

P.T. - Sunoco. Tues., May 24, 1940.

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GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

This has been a day, not merely of news, but of history.

As it happens, I am broadcasting at a place fitting for the recital of events so great with meaning for the world----and for our own nation. I am talking, not only to the radio audience, *— in the auditorium of the Nat. Press Club in* but also to the National ~~Academy of Arts~~ Forum, ~~this is a~~ *Washington, this Forum is a* congress of American aviation gathered at a time when national defense is so dominant a question of the day. And defense in

this age of ours means supremely----sky defense, aviation. *Wash. D.C. is full of aviation people, manufacturers, pilots and those of us who ride in planes.* Tonight, especially, the word of history is---aviation.

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At this moment the battle of Flanders is predominantly an affair of the sky---the allied flying forces striving with tremendous air action to cover the retreat of the allied armies in Flanders. London reports waves of bombing planes over the battle area striking with an incessant rain of high explosives at the advancing German columns, bombing, machine-gunning. Huge swarms of R. A. F. planes in a rear guard action. *TP also again* London reports that the R. A. F. is striking deep and far --- air-raids on great German cities: ----Dusseldorf, Cologne,

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Hamburg and Bremen. The air ~~is~~ seeking to protect retreat on the ground.

For retreat it is, as the battle of Flanders approaches an end. The British, their left flank left open by the Belgian surrender, ^{today} found themselves in a desperate position. Tonight the British minister of information, Alfred Duff Cooper, made a radio broadcast to the British people and said "it will be necessary to do our utmost to withdraw our armies from the position they now occupy."

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There was one report from London today that the British expeditionary force would defend itself to the last in northern France, to give the French time to consolidate their lines on the Aisne and Somme---for the defense of the rest of France. But other stories indicate that the British will try to evacuate their army, take it back to England ---by ship. *And* London states that this seems a desperate and almost impossible undertaking. ^R The Nazi armies, flushed with victory, are closing in on the trap as rapidly as they can. By what channel ports can the B. E. F. go? Apparently only one harbor is

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free of Nazi control tonight. Paris reports that the Germans have not captured Dunkirk. But that is a small and insufficient port, which moreover ^{at this moment} is in flames from Nazi air bombardment.

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Earlier today, there were British rumors that the allied northern army might launch a desperate, last-minute drive to break through the encirclement. There was talk of the often reported tremendous French offensive from the south to smash open the trap. But this seems to be in the discussion no more. The B. E. F. may make a stubborn stand to give the French a chance to dig in further South, and then try to escape across the channel as best they can. Always facing the possibility of the dread alternative of ----surrender or annihilation.

London speaks of the crisis as of the utmost gravity. Minister of Information Duff-Cooper made a plea to France today, a plea aimed at Nazi expectations that France may drop out of the war. Duff-Cooper pointed out that Germany succeeded in driving a wedge between the British and French armies.

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And then he added: "Do not, I beseech you, help her repeat
that success by hammering a wedge of prejudice between our
two great peoples."

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ADD

WAR

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Speaking with tense urgency, Duff-Cooper told the British not to put the blame on the French, the French not to put the blame on the British. He told his countrymen that any Britisher who says, "the French let us down," is doing Hitler propaganda.

~~Note (Drop the Soviet story, or at any rate the first paragraph. It is not so good.)~~

END. —

LEOPOLD

The story of the surrender of Belgium can be pieced out tonight by putting together the latest of the dispatches ---and a dramatic story it makes. King Leopold decided to capitulate as long as three days ago---Saturday. A London account tells of the trip by air that General Weygand, the supreme commander, made to the Allied forces in the trap. This happened on Saturday. General Weygand flew to Bruges and conferred with King Leopold. London reports that Leopold told the supreme allied commander that the Belgian army could not hold out any longer unless it got substantial help from the French and British.

He stated that his troops were down to their last bit of food supply. For four days they had been subsisting on meagre rations of biscuit. And they were down to their last rounds of ammunition. Many of the Belgian troops had fired their last cartridge. These are the statements reported to have been made by the Belgian King, and are part of the picture of huge military forces isolated

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and cut off, their main supply lines blocked, unable to get anything save by way of a couple of small channel ports which were under frightful German air attack.

On that same Saturday, four members of the exiled Belgian Government in Paris flew for a conference with Leopold. This was revealed by Belgian foreign Minister Spaak this afternoon. He relates that the King proposed to his ministers the capitulation of the Belgian army. The ministers rejected the idea angrily. They urged Leopold to leave the army, and flee to London. Leopold refused. He said he would not follow the example of other heads of nations and run away. He'd remain with his army. And, he added, the army would have to surrender. The ministers protested hotly, the meeting broke up with a flare of anger, and they flew back to Paris.

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Leopold thereupon opened negotiations with the German High command. There are reports that he tried to make terms--- an agreement that the Belgian troops would stop fighting but occupy the positions they held. But Hitler demanded --- unconditional surrender, and, Leopold yielded.

