into contracts which it
will take some time to complete.

The amounts involved are large
over a billion dollars — but I
believe that for national safety
the works are urgent.
In order to help meet the pressing needs in the grave emergency resulting from the brutal warfare in Europe, the American Red Cross is now conducting a national drive for a War Relief Fund of at least twenty million dollars.

I hope that the American people will quickly respond to the appeal of their Red Cross, because every dollar and more will be desperately needed. These funds will be used by the Red Cross for medical and hospital supplies, ambulances, etc., for wounded and sick soldiers and civilians, as well as for clothing and food for the refugees. However, the appalling problem created by the millions of refugees in France, from Holland, Belgium and northeastern France, requires vast quantities of food and other supplies, supplemental to that furnished by the Red Cross.

Under these circumstances I do not believe that our citizens want their government to stand idly by at this hour of critical need, and that they will want to supplement the splendid humanitarian work which their Red Cross is doing, to the extent, therefore, that more supplies will be available to the Red Cross for other urgent purposes, which are not provided for under the government appropriation, which is solely for aid to the refugees.
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June 11, 1940.

My dear Mr. Vice President:—

World events have made it clear to the American people that in the interest of American defense it is necessary for us to engage in a greatly enlarged program of training and armament.

At the same time our deepest sympathy has gone out to the civilian populations of war-torn areas, and I believe that this sympathy should be expressed by a concrete example of our inherent and decent generosity.

Many millions of dollars have been given to the American Red Cross for relief purposes in Europe, but I feel that the Government itself should greatly add to the assistance that is now being given.

In the pending Relief Bill before the Congress we are making possible the expenditure of over one billion dollars for the relief of the needy unemployed in the United States. And in addition to this, large further sums are being spent from day to day by states and municipalities in the care of the needy who cannot be given employment on work relief projects.

In view of these large sums spent at home, I feel that the Congress would receive nation-wide support if it were to add an appropriation to the Relief Bill in the sum of at least fifty million dollars as a token of our deep-seated desire to help not only Americans but peoples who are destitute in other lands.

Clearly the greater part of the amount appropriated will be spent in the United States for the purchase and export of food materials — nearly all of which represent surplus in this country. These surpluses are due principally to the war situation in other lands.
We have used and are using a part of these surpluses for
distribution to our own needy families. But there is still
an excess which tends, incidentally, to depreciate the
prices which American farmers receive for their products.
Further export of these surplus food products will help our
very large agricultural populations.

There are other things which the destitute
refugees need across the seas — medicines and medical and
nursing aid; bandages, surgical dressings, hospital garments
and even oots and blankets and sheets; ambulances; clothing
against the winter which will be upon them soon; safeguards
against epidemics which could well spread throughout the
world.

The appropriation I suggest should, I think,
be kept in somewhat elastic form because it is clear that
at this time it is impossible to forecast either the exact
needs or the exact methods of meeting them.

I call attention to the fact that such an
appropriation in no way lightens the burden which the
American Red Cross has already assumed. It is necessary
that the American Red Cross continue its splendid service
for wounded and sick soldiers and civilians. An appro-
priation by the Congress will supplement the work of the
Red Cross to meet the many additional crying needs of the
civilian populations who have been driven from their homes.