

● PSF

Readers Digest

Subject File

Box 177

*Surles, general*

**THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON**

January 10 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR  
GENERAL WATSON

I want to see General Surles  
and General Fred Osborn sometime  
soon.

(The subject I wish to dis-  
cuss with them is "The Readers  
Digest).

These people did not ask  
for an appointment and know  
nothing about it.

F. D. R.

*copy of this memo filed; -  
1) Gen Cases "C" dr. 4-44  
2) Gen Cases "S" " " "*

*Get memo in  
archive  
until end of  
May*

PSF: Readers Digest folder

4-44

file

John A.

Gen. ...

...

...

this appointment  
never arranged —  
General Osborne in  
Pacific area — so Judge  
Rosenman and Secretary  
Early handling  
with the President  
instead — filed by  
General Watson

2/7/44

**THE WHITE HOUSE**  
**WASHINGTON**

January 11, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WATSON:

When the President sees General Surles and General Fred Osborne, he wishes to have this material to remind him of the subject which he wishes to discuss with them.

Will you please give it to him a little before the appointment so he will have a chance to read it?

G.G.T.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 11, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT.

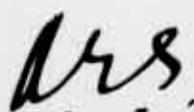
Submitted herewith is a survey of the Readers Digest for 1943, summarizing the articles in each issue which we consider are not suitable for publication or distribution abroad. Particularly flagrant was an article in the August issue, "Boondoggling on a Global Basis", a summary of which is on top in the enclosed material.

As I told you, we have had violent complaints from many of our outposts concerning the effects of various Readers Digest articles in foreign countries. For example, the Max Eastman article on Russia, which was published in Sweden, had previously been widely distributed in Sweden by German propagandists.

Another article, one by Hanson Baldwin on China, contained such statements as these: "Chinese war communique are almost worthless", "China is not a nation but a geographical expression", and "Most of its forces are badly led".

When one of the prime purposes of our propaganda and information service throughout the world is to build up United Nations' unity, this sort of thing coming from a presumably reputable American source does the nation disservice.

It should also be remembered that this material is being widely circulated among American troops and in some cases with official Army cooperation.

  
Robert Sherwood

Lashin - Jan. 7, 1943

READERS DIGEST - August 1943

Of thirty-odd articles, classification can roughly be made as follows:

- 2 are on politics in the U.S.
- 2 are on foreign countries
- 8 are on various phases of the war
- 3 are on labor management
- 11 are arts and science
- 3 are condensed books

The leading story is called "Boondoggling on a Global Basis", excerpts from a book called "Men in Motion" by Henry J. Taylor.

(Mr. Taylor was war correspondent for N.A.N.A. and is author of a book "Time Runs Out").

Mr. Taylor says we are talking through our hats when we make promises concerning post war help to Europe.

He is critical of:

the men who have abused the sound principles of emergency public works at home now putting boondoggling on world basis

American government workers abroad, who are undisciplined and unprincipled,

the American Boondoggling Corps in Bolivia as having too much politics and too little economics,

the Board of Economic Welfare for not getting us more coffee

American labor abroad,

Our plan for a better world as an impossible undertaking; the conception of the Four Freedoms as preposterous, - not idealism but sheer political buncombe. And he predicts possibility that American people will wash their hands of everything outside 12-mile limit at earliest possible moment, as they did after the last war.

COMMENT: The article is very definitely biased, lacks integrity, and is in many respects irrelevant. It is badly organized: at times you don't know whether he is dealing with Europe or Eskimox

An article by William Hard is called

**INCENTIVE PAY: For More War Production  
For More Peace Prosperity**

Mr. Hard argues for Mr. Charles E. Wilson's (Vice Chairman of War Production Board) "incentive pay"-- that is, to pay workers more if they PRODUCE MORE. However, Mr. Hard would seem to wish to extend the "incentive pay" to everybody: those whose work can be measured by standards and also those whose work cannot be measured at all.

An article by Hanson Baldwin,

**TOO MUCH WISHFUL THINKING ABOUT CHINA**

gives a picture of the bad military situation in China. While the Japanese will never be expelled from China by the Chinese armies, he acknowledges that China ties up perhaps one-fourth of Japanese land strength. However, we must face the fact that the chief burden of victory in the Pacific rests with us.

