

SPEECH OF SENATOR HARRY S. TRUMAN
BEFORE THE GRADUATING CLASS OF NORTHEAST
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TO BE RELEASED ON DELIVERY

I feel highly honored to have been invited here today to take part in this commencement exercise and to meet with the faculty, the students, the alumni, and many friends of this fine institution, to address the Graduating Class of the Northeast Missouri State Teachers College. I believe that all of us owe a debt of gratitude to the founders and the faculty of this school, who have labored so earnestly and conscientiously down through the years to preserve and perpetuate the high standards and fine traditions that prevail today. You of the Graduating Class have a continuing obligation to carry on these traditions and to assume the duties and responsibilities of citizenship which now become yours in this very complicated world we live in.

Today our cherished heritage of democracy and freedom is endangered by the most desperate and powerful forces of evil that have ever banded themselves together. This world-wide war will determine for generations to come whether we will live in a world of democracy and individual liberty or in a world enslaved, brutalized and terrorized by barbarous aggressors. That the United Nations shall put an end forever to the regime of the Axis madmen no one doubts. Our fighting men are steadily and surely attacking and destroying the outer fortresses of the enemy. Our invincible will is stepping up the tempo of the war and the inevitable day approaches when the gates of Rome, Berlin and Tokyo will fall. We who remain at home must gird ourselves with redetermination to use all our resources -- our material wealth, our ingenuity, our skill, all those attributes of mind and soul from which freedom, as we know it, has come

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to man — to the end that this conflict may be won in the shortest possible time and with the least possible loss of life.

This Country has a difficult future, but a good one if we have the courage to make it so. The war will be won — perhaps not so easily or so soon as we hope. To win the war we must exert the greatest possible striking power at the front. War today is total war and power cannot be exerted at the front unless we have the capacity to produce war materials and the articles necessary for the maintenance of a sound, healthy, civilian economy strong enough to endure a long war.

To insure the success of the war effort, we must preserve a healthy balance between (1) the armed services, (2) the production of war materials, and (3) our civilian economy. To do all this we must provide adequate transportation facilities. This means that the railroads must receive the equipment which they need to maintain their essential service. Operators of trucks and busses must be able to acquire equipment and parts for repairs without unnecessary delay and trouble. We must build barges and operate them to carry petroleum and other heavy products. We must provide tires and gasoline for private cars in amounts sufficient to maintain reasonably satisfactory living conditions. We must provide farm machinery for food production and sugar for domestic canning. We must provide adequate supplies of clothing, shelter for workers, fuel for heat, doctors for medical attention and fertilizer for truck and victory gardens.

The war in the Pacific may be very long if we are to insist upon total victory. We must insist on total victory and be satisfied with nothing

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less because any other course will simply invite another war within twenty years, for which we might be less well prepared than we are today.

All of this establishes the necessity for maintaining what I have termed "balance", to the end that our people may have the will to endure and to carry on until complete victory has been obtained.

The task of assuring that proper attention is given to these matters is one of the principal concerns of the Special Committee of the Senate Investigating the National Defense Program, of which I am Chairman. This task is of equal importance to that of preventing waste. We must do both because we must both be prepared to win the war, no matter how long it takes, and to maintain the unwavering interest of the people in doing that; and, at the same time, we must try to win the war at a minimum of cost, for all of you will be paying for this war as long as you live.

The cost of waging total war is so great that it is impossible for human beings to understand its extent. How can any of us visualize three hundred thousand millions of dollars? The war may cost much more than that, and there is no way of calculating the cost in dead and wounded.

But not everything in war is on the debit side.

War shakes our social and economic structures to their very foundations, but that which is best in them is so obviously right and needed that it is strong enough to survive war.

Much of what we lose by war is well lost, and we also obtain some new and important gains.

In peacetime, we get into a business-as-usual type of thinking. It is easy to do business at the old stand in the same time-honored ways. People tend to follow slavishly the old maxim "let well enough alone."

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It takes energy and daring to branch out in new fields. Even the men who possess those qualities are circumscribed by the caution of those with whom they are associated.

The energetic and daring businessman must deal with his local banker, with the suppliers of materials, and with his retail outlets. Each of these sources is usually unwilling to try any new and, to them, dangerous experiments, unless it is impossible to go on doing business as it has been done before.

