Franklin D. Roosevelt — "The Great Communicator"

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1944 March 8

Remarks to the Advertising War Council Conference

OFF THE RECORD

Advertising War Council Conference

March 8, 1944

At 4.30 p.m., e.w.t.

Executive Office of the President

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know how we are going to get two hundred people in here.

MR. EARLY: Move in closer, or we won't all be able to get in, I am afraid.

THE PRESIDENT: May need a little pressure on the rear -- I don't know. (laughter) We have enlarged this room once. I guess we'll have to do it again. (more laughter)

(after a pause) How are they behaving in the rear?

VOICE: Still coming.

MR. EARLY: Still coming, sir.

VOICE: No absentees at all, Steve. They are all here.

MR. SIMMONS: All in, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I want to say "how do" to you, and tell you how glad I am that you are here. I wish I had been able to make these tours with you, I probably would have learned a great deal. I am rather envious for that reason. I also want to tell you how really appreciative I am of what you have done for the war in the past couple of years. It has been a tremendous help to us in all these war efforts that you, probably more than anybody else, have put across throughout the country. They will be coming along, probably for a

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.

good long time to come -- more of them.

And we are counting on you for continued work with us in educating the country. It isn't propaganda and it isn't a drive, but it is part of our system of modern education, getting into all the communities, large -- large and small. A good many new ones that will come right along. They are not propaganda, or political in the larger sense.

I hesitate a little bit to ask you to help me on one thing. I think the country is -- one of the real dangers in the country, on the non-military side, is inflation. I am scared to death of inflation, quite frankly; and I don't think it is a party matter. There has been -- there have been quite a number of ads that have been carried in the past -- recent past about the dangers of inflation. And yet, as I see people that come in here from all over the country, the number of people that don't understand it yet! It is perfectly appalling. So the more education we give them the better it is.

I think probably everybody in this room is afraid of inflation, just as I am. You have seen it happen in other countries. We know the dangers that would occur if we went into an inflationary period. I still think we have got to do an awful lot of educating to prevent it from happening in some manner or form. It isn't just the same things that have happened to other countries that have got a debased currency, but it is what would happen -- what would happen to the investments of every man, woman and child in this country.

One thing that I don't dare say -- talk about out

loud is the effect it would have on Government bonds. A good many of us have bought Government bonds, and we want to get paid back in the same kind of dollars, so far as we can, that we put into those bonds. Of course, I can't talk about it in that way, because it might discourage the future sales of -- of Government bonds. So that kind of advertising and information -- education -- has got to be written by -- by experts like you people.

Things of that kind I don't think have anything to do with politics, one way or the other. And yet it's amazing the number of people who are playing up the inflationary program, who think of it very largely in terms of politics, one way or the other -- both parties.

I am just using that as an example of some of the -- some of the things we still have to do to keep the feet of the country on the ground. And there is always the tendency, in matters like that, for people to lift one foot up, a little like one of my farm-leader friends who admitted to one of the committees in Congress, when he was -- talked about the benefits of this, that and the other thing. And he was asked whether he was in favor of inflation.

"Oh -- Oh No. Oh my, No. Of course not."

Then he hesitated a minute, and said, "Just a little bit of inflation." (laughter)

Well, if you once start a little bit, as you all know, it is pretty hard to stop it. You want to keep the dam from breaking.

So I hope that you have had a good time, also a successful time, in hearing the -- some of the military and naval problems. I think things are going along fairly well. Of course, I am never satisfied. Probably it's a good attitude of mind to be in -- never to be satisfied.

You probably heard some of the senior officers that -- about the back of things, and some of the junior officers who have been out on the firing line, who are much more interesting than the senior officers. (laughter) Human interest stuff; and they are long on human interest -- rightly. And they are grand people.

Then, of course, we have to remember that they wouldn't have had their human interest if it hadn't been for the planning by the different staffs. And it is rather an interesting fact -- no reason you shouldn't know -- that on all this planning neither Churchill nor I have ever overruled the staffs. Lot of people think so. It isn't true. (laughter) We have gone along with the staffs remarkably well, if I do hand myself a bouquet. (more laughter) Then it so happens that the joint staffs and I over here have viewed this picture of the war all over the world in exactly the same way. We haven't had any basic disagreement, and even -- even haven't had any minor disagreements. We happen to have been thinking exactly along the same lines.

On international cooperation, we are now working really for -- not the first time, but since the last meeting in Teheran -- in really good cooperation with the Russians.

And I think with the Russians -- this, of course, is all off the record -- they are perfectly friendly, they aren't trying to gobble up all the rest of Europe or the world. They -- they didn't know us, that's -- that's the really fundamental difference. They are friendly people. They haven't got any crazy ideas of conquest, and so forth; and now that they have got to know us, they are much more willing to accept us. And we are working in with them on actual operations and plans much better than we did before, just because we didn't know each other.

So that was one of the great gains of -- of last fall in Teheran. Things of that kind take quite a while to work out with people who are five or six thousand miles away, who don't talk our language, English -- and we certainly don't know Russian. (laughter) And yet we are getting somewhere with them.

And all these fears that have been expressed by a lot of people here -- with some reason -- that the Russians are going to try to dominate Europe, I personally don't think there's anything in it. They have got a large enough "hunk of bread" right in Russia to keep them busy for a great many years to come without taking on any more -- any more headaches.

The military operations, therefore, are -- are in a good cooperative position. We have got a long, long road to go. Of course, the more you do to tell the people that "peace is just around the corner," the better it is, but we -- nobody agrees that peace is around the corner. It just

plain isn't. It's a long road, and a difficult road. We are going to have big losses. And I am personally confident of victory in the long run. But I am inclined to think that we ought to -- if we do any complaining at all -- be against the people who are, honorably and honestly, working in just the wrong direction, such as the group that wants to make peace now.

