

## BRIEF

"What Air Transportation Means to National Defense" an address by  
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The war has taught the importance of air power for national defense. It has also taught that air power is a total of three elements:

1. A striking element of the combat forces.
2. The productive capacity, including research, training, development and production of the manufacturing establishments.
3. Air transportation to guarantee the necessary modern mobility for transport and supply.

Effective striking power can be maintained only through constant modernization. Many of the aircraft of the recent war already seem slow and cumbersome by standards of 1947. "There is an urgent requirement that we modernize our air forces, and that we continually keep them modern." This requires the will to keep ahead and the will to provide funds for that purpose. Congress should be aware that the American people believe in air power, and on the basis that it is aware of this belief, will provide for "reasonable requirements of American air power."

The second element of air power, productive capacity, has been having difficulty. At the beginning of the war, we had too little productive capacity; "we ended the war with greater capacity than the peacetime economy could or should support." We must choose the most capable of the wartime aircraft manufacturers and we must have a program which will insure their continued maintenance. Aircraft manufacturers have been expending their resources, awaiting the adoption of a formal program for maintenance of aircraft productive capacity. This program cannot be delayed, since their resources are limited. It is hoped that as soon as the total of available appropriations is known, the Army and Navy will announce to the manufacturers the types and numbers of aircraft they will require and the time schedule of production and the factories upon which they will depend. "The number of factories, establishments or companies should be, must be, limited to those of superior capability, and the number must be a number which we can and will undertake to support in reasonable volume."

Air transportation has been recognized as an important element in national air power. Its strength is composed of the strength in air transportation capacity available in civilian as well as military and naval establishments. "On the basis that we employed ten thousand transport aircraft in the recent war, it seems advantageous to plan that we shall have on hand, ready for employment, something approximating half that strength." However, there is no way in which a fleet of five thousand transport aircraft can be employed in the armed services in peacetime. The "great bulk of the transport which we should maintain 'ready' must be numbered in the civilian air transport organizations; the air lines and others engaged for livelihood in air transportation." In this way, a large proportion of the air transport fleet can be maintained with a minimum drain upon the national treasury, since the planes will be engaged in civilian service of transportation and communication, and will always be available to the armed services in case of necessity. Those in civilian air transportation recognize their contribution to national air power and they are augmenting and modernizing their carrier fleets. However, the rate of augmentation is too slow. The Army and Navy should by joint action determine the air transportation capacity required to insure that the air transport element of national air power shall have adequate strength; the number and types of airplanes necessary to fulfill that requirement; the number of those planes that will be assigned directly to the services and the number the nation will depend on the carriers to provide; and the time element for the provision of that number of transport aircraft.

"When this decision has been made, a national program should be drawn up by the Army and Navy, the Civil Aeronautics Board, the Civil Aeronautics Administration, the Department of Commerce, and the Post Office Department." These agencies, working closely with air carriers, should enforce the plan which will insure that the requisite number of aircraft will be provided from civilian sources at the time scheduled "and under the arrangements made for their continued maintenance and operation." Programs such as transporting first class mail by air, transportation of air parcel post and increase in air freight schedules have been suggested but "the rate of progress in putting these programs into effect is too slow for national comfort." We must have a program for the air transport element of air power.

Since a national system of Federal airways is a basic requirement for national defense and for adequate air power, interest must be taken in the provision of adequate airports. Sufficient funds must be available for construction and maintenance of modern airports.