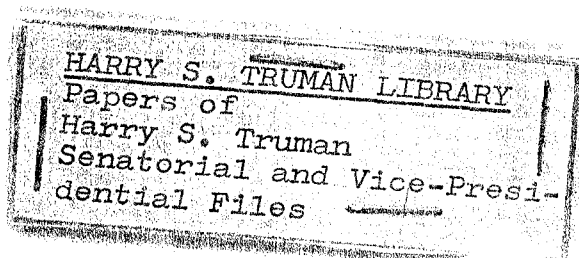
The whole pattern of peacetime business activity is against change, and improvements during peacetime are left to the few who have the hardihood to undergo most unusual risks.

• War changes all this.

The changes incident to war are so many, and their effects upon business so great, that it is impossible to go back to the old way of doing things. Even the most conservative persons are forced by circumstances to go into new ventures and new ways of producing.

• In this way we have enormously increased our capacity to produce basic raw materials. Today our capacity to produce aluminum has been increased by more than six times. Our capacity to produce magnesium has been increased by nearly a hundred times. The facilities for the production of alloy steels have been increased more than five times. We have built a huge artificial rubber industry and have greatly expanded and increased our plastic industry.

In addition to increasing the capacity to produce materials, we have developed new methods of utilizing them. We know how to roll, forge, cast and extrude aluminum and are learning how to process and use magnesium in ways we previously thought impossible. The same is true of plastics and plywood.



As a result of all this, we can be assured that we will have more and better materials for post-war use at much lower cost. We will be able to make articles which we did not know how to make at all, and we will be able to make, for popular sale, articles which formerly were too difficult and expensive to warrant their manufacture even for the use of the wealthy.

In this war we have already spent more than ten billion dollars on new plants. With this money we have built the best factory buildings in the world and equipped them with vast quantities of the finest and most up-to-date machinery in the world. There are thousands of such plants, and almost every large community in the Country has at least one or two of them. In short, we have rebuilt American industry. Its potential capacity for the production of peacetime goods is enormous.

Thus, we have the materials, the new skills with which to utilize them, and the factories and machinery with which to produce all that we need. We also have the labor. During the ten years preceding our entry into the war, we always had several millions of unemployed. This condition must never be allowed to exist again. As a result of the war production program, we have also trained many millions of women who are today working in factories at various skills. I have found in my examination of the various plants that women are considered to be equal to men in most work and superior to men in some kinds of work.

The last war put the women into the offices, and they never left them. This war has put them into the factories. Let no one imagine that the women will permit themselves to be shunted out of these jobs which they have so well demonstrated their capacity to do. Instead they will continue to produce to the end that they and their families, and everyone else in this country can have more and better goods for less money.

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We also have the market on which immense quantities of consumer goods can be sold. Most of the consumer goods in this country were produced some years back. Most of it will be worn out by the end of the war. Nearly all of it will be obsolete and shabby in comparison with new goods. Its replacement will provide a tremendous market. After having endured the rigors of a long war, everyone will be most interested in obtaining new articles and new goods so that they can enjoy the fruits of victory, namely a happy home life.

Money will be available to purchase the goods. During this war, nearly all of the indebtedness which has been built up by reason of the purchase of goods on the partial payment plan has been repaid. Today Americans are largely out of debt except for their homes. In addition, Americans have purchased many tens of billions of dollars of War Bonds, and the savings accounts in banks have increased. All these billions will be available to purchase new goods and articles.

Thus we have everything necessary to produce and distribute for use in the ordinary home more than was ever seen before in the history of the world, if, and I underscore this, and only if we are equal to the task of utilizing what we have.

We have no alternative but to try, because we have reshuffled our people from coast to coast. We have moved millions of people out of their homes to new locations. We have destroyed tens of thousands of small businesses. It is absolutely impossible to go back and restore our people to the places they lived before the war started, and our businesses to the condition in which they then were.

We must either substitute new skills and new articles and an entirely new economy, based on the time-tested principles of private initiative and

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development, or we must prepare ourselves to endure the worst times which this Country has ever faced. The latter alternative is unthinkable, especially as we have everything necessary to achieve the former.

This country must choose between leading the world in producing new and better articles for wide-spread popular distribution among all classes, or becoming a second rate power and watching Russia, Asia or a resurgent Germany pass it by.

Our prosperity is based upon doing more things better and cheaper than any other nation. We must lead or fall behind. I know that all of you are going to see to it that we do not fall behind.

Let us look into the future that is before us.

