

## Statement by Harry S. Truman on the UNRRA Program (17 September 1945)

**Caption:** On 17 September 1945, US President Harry S. Truman gives an address at the White House on the United States Aid Program to help those European countries occupied during the Second World War and liberated by the Allies.

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## The Relief and Rehabilitation Program

### Statement by THE PRESIDENT

[Released to the press by the White House September 17]

The United States Government is now in a position to fulfil the main requests of Europe – with the exception of sugar, fats, and oils – from this date until January 1 as these requests have been stated to it by the governments of the liberated countries and by UNRRA.

Provision of the supplies thus requested does not, however, mean that the civilian populations of Europe will reach even a minimum level of subsistence, and much suffering may be expected during the coming winter in certain areas of the Continent.

The limiting factor in meeting the minimum needs of the liberated peoples is no longer one of shipping. For the moment, in the case of most commodities, it is no longer a problem of supply. Today it is primarily a twofold financial problem: first, to work out credits or other financial arrangements with the European governments; second, to make additional funds available to UNRRA for emergency relief.

This Government is bending every effort to find solutions to this problem, in cooperation with the respective claimants, with a view to increasing the flow of urgently needed supplies. Pending such settlements this Government is taking necessary measures in relation to production, distribution, and shipping of supplies to insure a broad, equitable, and continuous flow of current stocks and new production of relief and rehabilitation supplies for liberated areas, which it is anticipated will be required, in addition to those quantities which they have already requisitioned. One purpose of such measures is to prevent the dissipation of available supplies in domestic channels where they are not essential.

When I returned from Potsdam I said, "If we let Europe go cold and hungry, we may lose some of the foundations of order on which the hope for world-wide peace must rest. We must help to the limits of our strength. And we will."<sup>1</sup> That pledge, made not only to our Allies but to the American people, must be kept. It should be made perfectly clear that, contrary to the belief of many, relaxation of rationing on the home front is not a factor in the allocation of relief supplies to Europe. The Department of Agriculture reports that, despite the release of cheese from rationing controls and the possible relaxation of domestic meat rationing, we have sufficient quantities of meat and dairy products to fulfil the requirements placed upon us by UNRRA and the paying governments for the last quarter of the year. Furthermore, should UNRRA secure the additional financial resources it so urgently needs and the paying governments conclude more satisfactory financial arrangements, again raising the problem of supply, both the Department of Agriculture and the War Production Board have the authority to issue set-aside orders on specific quantities of commodities purchased, regardless of whether they are rationed, to insure deliveries abroad. This does not mean that it may not become necessary to resume ration controls of certain items if they become so short in supply that such controls are required to insure more equitable distribution.

<sup>1</sup> BULLETIN of Aug 12, 1945, p. 212.

### Relief Needs Summarized

The most desperate needs of the liberated people are for coal, transportation, and food, in that order of priority. Other commodities urgently required include hides and leather, cotton, wool, textiles, soap, farm equipment, including fertilizer and seeds, repair parts and machinery, medical supplies, and a general list of raw materials. The items which are causing major concern because of world-wide shortages are coal, sugar and fats, hides and leather, textiles, and a few of the raw materials, in minor quantities. Locomotives constitute a special and acute problem because of the time factor involved in their manufacture.

Coal presents not only the most serious but the most complicated problem. Once self-sufficient in this commodity, Europe is now without the labor, the food, the transportation, the housing, and the machinery

needed to restore production quickly to its pre-war level. The Allied Control Commission is making every effort to speed the resumption of German production in order to supply the liberated areas, but despite considerable progress the people of these areas face a winter of extreme hardship.

### **What Is Being Done**

The United States is now shipping approximately 1,400,000 tons of coal to Europe a month. For the period ending January 1 the goal is 8,000,000 tons, or slightly more than one percent of our domestic production. The limiting factor is not primarily one of supply but of inland transportation facilities both here and abroad.

The Department of Agriculture reports that shipments of food to the paying governments and UNRRA during the last quarter of this year will include approximately these quantities:

- 150 million pounds of meat and meat products
- 70 million bushels of wheat
- 28 thousand short tons of raw sugar
- 90 million pounds of dried peas and beans
- 13 million pounds of lard

In addition, the Department of Agriculture is prepared to ship the following supplies of dairy products, in at least these quantities, as soon as financial arrangements have been satisfactorily completed:

- 60 million pounds of cheese
- 200 million pounds of evaporated milk
- 25 million pounds of dry whole-milk powder
- 80 million pounds of dry skim-milk powder
- 15 million pounds of condensed milk

It should be remembered that these supplies will serve not to improve but only to sustain the diet of the liberated peoples, which remains below the minimum level of subsistence. In some cases the doubling of these food shipments waits only upon the conclusion of satisfactory financial arrangements.

This Government has abundant evidence that the American people are aware of the suffering among our Allies. They have also made plain their determination that this country shall do its full part, along with other supplying nations, in helping to restore health and strength to those who fought at our side both in Europe and in the Far East. It is an American responsibility not only to our friends, but to ourselves, to see that this job is done and done quickly.