

# Newsweek

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## We Gave the Red Army Its Speed

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We, the American people, have a reputation abroad for being boastful. But at times we seem to be beset with the opposite fault. Since the Red armies began rolling again, the admiring inquiry: "How do they do it?" has been audible in Washington. There was nothing in the headlines—or in the dispatches from Moscow, Berlin, or other European capitals—to hint that these Russian victories were not wholly Russian achievements.

At last a few of our official spokesmen were moved to call attention to the fact that the United States was a direct contributor to, and partner of, the Red Army. Foreign Economic Administrator Leo Crowley issued a partial summary of Lend-Lease aid. Lt. Gen. Ira Eaker made bold to say that but for the work of American and British heavy bombers, the Russians would still be fighting somewhere near Moscow.

As Crowley reported, we have sent the Russians hundreds of thousands of motor vehicles, more than 12,000 planes, many thousands of tanks and self-propelled guns, thousands of railroad cars, more than a thousand locomotives, miles of track, and 60 ingenious rail-borne power plants. We have sent them 11,000,000 pairs of army boots, hundreds of millions of yards of cloth, thousands of machine tools, and many thousand tons of raw and semifinished materials.

Crowley touched only the high spots. In total volume, as he emphasized, we have provided only a small part of the equipment and supplies used by the Russians. But we have provided, in large quantities, critical items—especially transportation—without which the Red armies could not employ blitz tactics and very probably would still be fighting well inside their own country.

Our contribution did not end with the procurement and fabrication of these supplies. With the help of the British we had to deliver them. We had to build and man the cargo ships to carry them. We had to build and man the combat ships and the planes to escort the cargo ships through submarine-infested waters to the Persian Gulf and the White Sea ports. We had to contrive and manufacture devices for averting the U-boat peril. We had to build docks in the Persian Gulf and

## Red Speed

develop the rail and motor transport lines north through Iran. We had to expand the air ferry route across Africa and blaze the air trail across Canada to Fairbanks.

The exertions required for the delivery of Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union were immense. They involved the use of manpower probably equivalent to several Russian armies.

Then, too, as General Eaker pointed out, Americans and Britons built and flew the planes which beat down the Luftwaffe, steadily sapped Germany's capacity to make war, and, first in the Balkans and now in Germany, have given the Red armies direct tactical support by their attacks on enemy communication lines.

The last two American contributions to the advances of Uncle Joe's boys can be stated briefly: (1) the landing of large American armies in Europe and the destruction or capture by them of some 1,000,000 German fighting men, and (2) the great Pacific offensive beginning with the hairline gamble on Guadalcanal in August 1942 which kept the Japanese out of Siberia. These enterprises required not only millions of men but a technology which the Russians have not yet attained, as well as skills in warfare and transport on the sea and in the air with which they have only a vague acquaintance. And they cost many American lives.

Of course, we did not do any of this out of altruism. We did it to win a war, or two wars, as quickly and efficiently as possible. The official American conception of the victory over Germany always held that the Russians would carry the major burden of the fighting on the ground. They have proved that this strategic diagnosis was correct and that our faith in their fighting ability, from their dark days in 1941 and 1942 until the present, was well founded.

The man who is carrying the ball on a particular play, especially if he makes a long gain, gets the plaudits of the crowd. Although we give full credit to the fullback in this case, it is in the common interest to remind him, ourselves, and the spectators, including his own relatives, that he is only one man on a powerful, cooperative, and at times even self-effacing team.