Nearly all the automobiles in the country will be worn out. New automobiles will be built in an entirely new design. For example, Henry Kaiser has designed a completely new automobile to be manufactured by his Company. It is a light-weight car with a rear drive engine. The engine produces more power per pound, due to the higher compression that is possible with the new miracle 100-octane gasoline, which will be available for civilian use after the war. Less power will be needed to drive the car because of the use of aluminum, magnesium, and plastics which will reduce its weight and its cost, without sacrificing either room or comfort. Less manhours will be required to build the car. Mr. Kaiser hopes to sell it through gas stations, like tires and batteries, for about \$400.

This is no idle dream. Mr. Kaiser is actually building one automobile as a test car. If he doesn't build this new type of automobile for regular use, it will be built by some aircraft manufacturer or by someone like Andrew Higgins of New Orleans or by one of the regular automobile producers.

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Igor Sikorsky has shown the Truman Committee the performance of which helicopters are capable. The first one cost \$260,000, but vastly better ones will be built and sold commercially, within a few short years, for less than \$2,000. The Greyhound Bus Lines have already publicly announced that they intend to use them in lieu of busses as connecting links with air transcontinental routes.

The helicopter can rise and descend vertically and with it you can land in places that would not only be impossible for airplanes, but which would be inaccessible to either boat or land vehicles.

The helicopter will be relatively safe. Even when the engine fails to work, its rotors will enable it to descend safely. The only danger will be that careless drivers and road-hogs of the future will run into the rotors, and even that danger probably will not be any greater than that to which you were subjected before the war on weekend trips on crowded highways.

You all are aware of the progress which has already been obtained from the airplane. We can safely hope for much more. The day is not far distant when an airplane engine, weighing less than 100 pounds and capable of producing 100 horse-power, which would be ample for a small private plane, will be produced in mass quantities for \$100 each. With the new techniques of using magnesium and aluminum and the new supplies of those formerly costly metals, it should be possible to make private airplanes well within the purchasing power of the ordinary citizen.

Television is on the threshold of great development. It is true that there are many technical and commercial difficulties which must still be overcome. But the day cannot be far off when our homes, schools, offices and automobiles will be equipped with television sets. We will see news and sporting events while they are actually happening. Movies, concerts and variety shows will be enjoyed by millions of living room audiences all over the country. Television may have a profound influence on our future social, political, and

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economic progress.

The housing field should provide a whole new industry for this country, greater in size and importance than the automobile industry ever was. Our big cities, like New York, Chicago and Detroit, all have blighted areas of tenement houses, the continuance of which would be a public disgrace. Such areas are usually centrally located and near the business district, and the land is extremely valuable. The tenements should be torn down and replaced with new, wide and handsome boulevards lined with five and six-story apartment structures of the most modern type. Such structures should have playgrounds on the roofs, where children can safely play and get the light and air they need to develop strong healthy bodies. The apartments should be commodious and equipped with modern conveniences to lessen the housework of the tenants, most of whom will be employed in offices or factories.

The building of these new homes will provide employment for tens of thousands of building trade workers, who might otherwise be idle and who might even be forced to become public charges. To do this the municipalities must cooperate by creating proper tax structures that will provide the revenue necessary without discouraging the building and improvements we need. Similarly, the labor unions must be willing to establish rates and working conditions such that the cost of labor will not make the project prohibitive. Some of the more far-sighted leaders of union labor in the Building Trades Industry have already realized this. For example, in Kansas City, the President of the Building Trades Council stated that he and his associates realized that at their regular building trades wages, the cost of homes would be so prohibitively high that their own members would be denied the kind of living conditions that they want and deserve. He stated that the Kansas City Building Trades Council is considering establishing a double standard of union wages - one to apply on factories and business buildings, and the other to apply at a lower rate on apartments and dwelling houses. Intelligent action along these and

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similar lines will be most helpful. We must not be penny wise and dollar foolish.

The building industry will not only remake our big metropolitan centers, but it will also create prosperity and better living conditions in every town and hamlet of the country. New materials or old materials for new uses, such as plastics, glass-bricks, plywood and special pre-fabricated articles will be used in the homes, as a result of which it should be possible to build a house with many hours less of labor and a house which will be better insulated - cooler in the summer and easier to heat in the winter. Probably developments will be made to such an extent that it will be possible to order whole rooms as units. Small and inexpensive houses will be available for young couples who have little money, which later can be added to as the family and the income increases.