An article condensed from Forbes Magazine, written by U. S. Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney (D) from Wyoming is called

**AMERICA IS BEING MADE OVER -- AND WE WON'T LIKE IT.**

The Senator decries the doctrine of "secret covenants secretly arrived at". "When some of these things are done solely for the purpose of hastening victory, they may be forgiven or even supported...." However, "one is led to believe that the current increasing practice... is not wholly a result of a determination to win the war."

OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION

WASHINGTON

January 10, 1944.

TO: Mr. Robert E. Sherwood  
Director, Overseas Operations

FROM: Douglas Auchincloss *da*

I have made a quick analysis of the twelve issues of READER'S DIGEST for 1943. In almost every issue there are one or more things which would be valuable in varying degrees for dissemination abroad. But at the same time in almost any issue there are one or more articles the publication of which abroad would be detrimental to the national interest, as I think we understand it.

I have not attempted to comment upon the favorable articles, except where they had some specific bearing <sup>upon</sup> those which were unfavorable. Naturally, however, the editors and publishers of the READER'S DIGEST would make out a case for themselves on the grounds that they had maintained editorial balance of opinion on both sides of every controversial question.

However true this might be quantitatively it is certainly not so on a qualitative basis. The bad apples in this barrel count for more than the good.

And, in short, the record is that these 12 issues contain 12 articles, which would be positively injurious to our overseas interests as expressed in OWI directives.

I am attaching copies of the issues containing the most offensive articles (We Must Face The Facts About Russia, Boondoggling on a Global Basis, Too Much Wishful Thinking About China, and the Average American and the Postwar World.)

I am also attaching Mr. Lashin's analysis of "Boondoggling on a Global Basis."



Attachments

JANUARY

THE AMERICAN PLAN FOR A REORGANIZED WORLD by Kingsbury Smith  
(Condensed from The American Mercury)

This purports to be a flat, brass-tacks statement of State Department plans for the post-war. Mr. Smith writes as unsympathetically as anyone could without altogether losing contact with his sources, and refers constantly to "planners", and an "experiment" to form a "Better World Order", and commits the United States to post-war continuation of lend-lease, rationing, bond drives, etc. The article begins with the following words:

"Behind the scenes in Washington, a new world is being planned for you. If the plans materialize, you are to be given a try at running the world. You are to try to make it a better world and keep it so.

"If you think that defeating the Axis is the chief aim of the U.S. Government's foreign policy, you are in for a surprise. Smashing the Axis is only the beginning. Establishment of a better economic and social, as well as political, world order is the main objective.

"Uncle Sam is going to help police the world as well as feed, house and clothe great areas of it. He hopes the British, Russians and Chinese will act as fellow cops, but if they fall asleep on the beat Uncle Sam will swing the night stick alone.\*\*\*"

And it ends:

"The reward held out to you will be a promise of lasting peace; a pledge that the youth of the nation will not be called upon to shed its blood every other decade; that your children and your children's children will have a finer world in which to live. The promise will be in the nature of an experiment-- the American experiment in establishing a sane society of mankind.

"These are the plans your government has in mind."

FEBRUARY

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN AND THE POSTWAR WORLD by Robert Moses

This is an interesting sequel to the Kingsbury Smith article (The American Plan for a Reorganized World) in the Digest's January issue. It is an articulate and unequivocal statement of the "nationalist" position, characterizing the American people as "middle-of-the-roaders", unwilling to go in for the "internationalist" schemes of "earnest thinkers", such as "the League of Nations under some other name." A few quotes will give the tone of this piece, which is filled with straw men and reducti ad absurdum and is certainly not desirable for publication abroad.

"\*\*We have developed immense respect for the Russian people, not, however, to be confused with admiration for communism. Russia as a nation of people of many strains who love their own soil and fight like demons to keep it has no threat for us, but most of us regard international communism as a real menace. Moreover, we don't think much of the chances of guaranteeing the Four Freedoms in the U.S.S.R."

"It is the fashion at the moment to rail against imperialism without analyzing its virtues. The bonds which bind the dominions and colonies to England may be shadowy, but they are stronger than iron in the British family, as demonstrated again in this war."

