

"Dear Mr. President", Middlebury, Vermont, January or February 1942

AFS 6420B

Harry M. Fife: Mr. President, I am Harry M. Fife of Middlebury, Vermont, one of those ambassador states of a few years ago if you will remember. I'm a professor of economics. Your own personal devotion to the democratic way of life and your respect for the soundness of the judgements of the common man makes this talk with you possible.

The people of this community are disturbed and angered over the initial successes the Japanese have achieved through their treachery. We are not softened by these successes nor are we downhearted. Rather, they have aroused us from an overdose of trust in Japanese integrity. The Japanese have demonstrated that they are incapable of response to anything but military force. We are as sure of ultimate victory as we are of the rightness of our resistance to their perfidious aggression.

We know that great sacrifices will be called for and we are increasingly willing to make them. We want price upping stopped, we want burdens equitably distributed, we want Congress and officials to apply a soldier's devotion to duty so that the sacrifices we make are not made in vain. Given these conditions fulfilled along with the bold leadership for which you yourself are greatly noted greater and yet greater demands can be made upon us. We are fully conscious of the consequences of failure to do otherwise. Anything short of complete and final suppression of the aggressors is unthinkable no matter what it costs or how long it takes. Be assured Mr. President, that though we may grumble and curse the war, you can and must demand whatever is necessary to obtain complete victory. I think you should make these demands at once.