

January 12, 1943

[Farm Mobilization Day]

FDR Speech File

1448

FARM MOBILIZATION DAY
STATEMENT
BY THE PRESIDENT
READ BY
ECONOMIC STABILIZATION DIRECTOR
JAMES F. BYRNES
OVER THE RADIO
JANUARY 12, 1943, AT 4.30 PM., EWT.

All over the world, food from our country's farms is helping the United Nations to win this war. From the South Pacific to the winter front in Russia, from North Africa to India, American food is giving strength to the men on the battle lines, and sometimes also to the men and women working behind the lines. Somewhere on every continent the food ships from this country are the life-line of the forces that fight for freedom. This afternoon we have heard from some of the military and civilian fighters who look to us for food. No words of mine can add to what they have said.

But on this farm mobilization day I want to round out the picture and tell you a little more about the vital place that American farmers hold in the entire war strategy of the United Nations.

Food is a weapon in total war -- fully as important in its way as guns or planes or tanks. So are other products of the farm. The long-staple cotton that goes into parachutes, for example, the oils that go into paints for the ships and planes and guns, the grains that go into alcohol to make explosives, also are weapons.

Our enemies know the use of food in war. They employ it cold-bloodedly to strengthen their own fighters and workers

and to weaken or exterminate the peoples of the conquered countries. We of the United Nations also are using food as a weapon to keep our fighting men fit and to maintain the health of all our civilian families. We are using food to earn the friendship of people in liberated areas and to serve as a promise and an encouragement to peoples who are not yet free. Already, in North Africa, the food we are sending the inhabitants is saving the energies and the lives of our troops there. In short we are using food, both in this country and in allied countries with the single aim of helping to win this war.

Already it is taking a lot of food to fight the war. It is going to take a lot more to win the final victory and win the peace that will follow. In terms of total food supply the United Nations are far stronger than our enemies. But our great food resources are scattered to the ends of the earth -- from Australia and New Zealand to South Africa and the Americas -- and we no longer have food to waste. Food is precious, just as oil and steel are precious. As part of our global strategy, we must produce all we can of every essential farm product; we must divide our supplies wisely and use them carefully. We cannot afford to waste any of them.

Therefore the United Nations are pooling their food resources and using them where they will do the most good. Canada is sending large shipments of cheese, meats and other foods on the short North Atlantic run to Britain. Australia and New Zealand are providing a great deal of the food for American soldiers stationed in that part of the world. Food from Latin

America is going to Britain.

Every food producing country among the United Nations is doing its share. Our own share in food strategy, especially at this stage of the war, is large, because we have such great resources for production; and we are on direct ocean lanes to North Africa, to Britain and to the northern ports of Russia.

American farmers must feed our own growing army and navy. They must feed the civilian families of this country and feed them well. They must help feed the fighting men and some of the war workers of Britain and Russia and, to a lesser degree, those of other allied countries.

So this year, as never before, the entire nation is looking to its farmers. Many quarters of the free world are looking to them too. American farmers are a small group with a great task. Although 60 percent of the world's population are farm people, only 2 percent of that population are American farmers. But that 2 percent have the skill and the energy to make this country the United Nations greatest arsenal for food and fiber.

In spite of the handicaps under which American farmers worked last year, the production victory they won was among the major victories of the United Nations in 1942. Free people everywhere can be grateful to the farm families who made that victory possible.

This year the American farmer's task is greater, and the obstacles more formidable. But I know that once more our farmers will rise to their responsibility.

This farm mobilization is the first day ever dedicated by a President to the farm people of the nation. I know that the whole country joins with me in a tribute to the work farmers already have done, in a pledge of full support in the difficult task which lies ahead for farmers, and in a prayer for good weather to make farmers' efforts more fruitful.

Our fighting men and allies, and our families here at home can rely on farmers for the food and other farm products that will help to bring victory.

(signed) FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

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(signed) FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

STATEMENTS FILE

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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By the President

Read By

Economic Stabilization Director

James F. Byrnes

Over the Radio

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