

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## AIRWAYS TO PEACE EXHIBITION WITH TEXT BY WENDELL L. WILLKIE

OPENS AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Today's great panorama of the world of the air, from its beginning in ancient myths of bird-men to its present struggle for air supremacy and its future possibilities for world peace, will be spread before the visitor in Airways to Peace: An Exhibition of Geography for the Future, opening today (Friday, July 2) at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street.

Wendell L. Willkie has written the text, which will be mounted on the walls as a running commentary on the various sections of the exhibition. The opening and closing paragraphs of Mr. Willkie's text\* are as follows:

"We have always known two kinds of geography. Nature drew the oceans, continents, mountains, rivers and plains. Men etched in cities and national boundaries. For our well-being, we have tried to harmonize natural and man-made geography.

"But the modern airplane creates a new geographical dimension. A navigable ocean of air blankets the whole surface of the globe. There are no distant places any longer: the world is small and the world is one. The American people must grasp these new realities if they are to play their essential part in winning the war and building a world of peace and freedom. This exhibition tells the story of airways to peace....

"Peace must be planned on a world basis. Continents and oceans are plainly only parts of a whole seen from the air. And it is inescapable that there can be no peace for any part of the world unless the foundations of peace are made secure throughout all parts of the world. Our thinking in the future must be world-wide."

Installed in dramatic sequence, the exhibition fills the entire second floor of the Museum and consists of maps, spheres, models, photographs, drawings, paintings and photo-murals. The most noteworthy object is the Fifty-Inch Globe which President Roosevelt has lent the exhibition for a period of two weeks. Among other outstanding items shown are a replica of the oldest (1492) terrestrial globe extant; the Ga-Sur Clay Tablet, ca. 2500 B.C., a replica of the first known map in the world; a model of Homer's World, ca. 900 B.C.; Ptolemy's Map, ca. 150 A.D.; a Roman Road Map showing that all roads lead to Rome; an eleven-foot-square Polar Map showing the principal airways of the

(\*Complete text will be found on the last page of this release)

world; a glass Antipode Globe; a fifteen-foot globe into which the visitor may walk shows clearly how Europe, Asia and North America are clustered about the North Pole.

A photo-mural twelve feet high and ninety feet long shows the war being waged across the earth. Another photographic sequence shows the development of flight from the pterodactyl of fifty million years ago to the latest fighter and transport planes. A series of meteorological panels by Herbert Bayer depict the nature of the atmosphere. An automatic question-and-answer device will enable visitors to test the knowledge they have derived from the exhibition. Some of the questions concern the relative distance from the North Pole of Vladivostock and Venice; the relative distance from New York of Dakar and Berlin; and the percentage of the world's land area occupied by Europe.

The exhibition is divided into five sections, a prologue and a conclusion:

Prologue, which introduces the purpose of the exhibition, i.e., to explain to the layman in graphic form the basic factors of air-age geography, an understanding of which is essential to winning the war and making a successful peace.

- I. How Man Has Drawn His World: Maps and globes from the Ga-Sur Clay Tablet of 2500 B.C. to the latest air maps of the world. The distortions of flat maps are explained and the importance of the globe to an understanding of global geography is emphasized. A 15-foot globe into which the visitor can walk shows the nations of the world and air routes which link them.
- II. The Development of Flight: From the prehistoric pterodactyl and Icarus, the flying man of Greek mythology, to the giant air transport of tomorrow. From December 17, 1903, when the Wright brothers flew the first heavier-than-air machine, the progress of American aviation has been spectacular. United States airplane production this year is seven times greater than our automobile production before the war. By our fortunate geographic location no less than by national temperament, America's destiny seems to be the air world.
- III. Theatres of War. Background terrain and natives in a score of countries all over the earth where American men are now fighting.
- IV. Global Strategy: Germany's geo-political theories and the repudiation of them by the resources and strategy of the United Nations.
- V. The Nature of the Air: A series of colored panels showing the earth as a ball of atmosphere with a solid center, and the clouds and air currents which aviators must understand.

Conclusion: Photo-mural and text which indicate that in a world internationalized by the airplane peace can only be built on dynamic idealism.

