MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

The gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance before a joint session of the Congress.

The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved.

One phase of the present problem, which I wish to present to you at this time for your consideration and decision, concerns Greece and Turkey.

The United States has received from the Greek Government an urgent appeal for financial, economic, and industrial assistance.

Preliminary reports from the American Economic Mission now in Greece and reports from the American Ambassador in Greece corroborate the statement of the Greek Government that assistance is imperative if Greece is to survive as a free nation.

I do not believe that the American people and the Congress wish to turn a deaf ear to the appeal of the Greek Government.

Greece has never been a rich country. Poverty of natural resources has always forced the Greek people to work hard to make both ends meet. This industrious and peaceful country has, since 1941, suffered invasion, four years of cruel enemy occupation, and bitter internal strife.

Sincerely,
When forces of liberation entered Greece they found that
the retreating Germans had destroyed virtually all of Greece’s rail-
ways, roads, port facilities, communications, and merchant marine.
More than a thousand villages had been burned. Eighty-five percent
of the children were tubercular. Livestock, poultry, and draft
animals had almost disappeared. Inflation had wiped out
practically all savings.

As a result of these tragic conditions, a militant
minority, exploiting human want and misery, was able to create
political chaos which has made economic recovery impossible.

Greece is today without funds to finance the importa-
tion of those goods which are essential for bare subsistence.
Under these circumstances the people of Greece cannot make progress
in solving their problems of reconstruction. Greece is in desperate
need of financial and economic assistance to enable it to resume
immediately purchases of food, clothing, fuel, seeds and the like
that are indispensable for the subsistence of its people and that
are obtainable only from abroad, and to import the goods necessary
to restore internal order and assure an essential for economic
and political recovery. Assistance is necessary to enable Greece
to establish itself as a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.

The Greek Government has also asked for the assistance
of experienced American administrators, economists and technicians
to ensure that the financial and other aid given to Greece be used
effectively in creating a stable and self-sustaining economy and
in improving its public administration.

The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened
by the terrifying activities of several thousand armed men, led by
Communists, who defy the government’s authority at a number of
points, particularly along the northern boundaries. A Commission
appointed by the United Nations Security Council is at present
investigating disturbed conditions in northern Greece and alleged
border violations along the frontier between Greece on the one
hand and Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia on the other.

Meanwhile, the Greek Government is unable to cope with the
situation. The Greek army is small and poorly equipped. If that
army is to restore the authority of the Greek state throughout its
territory, it must have supplies and equipment to permit its reorganization and it must be supported by a sound economy.

If Greece is to have help in this critical situation, the United States must supply it. The United States has already extended to Greece certain types of relief and economic assistance, but they are inadequate.

There is no other country to which democratic Greece can turn.

No other nation is willing and able to provide the necessary support for a democratic Greek government.

The British Government, which has been assisting Greece, can give no further financial or economic aid after March 31. Great Britain finds itself under the necessity of reducing or liquidating its commitments in several parts of the world, including Greece.

We have considered how the United Nations might assist in this crisis. But the situation is an urgent one requiring immediate action, and the United Nations and its related organizations are not in a position to extend assistance of the kind that is required.
It is important to note that the Greek Government has asked for our assistance in utilizing effectively the financial and other assistance we may give to Greece, and in improving the public administration. It is of the utmost importance that the use of any funds made available to Greece be supervised, by us, in such a manner that each dollar spent will count toward making Greece self-supporting, and will assist in building an economy in which a healthy democracy can flourish.

No government is perfect. One of the chief virtues of a democracy, however, is that its defects are always visible and under democratic process can be pointed out and corrected. The government of Greece is not perfect. It nevertheless represents slightly over percent of the members of the Greek Parliament who were chosen last year in an election, with foreign observers, including OSS.

The Greek Government has been operating in an atmosphere of chaos and extremism. It has made mistakes. The extension of aid by this country does not mean that the United States condones everything that the Greek Government has done or will do. We have condemned in the past, and we condemn now, extremist measures of the right or the left. We have in the past advised tolerance, and
we advise it now.

