

Document 1 - Senator Joseph McCarthy, Speech at Wheeling, West Virginia, February 9, 1950



Six years ago, . . . there was within the Soviet orbit, 180,000,000 people. Lined up on the American side, there were in the world at the time, roughly 1,625,000,000 people. Today, only six years later, there are 800,000,000 people under the absolute domination of Soviet Russia—an increase of over 400 percent. On our side, the figure has shrunk to around 500,000,000. In other words, in less than six years, the odds have changed from 9 to 1 in our favor to 8 to 1 against us.

This indicates the swiftness of the tempo of Communist victories and American defeats in the cold war. As one of our outstanding historical figures [Abraham Lincoln] once said, “When a democracy is destroyed, it will not be from enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within.” The truth of this statement is becoming terrifyingly clear as we see this country each day losing on every front. . . .

The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores . . . but rather because of the traitorous actions of many Americans. It has not been the less fortunate, or members of minority groups who have been traitorous to this Nation, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest Nation on earth has had to offer—the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs in government we can give.

This is glaringly true in the State Department . . . While I cannot take time to name all the men in the State Department who have been named as active members of the Communist Party and members of a spy ring, I have here in my hand a list of 205 names that were made known to the Secretary of State [Dean Acheson] as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in that State Department. . . . We are dealing with a far more sinister type of activity because it permits the enemy to guide and shape our policy. . . .