Over 200 members of the department of state are communists

Politics, Communism

In his speech delivered on February 9, 1950 in Wheeling, West Virginia, Senator Joseph McCarthy declared that over 200 members of the Department of State are communists and claimed that he had a list with each of their names. His speech elevated McCarthy to national prominence, as well as triggered a nationwide paranoia about traitorous communists in the U. S. government.

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In his speech, Joseph McCarthy defines communist nations as those nations that want to dismantle the Christian democracy and substitute it with communistic atheism (Digital History, n. d.). McCarthy declares that Americans will be engulfed by communist forces from within the nation citing our threat lies from the enemies within. He further warns that the U. S. borders will therefore be weakened, leaving the nation vulnerable to be easily uprooted and overtaken by communist nations (Digital History, n. d.). In order to support his claim of how fast communism has grown in such a short period of time, McCarthy states the 400% increase of people in the domination of Soviet Russia (Digital History, n. d.). The goal of including these facts was to attest that the odds are no longer in the favor of the U. S. and that the threat of communism takeover is imminent. In his speech, McCarthy warns that the people of the world will see mass murder, the destruction of defenseless and innocent people, and all of the crime and lack of morals which go with war (Digital History, n. d.).

I do not believe that the McCarthy's charges that communists have infiltrated the U. S. government are accurate. His accusations that more than

200 members of the Department of State are communists were a scare tactic that created a temporary controversy that was short-lived. McCarthy's reputation was discredited when the inconsistencies of how many communists he declared were in the Department of State changed from 57 to 81 and even 10 at one point (History, n. d.). Unfortunately, his strategy was successful at initiating a nationwide hysteria and paranoia that became known as the second Red Scare (History, n. d.).

Replace the word communism in his speech with Islam. Are there similarities between what McCarthy said about communism and what has been said about Islam, particularly shortly after the attacks of 9/11?

When replacing the word communism with Islam in McCarthy's speech, there is clear evidence of similarities. After the tragedy of 9/11, there was nationwide state of hysteria and paranoia in the U. S., just as there was when McCarthy instilled the fear of communists present among the members of the U. S. Department of State. There was a presence of heightened suspicion and fear of Muslims or anyone who looked Arab, referring to their skin color or clothing. The term Islamophobia has been coined as early as the 1990s but was strongly present among Americans following 9/11 (Samari, 2016). Samari (2016) reports that over 60% of Americans reported unfavorable attitudes towards Muslims after 9/11. Unfortunately, after the attack on 9/11, associating Muslims with terrorists has become prevalent in American society. This association with terrorists has led to countless incidents of assaults on Muslims or anyone who appeared to be Muslim, as well as raids

on mosques and other hate crimes that began immediately after 9/11 and are still occurring today (Clay, 2017).

I do not believe that it is valid to draw comparisons between anti-communist rhetoric and anti-Islam rhetoric. I do believe that the anti-Islam rhetoric that is present today is far worse than the anti-communist rhetoric in the past. Anti-Muslim and Islamophobia attacks have been present in many elections around the country. There have been multiple campaigns across the U. S. where candidates, primarily Republicans, have engaged in anti-Islam campaign attacks. These campaign attacks take it as far as calling for Muslims to be denied basic rights or deny Islam as a religion. Our current president, Donald Trump, has publicly warned of the dangers of radical Islamic terrorism, and has slammed Obama and other Democrats for not acknowledging the threat and taking appropriate action (Hilal, 2017). From Muslim bans to countless wars in the Middle East, there is a new era of undisguised Islamophobia, as well as extreme and violent rhetoric about and towards Muslims, present in today's American politics and society (Hilal, 2017).