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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**  
**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**  
**Series 3: “The Four Freedoms” and FDR in World War II**

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**File No. 1468**

**1943 June 7**

**Radio Address to the U.N. Conference  
on Food & Agriculture**

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
EAST ROOM  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
JUNE 7, 1943.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the White House you who have served so splendidly at the epoch-making United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture.

I use that word "epoch-making" advisedly. The Conference could not have failed to be significant because it was the first United Nations Conference. But it has succeeded even beyond our hopes; it is truly epoch-making because, in reaching unanimity upon complex and difficult problems, you have demonstrated beyond question that the United Nations really are united -- not only for the prosecution of the war but for the solution of the many and difficult problems of peace. This Conference has been a living demonstration of the methods by which the conversations of nations of like mind contemplated by Article VII of the Mutual Aid Agreement can and will give practical application to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

You have been dealing with agriculture, the most basic of all human activities, and with food, the most basic of all human needs. Twice as many people are employed in work on food and agriculture as in work in all other fields combined. And all people have, in the literal sense of the word, a vital interest in food.

That a child or adult should get the nourishment necessary for full health is too important a thing to be left to mere chance.

You have recognized that society must accept this responsibility. As you stated in your declaration, "The primary responsibility lies with each nation for seeing that its own people have the food needed for health and life; steps to this end are for national determination. But each nation can fully achieve its goal only if all work together." On behalf of the United States, I accept this declaration.

You have gone beyond the general recognition of principles to deal in specific terms with specific tasks and projects.

You have examined the needs of all countries for food and other agricultural products, both as they will exist in the short-run period of recovery from the devastation of war, and as they will exist over the longer run, when our efforts can be fully devoted to expanding the production of food so that it will be adequate for health the world over.

You have surveyed with courage and with realism the magnitude of these problems and have reached unanimous agreement that they can, and must -- and will -- be solved.

It is true that no nation has ever had enough food to feed all of its people as we now know human beings should be fed. But neither have nations representing over eighty percent of the world's two billion inhabitants ever before been joined together to achieve such an aim. Never before have they set out to bend their united efforts to the development of the world's resources so that all men might seek to attain food they need.

For the short run, you have pointed out steps which have to be taken both in increasing supplies and in maintaining economy of use and coordination of distribution.

In considering our long range problems, you have surveyed our knowledge of the inadequacy in the quantity and quality of the diet of peoples in all lands. You have pooled our knowledge of the means of expanding our output, of increasing our agricultural efficiency, and of adjusting agricultural production to consumption needs. In the fields of both production and consumption you have recognized the need for the better utilization of the knowledge we now have and for extending still further the boundaries of our knowledge through education and research.

You have called upon your governments individually and collectively to enlarge and improve their activities in these fields.

For the perfection and rapid execution of these plans, you have recommended the creation of a permanent United Nations organization. To facilitate and hasten the creation of

that organization, and to carry on the work you have begun until its creation, you have established an Interim Commission. The Government of the United States is honored that you have asked that the Interim Commission have its seat in Washington, and will be glad to take the preliminary action for the establishment of that commission which you have entrusted to it.

Finally, you have expressed your deep conviction that our goal in this field cannot be attained without forward action in other fields as well. Increased food production must be accompanied by increased industrial production and by increased purchasing power. There must be measures for dealing with trade barriers, international exchange stability and international investment. The better use of natural and human resources must be assured to improve living standards. Many of these questions lie outside the scope of the work you have undertaken, but their solution is none the less essential to its success. They require, and shall receive, our united attention.

In the political field, these relationships are equally important. And they work both ways. A sound world agricultural program will depend upon world political security, while that security will in turn be greatly strengthened if each country can be assured of the food it needs. Freedom from want and freedom from fear go hand in hand.

Our ultimate objective can be simply stated: It is to build for ourselves, for all men, a world in which each individual human being shall have the opportunity to live out his life in peace; to work productively, earning at least enough for his actual needs and those of his family; to associate with the friends of his choice; to think and worship freely; and to die secure in the knowledge that his children, and their children, shall have the same opportunities.

That objective, as men know from long and bitter experience, will not be easy to achieve. But you and I know also that, throughout history, there has been no more worthwhile, no more inspiring challenge.

That challenge will be met.

You have demonstrated beyond question that free peoples all over the world can agree upon a common course of action and upon common machinery for action. You have brought new hope to the world that, through the establishment of orderly international procedures for the solution of international problems, there will be attained freedom from want and freedom from fear. The United Nations are united in the war against fear and want as solidly and effectively as they are united on the battlefield in this world-wide war against aggression.

And we are winning by action and unity.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

*Orig. reading copy*



ADDRESS  
OF THE  
PRESIDENT  
BEFORE THE DELEGATES OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
BROADCAST NATIONALLY  
FROM THE EAST ROOM IN THE WHITE HOUSE  
JUNE 7, 1943, AT 5.15 P.M., E.W.T.

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

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I use that word "epoch-making" advisedly. The Conference could not have failed to be significant, because it was the first United Nations Conference; but it has succeeded even beyond our hopes. It is truly epoch-making because, in reaching unanimity upon complex and difficult problems, you have demonstrated beyond question that the United Nations really are united -- not only for the prosecution of the war, but for the solution of the many and difficult problems of peace. This Conference has been a living demonstration of the methods by which the conversations of nations -- nations of like mind, contemplated by Article VII of the Mutual Aid Agreement, can and will give practical application to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. (applause)

You have been dealing with agriculture -- agriculture, the most basic of all human activities; and with food -- agriculture, the most basic of all human needs. Twice as

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

many people are employed in work on food and in agriculture as in work in all the other fields of human activity put together (combined). And all people have, in the literal sense of the word, a vital interest in food.