"The average American has no Messianic complexes. He simply doesn't believe we are anointed to do over the world in our own image and to force our civilization on all mankind. The American is too shrewd and humorous to be a true fanatic. He believes in the improbability if not in the perfectibility of mankind. He has a notion we haven't as much to contribute to the rest of the globe as some of our postwar experts believe. Commodore Perry, who sold Western civilization to Japan, may not have done so brilliant a service as we once thought. He simply grafted American business on an ancient oriental barbarism. The hybrid appeared in its true colors at Pearl Harbor."

"On the economic side, let us call the roll of the uncompromising free traders who would level tariff barriers. The noes would have it. Shallow thinkers spout: 'The war has annihilated distance. The world has shrunk. Therefore men's differences will disappear as they see more of each other, freely exchange their products, and discover how foolish and insubstantial are the barriers which have separated them.' But is there anything in past human experience

FEBRUARY (Continued)

to support this oratory? Unless the groundwork of interest and sympathy is carefully laid over a long period of years, closer association may increase animosities as it often does within families and wherever people live in close quarters."

"How many of our voters would open the gates to unlimited immigration of all races?"

"Will our farmer give up good prices and parity with labor to bolster international agricultural theories?"

"We hear almost hysterical demands that we solve immediately our own color problem as the price of cooperation in other quarters of the globe. No true friend of the Negro will advocate a course which would precipitate another civil conflict here and set back the clock which is moving ahead slowly, painfully but steadily, on the journey to racial amity on which President Lincoln started it. So wide is the gap between our pretensions and practices in this field that our war censors refused to let responsible foreign correspondents cable abroad the obvious explanation of the poll-tax filibuster in the Senate. In order to bolster up our demands for complete racial equality abroad we simply denied the existence of a color problem at home."

"The average American soldier wants a decent job and an opportunity to get ahead when he returns. There is nothing to show that our boys are going to come storming home, as we are told by some post-war philosophers, chanting the Atlantic Charter."

MARCH

WE CANNOT LOOK TO PREPAREDNESS ALONE FOR POSTWAR SECURITY by  
Mark Sullivan  
(Condensed from N.Y. Herald Tribune)

A short and unimportant piece which, together with the one by Anne O'Hare McCormick which immediately follows it might be cited as an example of opinion in favor of international cooperation. Sullivan says not merely that "we must not only disarm aggressor nations but must agree on some way to keep them disarmed."

MARCH (continued)

AMERICA'S NEW MOOD by Anne O'Hare McCormick  
(Condensed from The New York Times Magazine)

In this Miss McCormick sees a few pale rays of hope for an American trend toward international collaboration. Significantly, she says:

"The sincere America Firsters are still thinking of America first, but more realistically, in the searching light of experience. No surge of crusading spirit inspired former noninterventionists to shift their stand. Yet they have moved; in its strongholds, isolationism as the basis of foreign policy was sunk with the sips at Pearl Harbor. This is the most remarkable change the war has produced."

Later on she qualifies her trend-spotting heavily with:

"No one would be rash enough to claim that this is a permanent state of mind. There may be a great reaction, as there was after the last war, another stampede to take the wrong road back to 'normalcy'. This might happen if the struggle drags on until it exhausts the energy, dulls the mind and smothers hope in a better future, which Americans have within their power to shape."

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT POSTWAR IMMIGRATION by Robert Moses

Here again Mr. Moses sets up a bunch of straw men to tear limb from limb. Beginning his piece with the statement that "Powerful organizations, especially religious groups" have gone on record with "resolutions endorsing a program of more or less unrestricted immigration after the war", and citing among them Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's words in THE NEW REPUBLIC of May 11, 1942: 'I doubt very much if after this war is over we can differentiate among the peoples of Europe, the Near East and the Far East,' Mr. Moses goes on to argue hotly for the maintenance of status quo on immigration laws. This sentence especially is significant:

"If I have gauged correctly the temper of the country, and particularly of conservatives who are becoming more articulate everywhere, the measures which propose to cut quotas have a better chance on a showdown than those which would liberalize them." (The underlining is mine)

MARCH (Continued)

(WHAT TO DO ABOUT POSTWAR IMMIGRATION) (Continued)

It is also noteworthy that nowhere in the article is there mention of the Chinese exclusion laws which were in force at that time and about which there was then beginning to be considerable agitation among liberals.