Well, just the example, I got a letter yesterday from a very prominent man who -- very -- he has been retired for some years -- very prominent in the motion picture industry -- a five-page letter, making a plea to me to appoint a "secretary of peace" and send him over to Germany, and see under what conditions -- it's a beautiful letter, and he meant it; it's an honest thing, from his heart -- to see if we couldn't work out some means with Germany of ending this terrible slaughter, and the busting up of civilization. Not a word about some of the things we are hoping to get, suchas the end of German aggression, and a change in the philosophy of the German government. Oh No, not a word about that! But, appoint a peace secretary to go over there -- sort of a roving commission -- to bring peace to the world.

Now there are a lot -- lot of people in this country that are doing things of that kind honestly. I don't -- I don't believe in this "ulterior motive" stuff, but they just don't know. And therefore they require what I was talking about before, some education from you people.

So go ahead and give it to them, all you possibly

can.

We are going to win the war -- it is going to take a hell of a long time -- and we don't like to be interfered with in the winning of the war.

So on that note I am putting it up to you.

All right. It has been good to see you. I wish I had time to shake hands with you all, but I have to get -- Oh, I will probably work all afternoon and all evening.

VOICES: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

(applause for the President)

CONFIDENTIAL
Advertising War Council Conference
March 8, 1944, at 4.30 P.M., E.W.T.

STATEMENTS FILE

P. I don't know how we are going to get two hundred people in here.

Early: Move in closer, or we won't all be able to get in, I am afraid.

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afternoon and all evening.

VOICES: Thank you very much, Mr. President. (applause for the President)

On this, the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, I take the opportunity of conveying a message of friendship and good will to the people of the Philippines. American-Filipino friendship has had a long history. The bill for Philippine Independence which I signed just ten years ago was a manifestation of that friendship. It is a source of deep gratification to me to be able to say to the brave people, now bearing the yoke of Japanese domination, that the return of freedom to the Islands draws closer with each Allied victory. The Philippine government temporarily residing here possesses all the attributes of an independent nation. America will fulfill its pledge ~~to give you your independence~~.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE MARCH 24, 1944

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

On this, the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, I take the opportunity of conveying again a message of friendship and good will to the people of the Philippines. American-Filipino friendship has had a long history. The bill for Philippine Independence which I signed just ten years ago was a manifestation of that friendship. It is a source of deep gratification to me to be able to say to the brave people, who are now bearing the yoke of Japanese domination, that the return of freedom to their Islands draws closer with each Allied victory. The Philippine government temporarily residing here possesses all the attributes of an independent nation. America will fulfill its pledge.

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 24, 1944

2886

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

2892

The United Nations are fighting to make a world in which tyranny and aggression can not exist; a world based upon freedom, equality and justice; a world in which all persons regardless of race, color or creed may live in peace, honor and dignity.

In the meantime in most of Europe and in parts of Asia the systematic torture and murder of civilians — men, women and children — by the Nazis and the Japanese continue unabated. In areas subjugated by the aggressors innocent Poles, Czechs, Norwegians, Dutch, Danes, French, Greeks, Russians, Chinese, Filipinos — and many others — are being starved or frozen to death or murdered in cold blood in a campaign of savagery.

The slaughters of Warsaw, Lidice, Kharkov and Nanking — the brutal torture and murder by the Japanese, not only of civilians but of our own gallant American soldiers and fliers — these are startling examples of what goes on day by day, year in and year out, wherever the Nazis and the Japs are in military control — free to follow their barbaric purpose.

In one of the blackest crimes of all history -- begun by the Nazis in the day of peace and multiplied by them a hundred times in time of war -- the wholesale systematic murder of the Jews of Europe goes on unabated every hour. As a result of the events of the last few days hundreds of thousands of Jews, who while living under persecution have at least found a haven from death in Hungary and the Balkans, are now threatened with annihilation as Hitler's forces descend more heavily upon these lands. That these innocent people, who have already survived a decade of Hitler's fury, should perish on the very eve of triumph over the barbarism which their persecution symbolizes, would be a major tragedy.

It is therefore fitting that we should again proclaim our determination that none who participate in these acts of savagery shall go unpunished. The United Nations have made it clear that they will pursue the guilty and deliver them up in order that Justice be done. That warning applies not only to the leaders but also to their functionaries and subordinates in Germany and in the satellite countries. All who knowingly take part in the deportation of Jews to their death in Poland or Norwegians and French to their death in Germany are equally guilty with the executioner. All who share the guilt shall share the punishment.

Hitler is committing these crimes against humanity in the name of the German people. I ask every German and every man everywhere under Nazi domination to show the world by his action that in his heart he does not share these insane criminal desires. Let him hide these pursued victims, help them to get over their borders, and do what he can to save them from the Nazi hangman. I ask him also to keep watch, and to record the evidence that will one day be used to convict the guilty.

In the meantime, and until the victory that is now assured is won, the United States will persevere in its efforts to rescue the victims of brutality of the Nazis and the Japs. In so far as the necessity of military operations permit this Government will use all means at its command to aid the escape of all intended victims of the Nazi and Jap executioner -- regardless of race or religion or color. We call upon the free peoples of Europe and Asia temporarily to open their frontiers to all victims of oppression. We shall find havens of refuge for them, and we shall find the means for their maintenance and support until the tyrant is driven from their homelands and they may return.

In the name of justice and humanity let all freedom loving people rally to this righteous undertaking.

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