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**THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT**  
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen  
(Special Edition)

**"TO THE FOLKS BACK HOME."**

**STATE OF MIND OF THE UNION.**

Each year the President brings a message to Congress. It is called his message on The State Of The Union. Equally important is a message on the State Of Mind Of The Union. This brief and intimate summary seeks to give the folks back home an over-all picture of the present State Of The Union and The State Of Mind Of The Union as your representative in Congress sees it. There is some confusion and bewilderment. It is evident in the letters which come to the Congressional desk. Letters are filled with questions. Will we get into war? Will we convoy? Why dont Congress do something? Why dont the President tell the country what is happening? Why don't someone stop strikes? Why don't Congress curb the President's powers? Are we prepared? Are we giving all possible aid to Britain? Why all this inaction and inertia? These are but a few of the daily list of questions. Radio and press give daily detailed accounts of problems as they arise. This message undertakes to give a broad picture in the hope that it may contain a note of comfort and assurance.

**SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

may prove helpful and timely in seeing the picture. Washington is a hive of activity with more than 180,000 persons on the Federal payroll. available office space has been rented. New buildings have been erected. Other new buildings have been authorized. War and Navy Departments buzz with excitement and activity. The Defense Commission, the Office of Production Management, the Office of Emergency Management have thousands of workers who labor far into the night. Hotels are filled with delegations from all parts of the nation who come to confer on contracts and defense orders. Each day millions in new contracts are reported. Twelve billion dollars in Army and Navy contracts have been awarded. This is close to 75% of the total amount authorized. Two and one-third billions are for airplanes and parts. The Two-Ocean Navy is underway. Land is being bought and camps built in all sections of the land. Ships and shipyards are under construction. The huge program of preparation is moving forward. Consider the time and work involved in building a camp and filling it with young soldiers! Land must be bought and drained, lumber, roofing, equipment must be supplied, men must be hired, young soldiers must be registered as they arrive and provisions made for beds, clothing, food, equipment, recreation, spiritual guidance. It's a herculean task. It takes time.

**ON THE WASHINGTON FRONT**

headlines tell part of the story from day to day. On Friday, April 18, the President stated that the nation is not sufficiently aware of the seriousness of the situation. Commentators, public and private, relate that Congress is not fully alert to the present situation. This is one of those superficial generalizations which does not square with the truth. A Senator charges that convoys are already in use. It is denied by the Secretary Of The Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations. Four Committees of Congress are dealing with the strike situation. There is sharp differences of opinion on the matter. There is some belief that legislation is needed. Mr. Knudsen, our defense production expert stated that he did "not believe that legislation against strikes is necessary or enforceable." Mr. Hillman of the Defense Commission told the House Military Affairs Committee on April 8th that "no additional legislation is required." These are the men who are charged with the job of speeding up the defense program and the lend-lease program. In view of their statements what should be done?

**ARE WE MAKING PROGRESS**

in spite of momentary difficulties? The answer is yes! Mr. Biggers, Director of Production stated that production of small arms is ahead

of schedule, new powder plants are going into production on schedule, production of ammunition for small arms has increased one thousand per cent, light and medium tanks are in production, airplane production has increased 300% in the last 10 months. A quick plane trip to various sections of the country will prove to anyone how plants are springing up to build defense equipment and equipment and supplies with which to aid Great Britain. We have an army. General Marshall, Chief of Staff stated to a Senate Committee recently that we have  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million men in training, will have 1,400,000 by June 30 and plans for 2,800,000. By June 30 there will be a real army, not a paper army consisting of 27 Divisions including 4 armored divisions, 40 antiaircraft artillery regiments, 27 Field Artillery regiments, 15 regiments of engineers.

#### WHAT AID ARE WE GIVING BRITAIN

The question is often asked. It is definitely and rapidly increasing. Figures and types of material cannot of course be disclosed. At stated periods, the War Department holds confidential conferences for members of the War, Navy, and Appropriations Committees of Congress. Your representative in Congress has been privileged to attend these conferences. All problems and progress is freely discussed. Charts are submitted. Aid to Britain, especially of the essential types is rapidly increasing.

#### WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE?

Why don't we speed up? The answer is that we are speeding up. It might be well to analyze this question from the standpoint of Britain's needs. Take food and fibre. Our stocks are fairly abundant. It can be shipped from our present supply. The necessary financing has been provided. The lease-lend bill provides more than 1  $\frac{1}{3}$  billion dollars for aid to the democracies in the form of agricultural and industrial supplies. What about weapons? These are being sent in increasing quantities. What about planes? Deliveries are increasing. Try to buy a large-type plane for commercial use! The priorities division of the Office of Production Management will advise you that you can't have it. It is needed for the present program.

#### WHAT ABOUT BOTTLENECKS?

There are some bottlenecks to be sure. One is skilled help. Another is machine tools. Still another is certain types of essential raw materials. The first is being gradually met. The second and third are being met in part by clasifying industries according to their importance in the defense program and giving priority to those which are producing defense goods. Most serious bottleneck is the scarcity of cargo vessels. The press carries daily accounts of the enormous losses thro sinkings by submarines, planes, and mines. Planes can be flown across the North Atlantic. Food, fibre, supplies and weapons must be shipped by vessel. It constitutes a real difficulty. Hundreds of American merchant vessels have been transferred to foreign registry. But it takes more than this because the sinkings continue. Last week, contracts were awarded for 184 vessels to cost 364 million dollars. Britain will receive 112 of these. Altogether, Congress has authorized and provided funds for 600 vessels. From there on it's a question of production. That takes time. Large vessels must be built on deep water. There must be blueprints. There must be skilled craftsmen. There must be steel. There must be supplies and machinery. To assemble these takes time. The program is moving forward with all possible speed.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE BASES

which we acquired from Great Britain in return for 50 destroyers? They are located around Newfoundland and in the West Indies. Work is definitely under way on them. In fact some troops have already been dispatched to one or more of these points. That part of the program is well under way.

### WHAT ABOUT CONVOYS?

It is a highly controversial and explosive subject. Here is what section 3 (d) of the lease-lend act says: "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of convoying vessels by naval vessels of the United States." Section 3(e) of the same act says "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of the entry of any American vessel into a combat area in violation of section 3 of the Neutrality Act of 1939." Some say we must convoy because it is useless to produce goods and supplies to aid the democracies and not safely and surely deliver them. Others contend that convoying means war. The President is quoted as saying that "convoys mean shooting and shooting means war." Secretary Knox is quoted as saying before a Senate Committee that convoying "would be an act of war." Senator George, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee expressed opposition to convoying on the ground that "convoying would lead us into actual war." Senator Tobey of New Hampshire has introduced a resolution in the Senate to prohibit convoying except when the U.S. is engaged in war. If the Committee fails to report the resolution, the matter will be temporarily at an end and in the hands of the President. One fact so often forgotten deserves emphasis in this connection. The Constitution makes the President the Commander In Chief of the armed forces of the nation. Since it is a constitutional power, no act of Congress can abridge or curtail it. Volumes have been written on what is embraced in the President's powers as Commander-in-Chief. On occasion when Congress sought to abridge or curtail this power, it was reminded that it constituted an invalid usurpation of Executive powers. At the moment major damage to war supplies is done by bombing planes which bomb vessels while docking or while unloading. Keep in mind, the President's power under the Neutrality Act to proclaim combat areas or to lift the proclamation and his power as Commander-in-Chief.

### PERSONAL COMMENT

Three basic problems are before us. The first and foremost is to prepare the defenses of our own country. This requires men, money, and materials of all kinds. The men are in camp, the money has been voted, the contracts for materials have been awarded and production is under way. The second is aid to the democracies in the form of equipment of all kinds. This program is moving forward with increasing speed. The third is the question of national policy with respect to the present world conflict. There are some who would have the United States enter the war. There are more who oppose entry into war. As events, decisions, and the nation will contribute to the shaping of national policy there is one prized virtue which we must defend and retain at all hazards. It is the virtue of tolerance. Already, as disagreement over policy becomes manifest, men in high places are resorting to name-calling as a substitute for argument. Never in the history of this Republic has there been such need for that entreaty which the patriarch wrote upon the parchment thousands of years ago when he said, "Come, let us reason together." Congress can vote money and authority but it cannot provide that morale and gentleness of spirit out of which shall come triumph and salvation.