APRIL

It is on the credit side of the Digest ledger to note that this issue contains an article extremely favorable to Russia (as a land of fighters and workers) by Maurice Hindus, condensed from the New York Herald Tribune, and entitled "THE PRICE THAT RUSSIA IS PAYING". It closes with these words:

"People in American often ask what the Russians will do when the war is over. The answer depends, of course, on when, and under what circumstances, the war ends. After spending seven months in Russia, and traveling to the limit of the permission granted me, I feel that the people of the Soviet want nothing so much as to heal their wounds and start living again in some degree of security and comfort. The last thing they want is more fighting anywhere."

\* \* \*

OUR STAKE IN THE POSTWAR AIR WORLD  
(Condensed from the United States News)

1. Cooperation or International Competition for the Control of Routes?

This is written strongly from the point of view of American competition, and contains the following paragraph:

"Here is this sticking point: Any form of freedom of the air involves the principle of reciprocity between nations. Such a principle would mean that the United States would extend to other countries the same rights of entry that it asks for America's air transport lines. This would partly offset this

APRIL (Continued)

country's big advantages in postwar competition. Air lines from other countries could come into the U.S., competing with our own air lines.

"Our government is inclining away from a policy of backing expansion of America's air transport lines to the limit. Instead, Washington favors international cooperation and reciprocity, dividing up the aviation pie among the United Nations."

2. We Must Hold Our Supremacy

(Excerpts from a speech in Congress by Representative  
Clare Boothe Luce)

A typical quote:

"Shall freedom of the air, like freedom of the seas, in the year '49 or '59 have made it impossible for America's merchant airway systems to compete in the air against the low-cost countries of the world?"

For foreign consumption, such articles as these may well tend to foster distrust of the permanence of U.S. foreign policy and add to fears of the bogey of U.S. economic imperialism.

READER'S DIGEST 1943

MAY

This contains an excellent article by Edward R. Stettinius Jr., condensed from The American Magazine called WHERE IS ALL OUR FOOD GOING? and showing that food shortages are chiefly caused by Army needs and increased purchasing power, rather than shipment to countries abroad.

OUR PLAN FOR POSTWAR GERMANY by Kingsbury Smith  
(Condensed from The American Mercury)

This is another announcement by Mr. Smith of exactly what "our planners" have in store for Germany. There is not much that is positively harmful in this piece for foreign consumption except its very specific nature and its apparent assumption that the Americans are going to be the ones that determine Germany's postwar fate. This article also refers to the graduates of the U.S. Army School of Military Government at Charlottesville as "American Gauleiters".

JUNE

The June issue of the READER'S DIGEST contains nothing that would particularly disqualify it for distribution outside the United States.

JULY

WE MUST FACE THE FACTS ABOUT RUSSIA by Max Eastman

This article is by now so well-known that there is no point in quoting it here. I might only remind you of the fact that in Stockholm the Nazis made a point of reprinting this article in a large edition and distributing it widely.

AUGUST

In addition to BOONDOGLING ON A GLOBAL BASIS, which is already dealt with in the attached report by Mr. Lashin, the following articles in this issue are noteworthy:

AMERICA IS BEING MADE OVER - AND WE WON'T LIKE IT  
by Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney  
Condensed from Forbes

This is a long and violent attack upon the use of Executive order and the growth of Executive power as against that of Congress. Whereas this kind of thing is all right for home consumption, it is certainly not for foreigners and the title itself seems to me to be unfortunate, either for nationals of other countries or our own soldiers fighting overseas.

TOO MUCH WISHFUL THINKING ABOUT CHINA by Hanson W. Baldwin

This article is also well-known for such unfortunate passages as:

"The Chinese communiques are almost worthless for obtaining a true picture. Had they suffered even half the casualties the Chinese have claimed, the Japanese would by now have given evidence of a manpower shortage. Sometimes the Chinese report battles where there are no battles; often they exalt skirmishes and guerrilla fighting to the status of campaigns. In the recent Tungting Lake-Ichang fighting, for example, the Japanese almost certainly never intended - as reports from China claimed - to try to take Chungking. Their objective patently was the rich Chinese rice-bowl region around Tungting Lake; they took some of it, sacked it and retired. Yet Chinese communiques interpreted the Japanese retirement as a great victory."

"But the Japanese will never be expelled from China by the present Chinese armies. Hundreds of thousands of these are guerrilla forces owing only slight allegiance to the Chungking government, or are loosely organized followers of some provincial general, fighting chiefly for loot. When active they are a thorn in the flesh of the Japanese, but no more than that."