The helicopter, the improvements in the automobile and in the highways, and the factories - especially the present war plants - built in outlying regions, will make it possible to disperse housing over a wider area so that each family can hope and expect to have sufficient ground for its children to play and for the planting of fruit trees and gardens.

There will also be great advances in the railroads. Most of them were in poor financial condition at the time the war broke out. But, by reason of the enormous traffic which they have been called upon to carry during this war - both in freight and passengers, their revenues have so increased that even after paying heavy taxes and larger wages they have been able greatly to improve their financial structure. Most of their equipment will be worn out or in need of extensive repair after the war. This will be particularly true of their locomotives, and as a result of the war and the vast increase in our capacity to produce Diesel engines, we will be ready and able to produce equipment for

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the railroads far superior to anything which they previously had. Such equipment will enable the railroads to run longer and faster trains and, by the more efficient use of their track and other facilities, to carry freight at lower cost. Passenger traffic should be faster, smoother and cheaper. Probably instead of having pullman and coach classes, the railroads will have three or four classes. The first class will consist of equipment with all bedrooms, many of which will even have showers. The second class will consist of the present pullman lower and upper berth equipment which will be used at cheaper prices as tourist sleepers. The third class may well be triple-deck cheap coach sleepers, where those desiring to sleep in a bed can obtain it for a fraction more than the cost of riding in the coaches. The fourth class will be new coaches with reclining seats of the most modern type that can be designed. Of course, all railroad equipment will be better ventilated and air-conditioned, and people will recall the present difficult travelling conditions as a sort of nightmare which it will be hard to believe ever occurred.

There will also be great improvements in the packaging, storing and selling of vegetables, fruits and meats. The present vegetable markets where vegetables, gathered hours or even days before, are piled up in bins open to contamination from the air, and allowed to dry and wither away will be the rare exception, except in rural areas where the time between the harvest and the sale to the consumer is short. Deep freezers, similar to the Birds-Eye freezers seen in many local stores today, will be just as common in the home of the future as the electric refrigerator is in the present home. Not only will the fruits and vegetables be purer, but they will have been made ready for almost instant use by factories where the tedious job of shelling peas and beans will have been done by machinery for the housewife of the future.

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Your children will pity the way their parents lived in the "thirties" as much as you pity the arduous labor of your parents in the "eighties" and "nineties". Your children will not only live better than you, but they will live longer than you. We are sure to witness great strides in the advancement of the medical science.

All these things and many more can be accomplished if we have the will and the energy and the knowledge with which to do it. America has a great future, and the Committee, of which I have the honor to be the Chairman, has tried hard to see to it that the war program is so planned and directed that all these benefits of the future can be obtained as a repayment, in part at least, of the enormous sums spent to prosecute the war. To that end, the Committee has visited hundreds of plants and examined dozens of processes. Where necessary, it has intervened with the War Production Board, the War Department, the Navy Department and other governmental agencies to see to it that those people, capable of clear thinking, who devise new methods and new products are given at least an equal opportunity in the war production effort to do the job in such a way that there will be left to the country, after the war, a sound and healthy economy capable of the kind of prosperity that this nation deserves.

The Committee has at all times had in mind that money can be saved, not only by not spending it wastefully, but also by spending it for plants and machine tool facilities which can be used after the war for the benefit of all our people. Much has been accomplished in this way, and I truly believe that if we all put our shoulders to the wheel, it will be possible for this country to enter into a golden era of prosperity after the war. To do this, private business and initiative must be allowed an opportunity to work and produce; union leadership must be intelligent, far-sighted, ready to sacrifice, if

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necessary, small advantages to obtain great gains for union membership and the people in general. Last, but not least, the government must be prepared to do its part to aid and assist private business and to provide a sound framework within which the economy can function.

And while we make plans for our nation's postwar economy, we must also help to build a foundation in the postwar world that will secure for all men everywhere their basic human rights. Our President has proclaimed our war objectives as outlined in the Four Freedoms. We are fighting now that the Four Freedoms shall be not only freedoms for the United Nations but a heritage for all the peoples of the world. History has bestowed upon us a solemn responsibility. We must make the plan for a lasting and just peace. We failed before -- we dare not fail this time.

You young men and women will be called upon to help build the pattern and execute the plans for a postwar world. Your actions and decisions will play a great part in making that world. You have received excellent training in these classrooms for the momentous task before you and we know we can rely on you to carry out your responsibilities with intelligence, courage and vision.

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