The plight of Greece's neighbor, Turkey, also demands our attention.

The future of Turkey as an independent and economically sound state is clearly no less important to the freedom-loving peoples of the world than that of Greece. The circumstances in which Turkey finds herself today are considerably different from those of Greece. Turkey has been spared the disasters that have beset Greece. Since the war Turkey has sought additional financial assistance from Great Britain and the United States for the purpose of modernizing its defenses and developing its economy, both of which are necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity.

That integrity is essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East.
The British Government has informed us that, due to its own difficulties, it can no longer extend financial or economic aid to Turkey.

As in the case of Greece, if Turkey is to have the assistance it needs, the United States must supply it. We are the only country able to provide that help and it is in our interest to do so.

I am fully aware of the broad implications involved if the United States extends assistance to Greece and Turkey, and I shall discuss these implications with you at this time.

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations.
To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members.

We shall not go very far in realizing our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive attempts that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes imposed upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Molotov agreement, in Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments, for instance, in Greece, Yugoslavia, and Germany.
At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedom.

There has been a world-wide trend away from the system of free enterprise toward state-controlled economies. Two great wars and an intervening world depression have weakened this system almost everywhere except in the United States. Continued chaos in other countries and pressure asserted upon them free without, will almost certainly mean the end of free enterprise and democracy in those countries.
If, by default, we permit free enterprise to disappear in the other nations of the world, the very existence of our own economy and our own democracy will be gravely threatened.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside forces.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo to violate the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance. Greece, and the island possessions, control the Western approaches to the Middle East. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon our neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East, an area in which the United States has a vital interest in the maintenance of peace and good order. This is an area of great natural resources which must be accessible to all nations and must not be under the exclusive control of any single nation. The weakening of Turkey, or the further weakening of Greece, would be the exact contrary.

How is this all? There are countries in Europe whose people are struggling against great difficulties to maintain their freedom and their independence while they repair the damages of war.
It would be an unspeakable tragedy if countries such as Greece, which have struggled so long for their independence against overwhelming odds, should lose that victory for which they sacrificed so much. Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the world. Discouragement and possibly failure would quickly be the lot of neighboring peoples engaged in a struggle to maintain their freedom and independence.

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East.

We must take immediate and resolute action.

I therefore ask the Congress to provide authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of $500,000,000 for the period ending June 30, 1948. In requesting these funds, I have taken into consideration the maximum amount of relief assistance which would be furnished to Greece out of the $350,000,000 which I recently requested that the Congress authorize for the prevention of starvation and suffering in countries devastated by the war.
In addition to funds, I ask the Congress to authorize the detaining of American civilian and military personnel in Greece and Turkey, at the request of those countries, to assist in the tasks of reconstruction, and for the purpose of supervising the use of much financial and material assistance as may be furnished. I recommend that authority also be provided for the instruction and training of selected Greek and Turkish personnel.

Finally, I ask that the Congress provide authority which will permit the most efficient and most effective use, in terms of needed commodities, supplies, and equipment, of such funds as may be authorized.

If further funds, or further authority, should be needed for purposes indicated in this message, I shall not hesitate to bring the situation before the Congress. This is a subject upon which the Executive and Legislative branches of the Government must work together.
This is a serious issue upon which we embark.

I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious.

The United States contributed 360 billion 900 million dollars toward winning World War II. This was an investment in world freedom and world peace.

The assistance that I am recommending for Greece and Turkey amounts to 1 billion 1 per cent of our monetary investment in world freedom and world peace. It is only common sense that we should safeguard this investment and make sure that it was not in vain.

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the very soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when hopes for a better life have died. We must keep hope in the Greek people.

One strength we support that goes until the conclusion will be its

We have placed upon us, by the swift movement of events, great responsibilities.

I have full confidence that
We must now face the realization that the security of this nation depends upon the maintenance of the fundamental beliefs in human freedom and democracy, not only within our own country, but among the peoples of the world.