

February 14, 1943

Good Morning, Friends:

Now that both President Roosevelt and Primeminister Churchill have spoken of their meeting in Casablanca and of allied world strategy, lesser individuals can, with some more certainty, piece together this crazy quilt of ships and guns and men, violence, blood, and death.

First, let us look at the situation in North Africa by picking up the pieces of information <sup>here and there</sup> and putting them together. Mr. Churchill let it be known that Great Britain and the United States together had nearly a half million men in North Africa. From another source, I have been most reliably told that Germany has been bringing in approximately 2,000 men per day by plane. At this rate, it doesn't take many days to build up a considerable force. Of course, men without equipment would not be very formidable. So Germany is desperately trying to bring equipment over in ships. They have succeeded in landing large quantities, but, on the other hand, our planes and submarines have succeeded in sinking <sup>large quantities</sup> ~~a great deal of them~~. Their line of supply is shorter than ours, but, with surface vessels, submarines, and planes, our forces are making it extremely tortuous. In contemplating the assurance that we have nearly one half million men in North Africa, let us not forget that North Africa is a very wide expanse of <sup>territory</sup> ~~country~~. It is a long arduous journey from Casablanca to Tunisia, <sup>for instance</sup>. Our problem of transportation and supply is a tremendous one. Much of General Eisenhower's gasoline must be shipped by tanker from some port in the United States, In some instances, all the way from the Gulf of Mexico to North Africa and then carried by truck

or by the creaky French railroad across ~~the~~ African ~~continent~~ to the battlefields. The British Eighth Army must have ~~been~~ consumed enormous quantities of fuel, food, and ammunition as they fought and chased Rommel's <sup>ka</sup> African corps across 1500 miles of African desert. It is likely that his supplies are now being delivered through the port of Tripoli, but we must remember that to get to Tripoli from here, a ship must not only sail the Atlantic but must go through a dangerous <sup>stretch</sup> ~~section~~ of the Mediterranean. Some of his gasoline can come from the British oil fields in the Middle East, but again it must be shipped through dangerous waters within range of land based Axis planes. And not to be forgotten, the harbor facilities of Tripoli were demolished by the Germans before they retreated. Our planes, of course, assisted them in <sup>the</sup> demolition because our forces bombed it continuously in order to cut off Axis supplies. Ships were sunk in the harbor channels. Unloading devices, docks and other facilities were completely destroyed. However, ships are now unloading in the once beautiful <sup>but now devastated</sup> harbor of Tripoli.

From these bits of information, we know that a  <sup>fierce</sup> battle of supply is being waged. Germany is unleashing her submarine wolf packs in a desperate effort to cut our lines of supply. We, in turn, are desperately fighting the submarine menace, on the one hand, and waging an intensified campaign to sink, destroy, and otherwise prevent supplies from reaching the large Axis forces now cornered in Tunisia.

Going back further, for a moment, ~~fate~~ or luck was with us in the landing in North Africa, and if luck had remained with us, this costly battle



which is <sup>now</sup> inevitable might have been largely avoided. In other words, if the rain had held off for another week, our forces racing toward Tunis would very probably have captured it and destroyed the relatively small Axis forces there at that time. But the rainy season set in and bogged us down short of the goal. And men who have visited that area tell me that the North African mud is about as sticky and slimy as glue. This gave the Germans and Italians time in which to build up their forces, and as I said earlier, they have been bringing them by plane at the rate of 2,000 per day. In the meantime, the British pushed Rommel back across the desert and he has succeeded in joining his forces with the other Axis troops. They are building up defenses ~~for~~ for an expected assault by the allied armies. In the meantime, they are striking at the ~~battle~~ particular sectors which are manned by Frenchmen. <sup>Troops</sup> The French troops are ill equipped. The Germans, of course, know this and by continually striking at them, they hope to have the Frenchmen think that the Americans and British are putting them in the most dangerous places, even though they are poorly equipped. The American and British <sup>will</sup> Generals are not blinded to this purpose and they ~~are~~ undoubtedly inter-<sup>the French</sup>perse their own troops with the French and also re-equip ~~them~~ as speedily as possible.

