

Telegram from Senator Joseph McCarthy to President Harry S. Truman, 1950

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The White House  
Washington



THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

1950 FEB 11 PM 7 31

IN A LINCOLN DAY SPEECH AT WHEELING THURSDAY NIGHT

I STATED THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HARBORS A NEST OF COMMUNISTS AND COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS WHO ARE HELPING TO SHAPE OUR FOREIGN POLICY. I FURTHER STATED THAT I HAVE IN MY POSSESSION THE NAMES OF 57 COMMUNISTS WHO ARE IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT AT PRESENT. A STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN

Summary from page 1 of the telegram

FLY DENIED THIS AND CLAIMED THAT THERE IS NOT A SINGLE COMMUNIST IN THE DEPARTMENT. YOU CAN CONVINCE YOURSELF OF THE FALSITY OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT CLAIM VERY EASILY. YOU WILL RECALL THAT YOU PERSONALLY APPOINTED A BOARD TO SCREEN STATE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES FOR THE PURPOSE OF WEEDING OUT FELLOW TRAVELERS. YOUR BOARD DID A PAINS-TAKING JOB. AND NAMED HUNDREDS WHICH IT LISTED AS "DANGEROUS TO THE SECURITY OF THE NATION", BECAUSE OF COMMUNISTIC CONNECTIONS.

WHILE THE RECORDS ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO ME, I KNOW

Summary from page 2 of the telegram

ALLEGEDLY THAT OF ONE GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 300 CERTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY FOR DISCHARGE, HE ACTUALLY DISCHARGED ONLY APPROXIMATELY 80. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS WAS DONE AFTER LENGTHY CONSULTATION WITH ALGER HISS. I WOULD SUGGEST THEREFORE, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT YOU SIMPLY PICK UP YOUR PHONE AND ASK MR. ACHESON HOW MANY OF THOSE WHOM YOUR BOARD HAD LABELED AS DANGEROUS, HE FAILED TO DISCHARGE. THE DAY THE HOUSE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE EXPOSED ALGER HISS AS AN IMPORTANT LINK IN AN INTER-NATIONAL COMMUNIST SPY RING, YOU SIGNED AN ORDER FORBIDDING THE

Summary from page 3 of the telegram



STATE DEPARTMENTS GIVING TO THE CONGRESS ANY INFORMATION IN REGARD TO THE DISLOYALTY OR THE COMMUNISTIC CONNECTIONS OF ANYONE IN THAT DEPARTMENT, DISPUTE THIS STATE DEPARTMENT BLACKOUT, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COMPILE A LIST OF 57 COMMUNISTS IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THIS LIST IS AVAILABLE TO YOU, BUT YOU CAN GET A MUCH LONGER LIST BY ORDERING THE SECRETARY ACHESON TO GIVE YOU A LIST OF THESE WHOM YOUR OWN BOARD LISTED AS BEING DISLOYAL, AND WHO ARE STILL WORKING IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT. I BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING IS THE MINIMUM WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED OF YOU IN THIS CASE

[Summary from page 4 of the telegram](#)

(1) THAT YOU DEMAND THAT ACHESON GIVE YOU AND THE PROPER CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE THE NAMES AND A COMPLETE REPORT ON ALL OF THOSE WHO WERE PLACED IN THE DEPARTMENT BY ALGER HISS, AND ALL OF THOSE STILL WORKING IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT WHO WERE LISTED BY YOUR BOARD AS BAD SECURITY RISKS BECAUSE OF THE COMMUNISTIC CONNECTIONS.

[Summary from page 5 of the telegram](#)

(2) THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES COULD A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE OBTAIN ANY INFORMATION OR HELP FROM THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT IN EXPOSING COMMUNISTS.

FAILURE ON YOUR PART WILL LABEL THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF BEING THE BED-FELLOW OF INTER-NATIONAL COMMUNISM. CERTAINLY THIS LABEL IS NOT DESERVED BY THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF LOYAL AMERICAN DEMOCRATS THROUGHOUT THE NATION, AND BY THE SIZABLE NUMBER OF ABLE LOYAL DEMOCRATIES IN BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE

[Summary from page 6 of the telegram](#)

