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Taoiseach  
Head of Government  
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3 April 1945

Winston Churchill  
Prime Minister  
United Kingdom

Franklin Roosevelt  
President  
United States

Joseph Stalin  
Premier & Secretary  
Soviet Union

Dear Heads of Government of the Major Allied Powers,

Your armies are now in your enemies' territories. It is only a matter of days, perhaps hours, until your total victory is assured. You have not only smashed your enemies' ground forces and navies, but you have also decimated their industrial, technological, and agricultural capacity. In the process, your bombs and other terrible weapons have killed uncounted numbers of civilians--nationals of the Axis Powers--and also those displaced persons in their care in camps around their territories. Your operations officers have made no efforts to warn nearby civilians when bombing Axis military targets--nor have you made any transparent, public efforts to explain how you have identified your "military targets" at all.

Whatever your past justifications may have been, at a time when your political existence was put at risk by attacks emanating from the coordinated military forces of the Axis Powers, those past risks are now entirely (or nearly entirely) attenuated. You and your territories are no longer at any substantial risk (except for an occasional V-2 rocket--which are unguided and frequently land in little populated areas). In these circumstances, your continued use of massively devastating weapons--which, of necessity, must kill many wholly innocent nationals of the Axis Powers--is no longer justified (to the extent their use was ever justified). Because you are no longer at any substantial risk, any attacks on your part which knowingly kill civilians (including women and children) and destroy their little remaining property and food, is wholly disproportionate as a matter of public international law. Any such attacks ordered by you and your subordinates will subject you and your governments to sanctions by international institutions, Ireland, and other neutral governments (after a proper investigation in due course of law following principles of natural justice).

Based on nothing more than the Axis governments' continuing refusal to accept your unprecedented demand for an unconditional surrender, you could end hostilities by unnecessarily murdering the last soldier of the Axis forces. For that reason, you could mindlessly continue to kill their soldiers, and for that reason, you could continue to kill their civilians (incidental to military necessity). But it is your legal and moral duty not to do so. Rather, you should assume the burden and role of statesmen and pursue peace with your former opponents (whoever they might be and without respect to their former, current, or future political aims). For those reasons among others, you must declare a cease fire: unilaterally if needs be.

After the cease fire, you must begin a peace process (even if, at first, you lack cooperation from your opponents). The first steps in that peace process are: to recognize the Axis Powers' governments (even if not democratic); to allow all parties to return to their borders as they existed prior to the outbreak of these past regrettable hostilities; and finally, to allow international trade to flow freely so that hungry innocents may be fed, clothed, and receive medicine. It is true that this might allow (some of) your enemies to rearm. But my own experts assure me that this possibility is minor. Inconsequential, abstract, and theoretical future risks such as potential rearmament cannot overcome the pressing, real, and current demands of suffering humanity and international law.

Each of you must: stop your bombings; declare a cease fire; end all blockades and trade restrictions; permit the representatives of the Axis governments to reenter the world of diplomacy, finance, and international institutions; and finally, allow the long-suffering peoples of the Axis nations to feed themselves--something they cannot do as long as your bombs continue to rain down on them. Once these basic steps are taken, a lasting peace based on mutual respect and recognition will surely come--as night follows day.

Finally, on behalf of Douglas Hyde, the President of Ireland, I offer you my own government's good offices towards the pacific mediation, arbitration, and settlement of any international disputes.

Sincerely,

Éamon de Valera

cc: His Excellency Eduard Hempel, German Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary

*A parody by Seth Barrett Tillman, lecturer in the Maynooth University Department of Law, National University of Ireland Maynooth.*