The exhibition, planned and directed by Monroe Wheeler, with Richard Edes Harrison as consultant cartographer, and designed by Herbert Bayer, will be on view at the Museum through October 17, and will later be sent on a tour of the country. Additional consultants include L. F. V. Drake, John K. Wright, Eric Sloane, Major Lester D. Gardner, William S. Friedman, Walter W. Ristow, and George T. Renner. Special advice and assistance have been received from Samuel W. Boggs, William A. M. Burden, Edward H. Dodd, Jr., Juan T. Trippe, Russell W. Davenport, Harry Hopkins, Colonel Arthur R. Christie, Richard C. Walker, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Hartman, Charles T. Keller, Frank Vitullo, Jean Volkmer, Mrs. Joseph Thorndike, Allen Porter, Robert H. Pfeiffer, Joseph A. Allegro, Helmuth Bay and Harold E. Group. Lenders to the

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exhibition are United States Army, United States Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Irving Fisher, Buckminster Fuller, Major Lester D. Gardner, Norman Bel Geddes, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Richard Edes Harrison, S. Paul Johnston (Horizons Unlimited), Hispanic Society of America, Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, The Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences, American Geographical Society, Semitic Museum, Harvard University, Pan American Airways System, United Aircraft Corporation, Rand, McNally and Company, Time, Inc., Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Bronzart Metals Company, and Aviation Magazine.

AIRWAYS TO PEACE: An Exhibition of  
Geography for the Future

Text by Wendell L. Willkie

Prologue

We have always known two kinds of geography. Nature drew the oceans, continents, mountains, rivers and plains. Men etched in cities and national boundaries. For our well-being, we have tried to harmonize natural and man-made geography.

But the modern airplane creates a new geographical dimension. A navigable ocean of air blankets the whole surface of the globe. There are no distant places any longer: the world is small and the world is one. The American people must grasp these new realities if they are to play their essential part in winning the war and building a world of peace and freedom. This exhibition tells the story of airways to peace.

How Man Has Drawn His World

From the beginning of history, man has made maps to match his expanding knowledge of his surroundings. Homer's world, a little flat disk around the Mediterranean, grew slowly into a sphere.

Since the sixteenth century, Mercator's projection has been accepted as a reasonably workable picture of the world. Mariners have used it for hundreds of years. But its conception is dangerously misleading in our air age. The course over the top of the world is now clearly the shortest and the speediest way to friend and enemy alike, a course impassable to ocean ships. But the frozen waters and icy wastes around the North Pole offer no major obstacles to the swift ships of the air. Man must re-draw his world.

The Progress of Flight

Men's imaginations have been excited by the soaring of birds since before the dawn of history. Among our most cherished legends is the daring tale of Icarus with his wax-fastened wings. Leonardo, in that great awakening of minds, the Renaissance, dreamed of flight. Whenever there was intellectual ferment in the world, men wrestled with the problem. With Montgolfier's balloon the ancient dream began to come true. It was on a memorable December seventeenth in 1903 that Orville Wright first rose from the ground in a power-propelled machine, Wilbur standing on the ground to steady the slight wings as his brother took off from a monorail. Man had begun his conquest of the air. In the years since, intrepid adventurous spirits, often at the cost of life itself, have triumphed again and again. Today, so vast is the vision that the giant planes which fill our skies seem mere experiments for the accomplishments of tomorrow.

Americans have been pacemakers in the new science of the air which has revolutionized geography. And our inventive and industrial genius will play a leading role in re-shaping the world through the progress of that science.

War Over the World

Over Sicily and Attu, over Panama and Guadalcanal, America's flying men are mobilized against the enemies of democracy. From Africa and Australia, from England and China, they patrol the air. All over the globe, in concord with their Allies, they are smashing at the bastions of tyranny.

The airplane holds the power of life or death over civilization. We are using this mighty weapon to the utmost to defeat the aggressors. When that job is done, we must determine to dedicate

the wings of the world to the purposes of peace.

### Global Strategy

The Axis plan of world conquest was founded on geo-politics. This doctrine has backfired on its sponsors.

Germany has failed to subjugate Russia. The Mediterranean lies open to the ships of all the Allies. Those steppingstones to the Americas, Iceland and Greenland, Dakar and Natal, are in the hands of the United Nations. The plan has failed.

The United States, Russia, the British Commonwealth and China, and all the United Nations, working together, have strategic advantages of geography and resources which the enemy can never hope to match.

It is true that the supply lines from the Allied arsenal to the fighting fronts are long; that planes and ships can be destroyed. But the air and water on which they move are indestructible. The Axis network of railroad and highway transportation is shorter, but bombers can cripple it beyond repair.

### Conclusion

Our one great aim, beyond military victory, must be to create a world of freedom, opportunity, justice and lasting peace. Only so can the cruel cost of war be justified.

Vision and courage will be as necessary for the winning of the peace as for the winning of the war. We must learn that narrow nationalism and racial and religious intolerance are suicidal. We must understand that economic freedom is as important as political freedom. We must accept our full responsibility for America's share in the tremendous tasks of reconstruction.

Peace must be planned on a world basis. Continents and oceans are plainly only parts of a whole seen from the air. And it is inescapable that there can be no peace for any part of the world unless the foundations of peace are made secure throughout all parts of the world. Our thinking in the future must be world-wide.