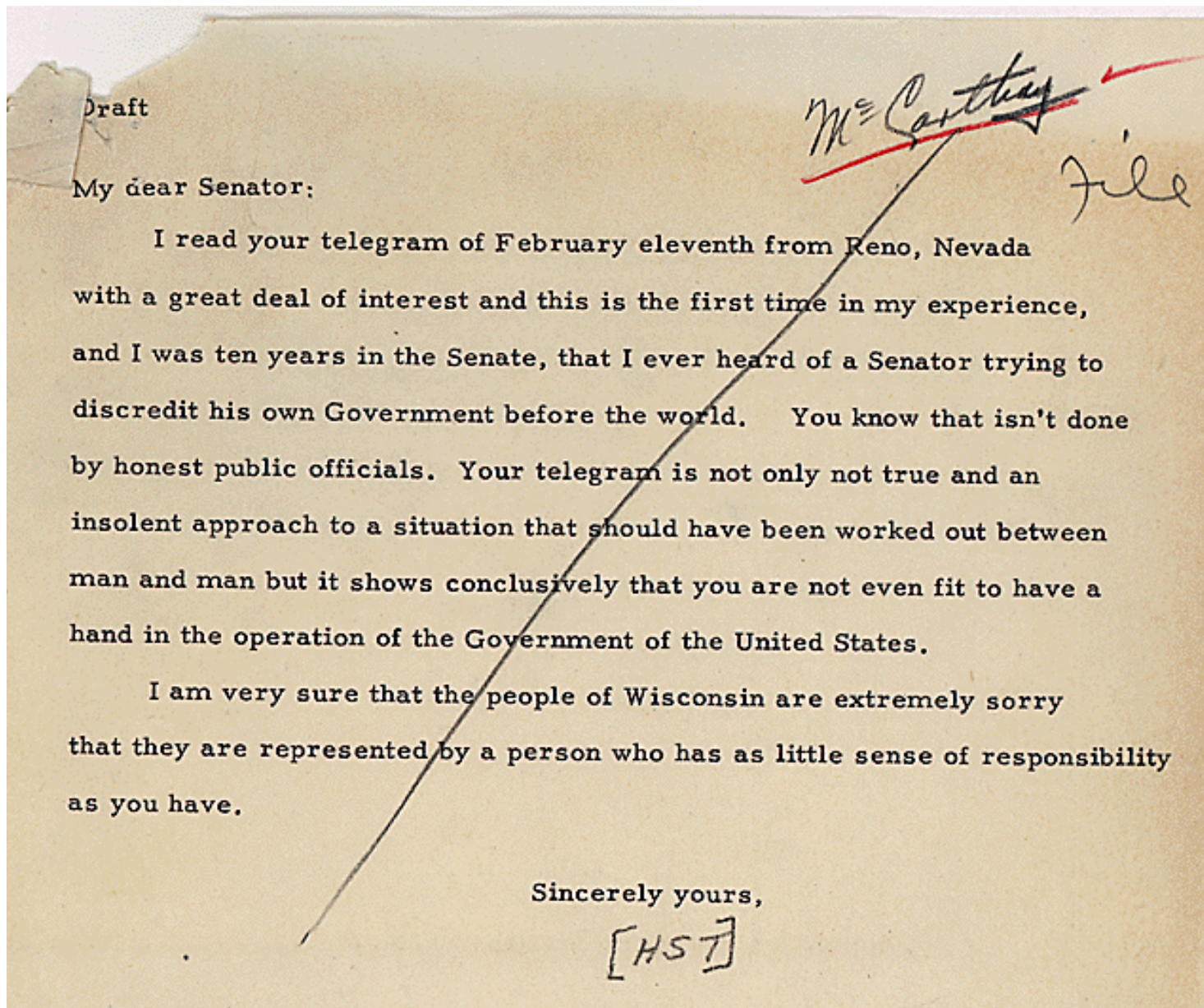
JOE MC CARTHY U.S.S. WIS..

#### McCarthy Telegram Questions:

1. What accusations does Senator Joseph McCarthy make in this telegram to President Truman? What do you think motivated McCarthy to send this telegram?
2. How do you think the American people reacted when McCarthy made these accusations public in 1950?
3. Assume the role of President Harry Truman. How would you respond to this telegram (must be at least 6 sentences)?

## President Truman's Response to the McCarthy Telegram, 1950

(The letter below was probably never sent)



### Truman Response Questions:

1. How does President Truman respond to McCarthy's accusations? What is the tone of this letter?
2. Which side of this disagreement do you think most Americans would have chosen: McCarthy or Truman? Why?
3. Why would this letter have never been sent?
4. If you were Truman, how would you have dealt with the situation?
5. Write a response to McCarthy as if you were Truman (at least 6 sentences).

## IF YOU HAVE HAD NO WARNING IN AN A-BOMB ATTACK

WHEN YOU SEE A FLASH OF LIGHT  
BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN —

- Don't run: there isn't time.
- Fall flat on your face.
- **GET DOWN FAST!**



### IF IN-DOORS



- **GET DOWN!**
- Drop to the floor to avoid flying window glass.
- Crawl under or behind something.
- Cover up.

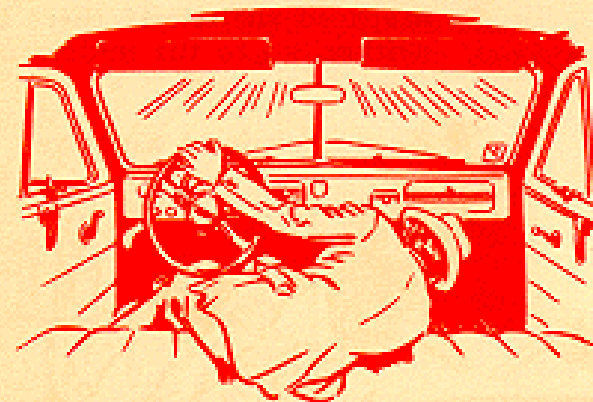
**STAY DOWN FOR AT LEAST ONE MINUTE**

### IF OUT-OF-DOORS



- **GET DOWN!**
- Drop to the ground: close against a wall if possible.
- Cover up.
- Stay down until the blast has passed; then get under the heaviest cover nearby.

**STAY THERE FOR AT LEAST A MINUTE**



### IF IN YOUR CAR

- Stop the car fast, set the emergency brake, and dive for the floor.

**STAY DOWN FOR AT LEAST A MINUTE**

IF YOU HAVE NO AIR-RAID WARNING

WHEN YOU SEE THE FLASH  
THERE IS NO TIME TO RUN

**WHEREVER YOU ARE GET DOWN FAST**

## Questions from Ads

1. What do these documents reveal about American attitudes during the Cold War?
2. How affective would these practices be during an actual nuclear attack?
3. Why would the government publish these ads?
4. Who was the target audience for these ads?
5. Do you think these ads were taken seriously? Why or why not?