

P.S.F. Office of War Information

1942-1944

PSF: DWI - S *Alain's folder*  
3-42

*file  
personal*

OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

16 November 1942

Dear Mr President--

After consultation with the State and War Departments it seemed to all concerned that no one but you could speak with adequate authority on this Darlan matter; and, further, that if this statement were to be made at a press conference it should be carefully prepared. Press conferences are outside of my field; but I was unable to get Steve (he had gone home with a cold) and so started to draft some suggestions myself.

I am sending them to you, via him. This enclosed draft contains a good deal of what you said to me this morning; also some suggestions from the Secretary of State, from the Secretary of War, from General Eisenhower (who had cabled a proposed press release before the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that nobody below the top had better say anything) and a few from various people in OWI. I hope these diverse ingredients may here have been shaken up into a potable cocktail; or that if they have not, you and Steve will at least find them useful source material.

Very truly,

*Elmer Davis*



PLANS OF THE DEPARTMENT  
SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT... from OWI

I have approved General Eisenhower's acceptance of the present political arrangements in northern Africa. Our enterprise there is a purely military operation; our objectives are Tunis, Tripoli, and the German and Italian armies. We do not want our striking force to have to spend time restoring order in Algeria and Morocco. Admiral Darlan's proclamation ~~was~~ assisted in making this mopping-up period unnecessary; and saved not only time, but American lives. His assistance has been accepted for military reasons; and our decisions will continue to be made on military grounds until the military objectives are attained.

Political arrangements made between local French leaders have been accepted as insuring the continuation of the existing French administration in northern Africa, with which we have no wish to interfere. But engagements made with Admiral Darlan apply, without exception, to the local situation only. We will work with and fight beside all Frenchmen who are against Hitler and the axis--and these are the overwhelming majority of the nation; we oppose all Frenchmen who support Hitler and the axis. No one in our army has any authority to discuss the future government of France and the French Empire. That government will be established, and the eventual leaders of the nation will be chosen, both in metropolitan France and overseas, by the French people themselves, after they have been set free by the victory of the United Nations.

I have requested the liberation of all persons in northern Africa who had been imprisoned because they opposed the effort of the Nazis and their allies to dominate the world, and the abrogation of all laws and decrees inspired by enemy governments or enemy ideologies. Beyond that, reports indicate that the French of northern Africa have subordinated all political questions to the formation of a common front against the common enemy. French troops under the command of General Giraud have already been in action against that enemy in Tunisia, fighting by the side of American and British soldiers for the liberation of their country.

November 17, 1942.

I have approved General Eisenhower's acceptance for the time being of the present political arrangements in Northern and Western Africa.

I thoroughly understand and approve the feeling in the United States and Great Britain and among all the United Nations that in view of the history of the past two years no permanent arrangement should be made with Admiral Darlan. People in the United Nations likewise would never understand recognition of a reconstituting of the Vichy Government in France or in any French territory.

We are opposed to Frenchmen who support Hitler and the Axis. No one in our Army has any authority to discuss the future Government of France and the French Empire.

The future French Government will be established not by any individual, either in metropolitan France or overseas, but by the French people themselves after they

have been set free by the victory of the United Nations.

The present temporary arrangement in North and West Africa is only a temporary expedient, justified solely by the stress of battle.

The present temporary arrangement has accomplished two military objectives. The first was to save American and British lives on the one hand, and French lives on the other hand.

The second was the vital factor of time. The temporary arrangement has made it possible to ~~fix~~ avoid a mopping up period in Algiers and Morocco which might have taken a month or two to consummate. Such a period would have delayed the concentration for the attack from the West on Tunis, and we hope on Tripoli.

Every day of delay in the current operation would have enabled the Germans and Italians to build up a strong resistance, to dig in and make a military operation on our part essential before we could win.

Here again, many more lives would have been lost even under the present speedy and undelayed attack.

It will also be noted that French troops, under the command of General Giroud, have already been in action against the enemy in Tunisia, fighting by the side of American and British soldiers for the liberation of their country.

Admiral Darlan's proclamation assisted in making a mopping up period unnecessary. Temporary ~~arrangements~~ arrangements made with Admiral Darlan apply, without exception, to the current local situation only.

I have requested the liberation of all persons in Northern Africa who had been imprisoned because they opposed the efforts of the Nazis to dominate the world, and I have asked for the abrogation of all laws and decrees inspired by Nazi Governments or Nazi ideologists. Reports indicate that the French of North Africa are subordinating all political questions to the formation of ~~the~~ a common front against the common enemy.

TELEGRAM

*file*

The White House  
Washington

PRIORITY CABLEGRAM

November 17, 1942

(via State Dept. - no coding)

Honorable Brendan Bracken,  
British Ministry of Information,  
London, England.

The President is giving a statement regarding Darlan  
political arrangements <sup>in Africa</sup> to press this afternoon for immediate  
publication. He is rushing copy to the PM. Suggest press will  
have text of statement available in London before official  
dispatch can be transmitted. You may therefore obtain text  
from press in London. Please advise PM.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President