Both President Roosevelt and Secretary of War Stimson have warned the nation to be prepared for heavy casualties, which is another way of saying that the battle, and a hard one, will soon <sup>begin</sup> start. President Roosevelt and

Mr. Churchill, as well as our technical military leaders, seem confident of victory in Tunisia. From the facts available to us, though, we know that it will be a violent <sup>battle</sup> ~~conflict~~. In ~~a~~ his speech Friday night, the President pointedly said that invasion of Europe would follow victory in Tunisia.

Germany and Italy must have known this even before the President said so.

It is plain to see that if we come into possession of the whole of North Africa that Italy, especially, will be within easy bombing range of the

Tunisian air fields and, of course, old whimpering Mussolini knows that he

would be bombed mercilessly. The enemy <sup>also</sup> knows that if we possess the whole of North Africa, armies and supplies can be concentrated for invasions in

any of several places along the Mediterranean. So, they are undoubtedly

prepared to fight desperately to hold on. Our leaders and our forces are <sup>deadly</sup>

determined, as the President said, to ~~drive~~ drive them into the sea.

There is high praise here in the capital for General Eisenhower, and, of course, all of us, are delighted that an American will be in command, not that we mistrust our British allies in the least. It is, though, a matter of high pride that a young American general has already proved himself to be a brilliant organizer and strategist <sup>so</sup> sufficiently <sup>so</sup> to be accepted by our Allies - indeed, to be put forward by Prime Minister Churchill, as the supreme Commander in this important, combined offensive by the Anglo-American armies.



Let us go to another important theater of coming operations. It was announced during the week that General Arnold, head of our air forces, and the great Englishman, Sir John Dill, who has already made such a notable contribution to our war, along with their joint staffs, have been in China conferring at length with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, whose noted wife incidentally is scheduled to address a joint session of Congress during the coming week. The big problem of the moment in the China theater is to open up a line of supply. We are now <sup>carrying considerable</sup> ~~transporting~~ supplies by transport plane into China, but such an operation is necessarily limited. The load which existing transport planes can carry is a limitation, and they must fly across the hazardous Himalaya mountains. We need to reopen the Burma Road. The visit of General Arnold and Sir John Dill to China is significant.

Patching this piece of information to the statements in the President's speech about our war with Japan, we can know that the plan envisaged is to wage war on Japan in China and from China. ~~Not~~

Now, as to the Russian theater, there is <sup>not</sup> a great deal more known in Washington, certainly not by members of Congress, and I do not think by anyone else, than appears in newspapers. The fact is, Russia has not let either the United States or Great Britain know very much about what has happened or what is going to happen. <sup>or what they plan.</sup> I understand Stalin told one <sup>person</sup> ~~fellow~~ that democracies talked too much. There are high hopes here <sup>though,</sup> that the Russian advance can continue in spite of the spring thaws, which will soon

come in certain sections of the Russian battle front, and that she can continue to push the Germans back.

On the home front, the news of the week burst forth with shoe rationing, which does not seem to have troubled many people. Men who work inside will not need three pairs of shoes, but ~~whereas~~ men who work on the farm and on ~~the~~ outside public works will probably need more. As time goes along, these adjustments will be made. There is no immediate prospect of anyone having to go barefooted.

*Last Wednesday*  
Assistant President Jimmy Byrnes made a very strong speech and took an emphatic stand in the ~~the~~ battle against inflation. This was followed by the President's executive order lifting the work week to 48 hours.

It would have been much easier if the government had taken this firm stand many months ago. On wages, the government's stand was forced by the challenge of John L. Lewis in his demand for <sup>a</sup>\$2.00 per day increase for united mine workers. It will be remembered that Lewis destroyed the President's

*National*  
Mediation Board and those on the inside know that he is now out to destroy the War Labor Board.

The 48 hour week is designed to effect this struggle, As I believe will be seen in ~~the~~ coming events. The President's order did not do away with the requirement of the law that wages at the rate of time and a half be paid for all work over 48 hours. This time and a half requirement up ~~to a 48~~ to a 48 hour week should have been eliminated from the law by an act of Congress a long time ago.