

February 21, 1947

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

I recommend that the Congress authorize the appropriation of not to exceed \$350 million to assist in completing the great task of bringing relief from the ravages of the war to the people of the liberated countries.

The period of full scale supply operations by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration is rapidly drawing to a close. In some of the liberated countries UNRRA will have achieved its objective fully, for these countries will once again be self-supporting so far as the basic essentials of life are concerned. In other liberated countries, however, this is not yet the case. Compared with what has already been done, what remains to be done is relatively small and limited in time and scope, but none-the-less vitally important.

On humanitarian grounds, and in the light of our own self-interest as well, we must not leave the task unfinished. We cannot abandon the peoples still in need. To do so would be to replace hope with despair in the hearts of these peoples and thus to undermine the spiritual and economic stability upon which our own hopes for a better world must rest. Others will help but such is the preponderance of our economic resources that success cannot be achieved without us. If we fail to do our part, millions of human beings will be denied the elemental necessities of life. Their strength and recuperative powers, which have been slowly growing, will be undermined. The time, now in sight, when they can once more exist without help and make their contributions to the peace, prosperity and progress of the world, will be indefinitely postponed.

I recommend that this relief assistance be given directly rather than through an international organization, and that our contribution be administered under United States control. International cooperation in the program and the necessary coordination of our relief activities with those of other contributors can be achieved by informal consultations with all nations concerned through the mechanism of the United Nations and otherwise. I believe that our relief contribution should be used only for providing the basic essentials of life, such as medical supplies, food and items which will aid in the production of foodstuffs.

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The authorization recommended is designed for the urgent relief needs for the balance of the year. The most critical period will be in the spring and summer months, when UNRRA shipments will cease and the harvests are not yet available. Swift legislative action is necessary if our help is not to come too late.

The United States, in keeping with our traditions of immediate and whole-hearted response to human need, has stood in the forefront of those who have checked the forces of starvation, disease, suffering and chaos which threatened to engulf the world in the wake of the war. The task is nearly finished. I urge the Congress to act promptly to insure that we do not stop short of the goal; that we do not endanger the permanence of the gains we have helped to achieve.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

THE WHITE HOUSE,

February 21, 1947.