"The plain truth is that Japan is both a great continental power and a great sea power. She must be beaten on land and at sea. Only if Russia enters the Pacific war can continental power easily be brought to bear against Japan's continental power. At sea the task is certainly ours, and on land we must provide major aid."

"China will play its noble part in this strategy of encirclement. But it would be calamitous if the American people expected China to play a decisive part - the main part."

SEPTEMBER

I find nothing particularly worthy of note in this issue.

OCTOBER

WASHINGTON PLANS ITALY'S ECONOMIC FUTURE by Kingsbury Smith  
(Condensed from The American Mercury)

In this short piece, Kingsbury Smith commits America to a United Nations pool of raw materials from which Italy (and presumably other impoverished countries) would be empowered to draw "not necessarily according to her ability to pay, but according to the reasonable needs of her peaceful economy." Of this alleged plan, Smith goes on to say, "This is one of the most revolutionary ideas that the American planners have in mind for helping the smaller nations of the world. It is designed to fulfill the Atlantic Charter pledge that all nations shall enjoy equal access to raw materials. It is also intended to avert the danger of future wars being precipitated by nations lacking in natural resources."

NOVEMBER

In this, I question whether Mr. Wendell L. Willkie's article BETTER MANAGEMENT, PLEASE, MR. PRESIDENT! is well-calculated for indiscriminate distribution in foreign countries.

DECEMBER

There was no article in this issue which would be particularly objectionable for foreign consumption.

PSF; *Readers Digest folder*  
4-44

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 20, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR

ROBT. E. SHERWOOD:

Go ahead and arrange this as planned by you and, at the same time, please get me copies of the Readers' Digest covering the period of the past year. Will you try and work it out for about the sixth or seventh of February?

~~SECRET~~

January 17, 1944

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT:

From: Robert E. Sherwood

Supplementing previous reports on the Readers' Digest:

On January 14 the New York Times published a story (enclosed herewith) from its New Delhi correspondent to the effect that the Government of India, through its so-called "United Nations Center," has distributed reprints of the Henry J. Taylor article from the Readers' Digest entitled "Boondoggling on a Global Basis." This, as previous reports show, is about as bad for foreign distribution as an article could be since its whole effect is to create doubts as to our national sincerity in this war and particularly on your ability to speak for the American people.

The "United Nations Center" in New Delhi is a sort of propaganda office conducted by the GOI under the guise of representing all the United Nations rather than the British themselves. We have been asked to participate in this Center but have been extremely reluctant to do so since we have felt that if we were to do any propaganda in India at all it must be kept distinctively and independently American and never appear to the people of India to be merely a front for the British.

Immediately after reading the New York Times story I cabled inquiries about it to our chief representative in New Delhi, Ralph Block, who is an exceptionally able, intelligent man. He immediately replied as follows:

"Reur 489. Have verified distribution by United Nations Center of reprint of Taylor article from Readers Digest and have asked for and received copy from them. Have also talked to Till Durden New York Times correspondent who said that he had received copy in the mail and had sent story to New York Times mentioned by you, and that he had assumed I had known about it or would have mentioned it to me. Have brought matter to attention George Merrell American Mission who also received copy but never read it and will discuss matter with me Monday after reading."

Enc.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date JUN 2 19

~~SECRET~~

I have got a plan to whip Readers Digest and DeWitt Wallace in line. This is through young Bill White, who is our kind. How about your writing to Bill White (William L. White, 56 West 12th Street, New York, N.Y.) indicating that you have an idea for a story and would he like to talk to you about it? He will then refer this to his boss and suggest that his boss come along. His boss will say he wasn't invited and Bill can then communicate with you to see if he can bring his boss along. I wouldn't see Wallace without White for fear of repercussions. Bill will do the job.

~~SECRET~~

File PSF. Rem. serv. Digest folder 4-44  
copy given Steve Early

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

July 7, 1944 Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

DECLASSIFIED

DOD DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/59)

The President,

The White House.

Date- 3-17-59

Dear Mr. President:

Signature- Carl S. Spicer

I have your letter of June 3 regarding the Readers' Digest. As you state, it is my desire as it is yours to keep the Army entirely clear of politics. That is the Secretary's policy, and it is being rigidly maintained.