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So occurred the event of early this morning, the event so disastrous for the trapped Allied army. The exiled Belgian Government immediately disavowed the surrender, and proclaimed Belgium still at war and fighting. Then they proceeded to depose the King, Leopold no longer their monarch. Prime Minister Reynaud of France poured the vials of scorn on the son of hero King Albert, ~~and~~ ^{and} contemptuous ^u spokesmen of the allied nations are denouncing him for having betrayed the Allies, and so are the newspapers of France and Great Britain.

^R But not the British Government. Today the Prime Minister, before the House of Commons, spoke of the Belgian surrender in these terms: --"I have no intention to suggest to the House," said Churchill, "that we should attempt at this moment to pass judgment on the action of the King of the Belgians in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the Belgian army."

Today's news as some of you know by now relates that at Roosevelt Field, New York, A German refugee made a disclosure to aeronautical engineers. He declared the secret weapon about which Hitler brags is a tank-carrying airplane; a fleet of two hundred giant planes, each to carry a thirty-ton tank. When the plane lands, the tank is simply lowered to the ground, and goes speeding on its deadly mission. The plane then flies back and fetches another tank.

When the aviation engineers at Roosevelt Field heard this, they quickly pointed out to newspapermen that the tank-carrying airplane is nothing new. It is, in fact, an American idea that dates back five years. It was suggested when an airplane built by an American designer, Vincent Burnelli, actually carried a full sized automobile slung beneath its cabin.

I myself remember that experiment. For it was my sponsors, the Sun Oil Company, who staged the spectacular stunt; to dramatize a test of the starting power of Blue Sunoco in intensely cold weather.

If today's story be true, and the new secret weapon of the Germans is indeed a fleet of tank-carrying planes, we can only say, it's a rather old American idea.

RUSSIA.

There is a bit ^{more talk today} ~~of talk~~ that Soviet Russia may join the Allies against Nazi Germany. ~~The reasoning being--that Stalin~~ expected the war to be a long drawn out exhausting affair which would leave western Europe an easy prey for Bolshevism. Now, he's afraid that Nazi Germany may defeat the Allies, and not be exhausted at all. And Hitler flushed with victory may take a poke at Stalin, ^{perhaps overrun the Ukraine.} Such is the line of rumor, and it's encouraged ^{by the} new British gestures in the direction of the Soviets.

What has Moscow to say about it? Today the newspaper Pravda, official organ of the Communist party, prints an attack against people spreading rumors that Stalin may turn against Hitler. The Soviet paper makes the charge against what it calls certain groups of Esthonian intellectuals. "These groups," Pravda said, "spread rumors that the Soviet-German friendship would not endure and that a Soviet-German war was inevitable."

The Bolshevik comment is interesting---the following:
---"Various threads," says Pravda "connect these people with the British and American legations." So, the official Soviet

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newspaper lays the Stalin-fight-Hitler-rumors to the machinations
of the British. Oh, yes---and the Americans.

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CONGRESSMAN MAY

L.T.:- Sitting around me and before me, here in the National Press Club Auditorium, are many of the leaders of the world of aviation, members of both Houses of Congress, and many well-known members of the Washington Press Club. Among them is one man who certainly ought to be an authority on this problem of national defense which is uppermost in our minds. In fact, he is the Chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee. Last year it was Congressman May of Kentucky who pushed through the National Defense Program ^{for} ~~with~~ the President. Congressman May is one of the half-dozen busiest men in Washington right now. But, I seem to have him in a moment when he is relaxed, and I'll get him to tell us the latest concerning defense.

How about it, Congressman May? Will you tell the crowd here at the National Aviation Forum, and the radio audience?

MR. MAY:- The question of how to pay for the giant defense program received an answer today -- an answer sponsored by Congressional leaders and the White House. The Administration will ask Congress to do ~~kw~~ two things for the purpose of raising money for ~~armament~~ armament. Firstly -- enact special national defense taxes to the tune of between six hundred million and seven hundred million dollars a year. That much extra taxation for a period of five years. Secondly, raise the legal limit of the national debt by three billion dollars. The debt limit is now fixed at forty-five billion. The public debt itself stands at something more than forty-two billion and seven hundred million. Raising the limit to forty-eight billion will leave a margin of about five billion -- the government able to borrow money within that margin.

This program for financing defense was decided upon today by a conference at which the principal figures were -- Senator Pat Harrison, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Congressman Robert L. Doughton, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and Secretary Morgenthau of the Treasury.

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Their decision was communicated to the President, and he said okay. Thus powerfully sponsored, the proposal will go to Congress. It will be my job, my duty, to push this program through the House of Representatives. And, I think we'll do it within the next few days.

WHITE HOUSE

Here's the latest from the White House: The President has, under the National Defense Act, as a Commission under the National Defense Council, just appointed the following:-

Edward R. Stettinius of U.S. Steel, in charge of industrial materials; William S. Knudsen of General Motors, in charge of Industrial production; Sidney Hillman, middle-of-the-road Labor mogul, in charge of employment; Chester Davis in charge of farm productions; Ralph Budd, transportation; Leon Henderson, raw material prices; and Harriet Elliot, Dean of Women at North Carolina, will have charge of consumer protection.

These people who are going to play such a vital part in coming events in this country will meet with the President on Thursday.

And now back to New York and Hugh James.