Joseph McCarthy's Speech on Communists in the U.S. State Senator McCarthy spent almost five years trying in vain to expose communists and other left-wing "loyalty risks" in the U.S. government. In the hyper-suspicious environment of the early 1950s, McCarthy accused the State Department of being infested with communists. His speech on February 9, 1950, was a major public disclosure of a list of 205 alleged communists in the State Department. McCarthy's claims were based on unverified and often anecdotal evidence, and his accusations were often baseless. The speech was a turning point in McCarthy's career and helped to launch the McCarthyism and the Red Scare movement. Although McCarthy was eventually discredited, his accusations and the fear they created had a lasting impact on American society and politics.