

July 9, 1943

[White House]

FDR Speech File

1474

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 10, 1943

Mr. McDermott dictated this:

What happened when Colonel Dostart went to the White House last night was as follows:

General Watson told him not to worry about it (his mission to get the text of the toasts), that the President would just make a few informal off the record remarks. After the President had done so, General Giraud replied. He thanked the President for the support that is being given France, expressing his deep gratitude for the fact that through America's assistance re-armed soldiers of France would have their share in the liberation of their country. He lifted his glass to the health of the President, the glory of the United States, that great nation through which peace and freedom will be restored to the world.

STATEMENTS FILE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

7-9-43

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. EARLY:

The President talked very low during most of this little speech, and I must say that what he said at the beginning -- the first paragraph -- was unintelligible to me. I have notes on it, but they don't make sense, so I just wrote in the first sentence, which is correct.

Perhaps the President would care to correct or change it a bit.


J. Romsagna

Informal Remarks of the President at the State Dinner given
for General Henri Honore Giraud and his staff, July 9, 1943,
at about 9.25 p.m., e.w.t., in the State Dining Room of the
White House

I have just had word of the first attack against the soft underbelly of Europe.

I am going to ask you not to say anything about it after you leave here, until Midnight ends.

American and British forces, and some French observers, have attacked and landed in Sicily. The operations have just begun, and we won't get definite news until later in the day, but the news will be coming in all the time from now on.

This is a good illustration of the fact of planning, not the desire for planning but the fact of planning, which we have had since the administration began over a year ago in Washington. With the commencing of the expedition in North Africa with complete cooperation between the British and ourselves, that was followed by complete cooperation with the French in North Africa. The result, after landing, was the Battle of Tunis; and we all know the number of prisoners we took. That was not all planning, that was cooperation. From that time on we have been working in complete harmony, which in effect was the invasion of Europe, which is under way tonight.

There are a great many objectives, and of course the

major objective is the elimination of Germany -- that goes without saying -- the elimination of Germany out of the war. And as a result of this step which is in progress at this moment, we hope it is the beginning of the end. Last autumn, the Prime Minister of England called it "the end of the beginning." I think you can almost say that this action tonight is the beginning of the end.

We are going to be ashore in a naval sense -- air sense -- military. Once there, we have the opportunity of going in different directions, and I want to tell General Giraud that we haven't forgotten France as one of the directions.

One of our prime aims, of course, is the restoration of the people of France, and the sovereignty of France. Even if a move is not directed at this moment to France itself, General Giraud can rest assured that the ultimate objective -- we will do it, and in the best way -- is to liberate the people of France, not merely the southern part of France, just for a while, but the people of northern France -- Paris.

And in this whole operation, I should say rightly that in the enormous planning we have had the complete cooperation of the French military and naval forces in North Africa. Gradually the opposition cooled, and the older regime is breaking down. We have seen what has happened, or is happening at the present moment, in Martinique and Guadalupe, and becoming worse. Well, that is a very major part toward the big

objective. It is going to be worth working for. The navy, the army, the merchant ships of Martinique, I hope, will be working with us day in and day out toward the unification -- the unity of all of our forces.

We haven't won the war yet, but one of the happy things is that with the help of General Giraud, in command of the French forces in North Africa, we have got a unified military situation. Well, that goes a long way; and that is why ever since my friend and I met at Casablanca last January, I became perfectly sure -- have for certain -- that under General Giraud's leadership the French military and naval forces in North Africa would more and more work with us, as we have done -- not all we want -- to help re-arm those French forces, and to build up the French strength so that when the time comes, from a military point of view, when we get into France itself and throw the Germans out, there will be a French army and French ships working with the British and ourselves. That is why it is a very great symbol that General Giraud is here tonight -- to come over here to talk to us about his military problems, toward the same objective that all the United Nations have gone -- the freedom of France, and with it the unity of France.

So I think everybody here is very happy to drink with me to the success, health, and happiness of General Giraud.

(the toast was drunk, and General Giraud replied rather briefly in French -- from a prepared paper -- and reciprocated the toast)

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RUTHJANE:

FOR MR. EARLY, AS SOON AS HE COMES IN, PLEASE

CONFIDENTIAL ...

J. R. ...

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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(the toast was drunk, and then General Giraud -- in French -- thanked the President for the support that is being given France, expressing his deep gratitude for the

fact that through America's assistance re-armed soldiers of France would have their share in the liberation of their country. He lifted his glass to the health of the President, the glory of the United States, that great nation through which peace and freedom will be restored to the world)

(excerpts from these remarks were given to the press next day, for details of which please see Mr. Early's Press and Radio Conference of July 10, 1943)

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