Your letter and the information contained in its enclosure have been carefully considered and the following, I trust, will indicate to you the action that has been taken in regard to the matters mentioned.

Instructions were sent yesterday to the North African Theatre to discontinue publication of the Readers' Digest or any other civilian publication as a supplement to Stars and Stripes and to remove all Readers' Digest material which it is physically possible to remove from issues of Stars and Stripes being currently distributed. These instructions will, I hope, eliminate the Painton article from distribution. They will also put a stop to any proposed publication of Saturday Evening Post articles as a supplement to Stars and Stripes.

According to press dispatches received from Algiers today, Colonel Egbert White has been relieved as officer in charge of Stars and Stripes, Mediterranean edition. Some mistaken practices, it is believed, have been due to his activities.

No one in the War Department had any information as to the statement that officers of the United States Army at Cairo were instructed to take subscriptions to the Readers' Digest but not any other magazine. A cable directing investigation on this point was dispatched; the reply indicated there is no foundation for the statement. If it is possible for your informant to give more specific information, I can have the matter traced and report to you.

The report that six copies of the Readers' Digest are included in each "kit" sent out by Special Services Division is incorrect. The "kit" is sent out monthly. It consists of twenty-eight different magazines selected in accordance with soldier

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

preferences. Extra copies of the most popular magazines are included; there are six copies of Overseas Comics; three copies each of Life, Omnibook, Readers' Digest and Saturday Evening Post, and two copies each of a few others. If the magazine is a weekly, copies of each week's issue are included. Thus, there will be twelve to fifteen copies of Life in each kit (three for each week) as compared with three copies of Readers' Digest. The only instance in which there might be more than the designated number of individual magazines in any kit would be in case of a miscount by the publisher in the number of magazines furnished the assembly point in New York. In this case, the over-count would be distributed equally among the kits as far as it would go.

As you know, the Army's connection with the Arabic edition of the Readers' Digest is only incidental to what has been considered the primary concern of other agencies. The Army does not contribute the paper. It is my understanding that the priority for the paper was obtained through the War Production Board and that the State Department and the Office of War Information have been concerned with the project. If you would like me to go into this matter further, please let me know. It would be appreciated if you would also advise me if there is any additional information you wish in regard to the other questions raised.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. P. Patterson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

ROBERT P. PATTERSON,  
Acting Secretary of War.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

PSF  
Reader's Digest  
Box 177

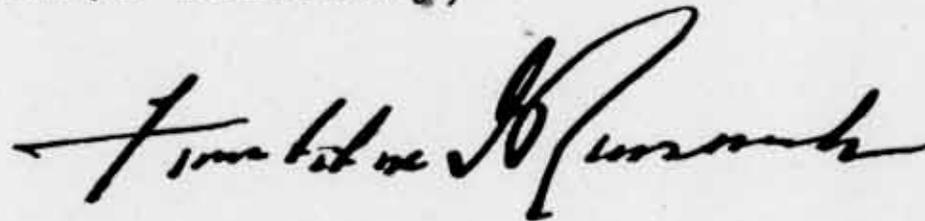
July 3, 1944.

Dear Bob:

The enclosed was the result of an independent survey made for me. I am, of course, worried because I want, as you do, to keep the Army out of politics. If anything is done it should be done quickly because any investigation which takes a month or two will be too late.

When I was in Egypt there was a good deal of trouble, especially about Readers' Digest to which, in some way, we were contributing and carrying a vast amount of paper for publishing their Arabic edition. At that time, I asked for a report but nothing ever happened.

Always sincerely,



Honorable Robert Patterson,  
The Acting Secretary of War,  
Washington, D. C.

Enclosure.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

The Readers' Digest is published in full each month in four weekly installments in the Stars & Stripes, overseas paper circulated among all military personnel. The paper can also be purchased by civilians in England, North Africa and Italy.

The Readers' Digest is deliberately biased against the Administration, and regularly carries a balance of articles on the critical side.

It has also published articles damaging from a military standpoint. The reprinting of the U. S. News story on French bases in the West Indies is one example. It resulted in great harm to our delicate relations with the French Committee. In the July issue is a vicious and false attack on the Allies' handling of civilian problems at Naples. This article, written by a staff correspondent, Frederick Painton, was strongly protested by the War Department PRIOR TO PUBLICATION, and was published despite advice that it was outright Nazi propaganda.

