

McCarthyism DBQ

Document A

“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 those who have been treated so well by this Nation. 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. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been most traitorous... I have here in my hand a list of 57...a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department ...”

Source: *Excerpt from a speech given by Senator McCarthy in Wheeling, West Virginia on February 9th, 1950*

According to Senator Joseph McCarthy, who was responsible for the “impotency,” or the inability of the United States to defend itself from Communist aggression?

Why would McCarthy’s list be damaging to the reputation of the State Department employees?

Document B

“In a five-and-a-half-hour speech he read case histories of all his exhibits, cried that 80 of them were employed in the State Department, that one card-carrying comrade was a presidential speechwriter. He refused to name one name. And his story was also weakened by the fact that he had been using all kinds of differing figures for weeks: first he had said there were 205 disloyal employees in State, then 57, before settling on 80. By demanding a quorum to listen to him, he forced a dragooning of members back to their seats for a night session for the first time in almost five years.

Two days later the Senate voted unanimously to investigate McCarthy’s charges. Republicans hoped they might turn up another Alger Hiss case; Democrats felt that they didn’t dare stifle an inquiry—and besides, they said confidently, they weren’t worried.

Was there any fire at all below Joe McCarthy’s smoke signals? Maryland’s thorough and careful Democratic Senator Millard E. Tydings, chairman of the investigating committee, promised “neither a witch hunt, nor a whitewash.”

Source: *Time Magazine, March 6, 1950*

What did the Senate agree to do?

What has Senator Tydings promised?

Document C

“... I consider your crime worse than murder. Plain deliberate contemplated murder is dwarfed in magnitude by comparison with the crime you have committed. In committing the act of murder, the criminal kills only his victim. The immediate family is brought to grief and when justice is meted out the chapter is closed. But in your case, I believe your conduct in putting into the hands of the Russians the A-bomb years before our best scientists predicted Russia would perfect the bomb has already caused, in my opinion, the Communist aggression in Korea, with the resultant casualties exceeding 50,000 and who knows but that millions more of innocent people may pay that price of your treason. Indeed, by your betrayal you undoubtedly have altered the course of history to the disadvantage of our country.”

Source: *Sentencing of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Judge Irving Kaufman, April 5, 1951*

What aspect of the Rosenbergs' crime made it so much “worse than murder” to Judge Kaufman?

In what ways did the Rosenbergs endanger the lives of Americans?

Document D

“In 1947 I instituted a loyalty program for Government employees, and that loyalty procedure program was set up in such a way that the rights of individuals were respected. In a survey of the 2,200,000 employees at that time, I think there were some 205—something like that—who left the service. I don't know—a great many of them left of their own accord. An infinitesimal part of 1 percent. We will get the figures for you. The Republicans have been trying vainly to find an issue on which to make a bid for the control of the Congress for next year. They tried “statism.” They tried “welfare state.” They tried “socialism.” And there are a certain number of members of the Republican party who are trying to dig up that old malodorous dead horse called “isolationism.” And in order to do that, they are perfectly willing to sabotage the bipartisan foreign policy of the United States. And this fiasco which has been going on in the Senate is the very best asset that the Kremlin could have in the operation of the cold war. And that is what I mean when I say that McCarthy's antics are the best asset that the Kremlin can have.”

Source: *President Harry S. Truman, Response to McCarthy. Interview March 30, 1950*

What was President Truman's response to the charges made by McCarthy?

What did Truman mean when he said, “McCarthy's antics are the best asset that the Kremlin can have?”

Was the second “Red Scare” a legitimate threat against the American government or an unconstitutional invasion of the Government into the lives of its citizens?

Key Vocabulary/Terminology

Impotency: *a lack of power or strength*

Glaringly: *obvious*

Comrade: *a fellow communist or member of a group/party*

Quorum: *minimum*

Dragooning: *bullying*

Unanimously: *totally or completely*

Stifle: *to cut off*

Inquiry: *examination into facts*

Whitewash: *to gloss over or cover up (such as crimes)*

Meted: *to give out*

Infinitesimal: *tiny*

Malodorous: *stinking*

Bipartisan: *two parties working together*

Fiasco: *humiliation*

Kremlin: *the seat of the Soviet government*