The last Nuremberg judgment, more than six weeks ago, is discussed in the present document. Public attention was once more on the principles and purposes of the war crimes trials. Except at occasional especially dramatic events, the Nuremberg trials have not proved particularly "good copy", partly because the average American likes to look forward to a cheerful future rather than brood over disagreeable memories, and partly because his attention has been increasingly concentrated on the new tensions generated by the East-West split.

So few people will regret that the Nuremberg trials have ended, and many will find it easy to forget them entirely. And yet I venture to predict that as time goes on we will all hear more about Nuremberg rather than less, and that in a very real sense the conclusion of the trials marks the beginning, and not the end, of Nuremberg as a force in politics, law, and morals. For the Nuremberg trials, like all judicial trials, must be seen more than an episode — they must be part of a process. Nuremberg was part of the process of enforcing law — law that long antedated the trials, and that will endure long after the Nuremberg trials. Law that binds not only Germans or Japanese, but all men. As the Nuremberg Tribunal itself declared in the last judgment:

"We may not, in justice, apply to these defendants because they are German, standards of duty and responsibility which are not equally applicable to the officials of the Allied Powers and to those of all nations. Nor should Germans be convicted for acts or conduct which, if committed by Americans, British, French or Russians would not subject them to legal trial and conviction."

By undertaking to judge and punish Germans at Nuremberg, the United States and other participating governments are deeply committed to the standards and principles which were enforced there. And it is awareness of this fact which lies at the root of the controversy engendered by Nuremberg — controversies which, I believe, are largely based on misunderstanding, and which often open with the remark that "Nuremberg has established a dangerous precedent."
As a rule, those accusations spring from the notion that at Nuremberg the
Nazis did not commit crimes, or that they were not guilty of war crimes or
crimes against humanity. However, a glance at the Nuremberg records and judgments will at once
show that these charges are without foundation, and that the only real
problem is how to make people generally aware of the true
facts.

So Nuremberg defendant was accused or convicted merely because he held
a high position or performed a particular function, but only upon a showing
that he used or abused his position, authority, or skill in a criminal manner.
American doctors do not perform useless and numerous medical experiments on
prisoners; American business men do not engage in rounding-up
activities of foreign civilians, deporting them thousands of miles and
setting them to forced labor under inhuman conditions; American generals and diplomats
do not participate in the extermination of racial and religious minorities.

But it was these and other such acts that underlie the Nuremberg judgments,
and the only precedent that Nuremberg has established is that there may be
punishment by internationally-consolidated courts. It is a precedent that need
attain no American as long as our country retains its freedom, and our government
maintains its devotion to humanity and the cause of peace. It is a precedent
which will be welcomed by all who believe that peace and human dignity will
find their surest guarantee in the establishment of "world order under the
rule of law."1

1. The April issue of "International Opinion", published by the German
          Nuremberg, contains a message of General Taylor of all the Nuremberg trials, together with an analysis of the pertinent legal
          questions.