I am now advised that consideration is being given at the War Department to publishing articles from another anti-Administration medium, the Saturday Evening Post, in the Stars & Stripes.

Why should the Stars & Stripes publish this type of prejudicial material? Should it not serve as a NEWSPAPER, giving news of the war and the home front? Magazines, including both the Saturday Evening Post and the Readers' Digest, are available to service men who choose to read them.

I have also been advised that officers of the U.S. Army at Cairo were instructed to take subscriptions to the Readers' Digest, but not any other magazine. It would be well to have an inquiry into the motives and the personalities behind all this, and to get up a report indicating the nature and scope of the army's distribution and use of the magazine.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

P.S. I have just heard that the "kits" regularly distributed by the Special Services Division of Army Service Forces, which include books, magazines and other material, each contain more copies of The Readers' Digest than any other publication. Six copies of the Digest are included in each kit, as against only one or two of Time, Life, Newsweek, etc. How many thousands of these kits are sent out I don't know, but I am told that it is reasonable to assume that every soldier in the army is brought into contact with the Readers' Digest.

5562

July 3, 1944.

Dear Bob:

The enclosed was the result of an independent survey made for me. I am, of course, worried because I want, as you do, to keep the Army out of politics. If anything is done it should be done quickly because any investigation which takes a month or two will be too late.

x300

When I was in Egypt there was a good deal of trouble, especially about Readers' Digest to which, in some way, we were contributing and carrying a vast amount of paper for publishing their Arabic edition. At that time, I asked for a report but nothing ever happened.

x200-3-71

x424

x3500

Always sincerely,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Honorable Robert Patterson,  
The Acting Secretary of War,  
Washington, D. C.

x25

Enclosure.

COPY

*Handwritten mark*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*x seen  
x 1178113*

The Reader's Digest is published in full each month in four weekly installments in the Stars & Stripes, overseas paper circulated among all military personnel. The paper can also be purchased by civilians in England, North Africa and Italy.

The Readers' Digest is deliberately biased against the Administration, and regularly carries a balance of articles on the critical side.

It has also published articles damaging from a military standpoint. The reprinting of the U. S. News story on French bases in the West Indies is one example. *x* It resulted in great harm to our delicate relations with the French Committee. In the July issue is a vicious and false attack on the Allies' handling of civilian problems at Naples. This article, written by a staff correspondent, Frederick Panton, was strongly protested by the War Department BEFORE PUBLICATION, and was published despite advice that it was outright Nazi propaganda. *x*

*x 4453*

I am now advised that consideration is being given at the War Department to publishing articles from another anti-Administration medium, the Saturday Evening Post, in the Stars & Stripes.

Why should the Stars & Stripes publish this type of prejudicial material? Should it not serve as a NEWSPAPER, giving news of the war and the home front? Magazines, including both the Saturday Evening Post and the Readers' Digest, are available to service men who choose to read them.

*x 283-A*

I have also been advised that officers of the U.S. Army at Cairo were instructed to take subscriptions to the Readers' Digest, but not any other magazine. It would be well to have an inquiry into the motives and the personalities behind all this, and to set up a report indicating the nature and scope of the army's distribution and use of the magazine.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

P.S. I have just heard that the "kits" regularly distributed by the Special Services Division of Army Service Forces, which include books, magazines and other material, each contain more copies of The Readers' Digest than any other publication. Six copies of the Digest are included in each kit, as against only one or two of Time, Life, Newsweek, etc. How many thousands of these kits are sent out I don't know, but I am told that it is reasonable to assume that every soldier in the army is brought into contact with the Readers' Digest.

PSF: Readers Digest folder 4-44

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

File  
Bismul

July 10, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

FROM: S.T.E.

You probably have noticed in press dispatches that Col. Egbert White has been relieved from duty as officer in charge of the Stars and Stripes and that another officer is on his way to take over that post and the latter officer has been properly indoctrinated.

The Stars and Stripes has discontinued publication of the supplement which contained the reproductions of the Readers Digest and other American magazines as published by Col. White. This was done at my request by General Surles, who visited Algiers with Secretary Stimson.

The President said  
found — to find some  
now Egbert Whites who can be  
recalled

(copy of memo filed - Gen Carles "W", 4-44)