That a child or an adult should get the nourishment necessary for full health is too important all over the world -- too important a thing to be left to mere chance.

You have recognized that society must accept this responsibility. As you stated in your declaration, "The primary responsibility lies with each nation for seeing that its own people have the food needed for health and life; steps to this end are for national determination. But each nation can fully achieve its goal only if all work together."

(applause) And on behalf of the United States I gladly accept this declaration. (applause)

You have gone beyond the general recognition of principles, to deal in specific terms with specific things (tasks) and specific projects.

You have examined the needs of all countries for food and other agricultural products, both as they will exist, or rather, to put it this way, rather as they will exist in the short-run (period) of recovery from the devastation of war -- the few years when the fighting stops, and as they will exist over the longer run, when our efforts can be fully devoted to expanding the production of food, so that it will be adequate for health the world over, and all through the years to come.

You have surveyed with courage and with realism the magnitude of these problems, and you have reached unanimous agreement that they can, and must -- and will -- be solved.

It is true that no nation has ever had enough food to feed all of the (its) people, as we now know that human beings should be fed. But neither have nations representing over 80 percent of the world's two billion inhabitants, never (ever) before have they (been) joined together to achieve that (such an) aim. Never before have they set out to bend their united efforts to the development of the world's resources so that all men might seek to attain the food they need.

For the short-run, you have pointed out steps that (which) have to be taken, both in increasing supplies and in maintaining the economy of use and coordination of distribution.

In considering our long range problems, you have surveyed our knowledge of the inadequacy in the quantity and the quality of the diet of peoples in all lands. You have pooled our knowledge of the means of expanding our output, of increasing our agricultural efficiency in every nation, and of adjusting agricultural production to consumption needs. In the fields of both production and consumption you have recognized the need for the better utilization of the knowledge we now have, and for extending still further the boundaries of our knowledge through education and research.

You have called upon your governments individually and collectively to enlarge and improve their activities in

these fields.

For the perfection and the rapid execution of these plans, you have recommended the creation of a permanent United Nations organization, and for that I specially thank you. To facilitate and hasten the creation of that organization, (and) to carry on the work that you have begun until it is permanently set on its feet (its creation), you have established an Ad Interim Commission. The Government of the United States is honored that you have asked that the Interim Commission have its seat in Washington, and will be glad to take the preliminary action for the establishment of that commission which you have entrusted to it. (applause)

Finally, you have expressed your deep conviction that our goal in this field cannot be attained without forward action in other fields as well. Increased food production must be accompanied by increased industrial production, and by increased purchasing power. There must be measures for dealing with trade barriers, international exchange stability, and international investment. The better use of natural and human resources must be assured to improve the living standard(s); and, may I add, the better use of these resources without exploitation on the part of any nation. (applause) Now, under it goes -- I would say that many of these questions lie outside of the scope (of the work) that you have undertaken, but their solution is none the less essential to its success. They require, and I think they shall receive, our united attention.

In the political field, these relationships are

equally important. And they work both ways. A sound world agricultural program will depend upon world political security, while that security will in turn be greatly strengthened if each country can be assured of the food it needs. Freedom from want and freedom from fear go hand in hand. (applause)

And so I think that our ultimate objective can be simply stated: It is to build for ourselves, meaning for all men everywhere, a world in which each individual human being shall have the opportunity to live out his life in peace; to work productively, earning at least enough for his actual needs and those of his family; to associate with the friends of his choice; to think and worship freely; and to die secure in the knowledge that his children, and their children, shall have the same opportunities. (applause)

That objective, as men know from long and bitter experience, will not be easy to achieve. But you and I know, also, that throughout history there has been no more worth while, no more inspiring challenge.

That challenge will be met.

You have demonstrated beyond question that free peoples all over the world can agree upon a common course of action, and upon common machinery for action. You have brought new hope -- new hope to the world that, through the establishment of orderly international procedures for the solution of international problems, there will be attained freedom from want and freedom from fear. The United Nations are united in the war against fear and want, as solidly -- as (and) effectively

-- as they are united on the battle-front in this world(wide) war against aggression.

And we are winning that war by action and by unity. (applause)

And now may I express the hope that you will come out to the lawn, because Mrs. Roosevelt and I, and the Vice President and the Secretary of State want to have the privilege of meeting each and every one of you. (applause)

(A)

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Address  
of the  
President  
Before the Delegates of the  
United Nations Conference on Food and  
Agriculture

STATEMENTS FILE

Broadcast Nationally  
from the East Room in the White House  
June 4, 1943, at 5:15 PM EDT

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Jack Romagna

HOLD FOR RELEASE

HOLD FOR RELEASE

JUNE 7, 1943

The following address of the President before the delegates to the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture to be broadcast from the East Room of the White House is for release in papers appearing on the streets not earlier than 5:15 P.M., E.W.T., Monday, June 7, 1943.

The same release also applies to radio announcers and news commentators.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

(INSERT A)

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(Enact B)

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

(B)

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(applause)