PRESIDENT FORMS TOP NEWS AGENCY; ELMER DAVIS CHIEF

Office of War Information Gets
Control of Official Publicity
but Not of Censorship

OTHER SERVICES ASSORBED

Director Will Decide on Policy for Matter to All World
Except Latin America

The text of the President’s order appears on Page 31.

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PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT today named Elmer Davis, nationally known radio news commentator, as his top newsmaker, as the new head of a new Office of War Information, with authority over all distribution of official news and propaganda within the United States, except for Latin America, abroad.

The President by executive order put Davis and two additional White House workers under the authority of Mr. Davis, who will apply his influence in orders only from the Chief Executive himself. Three “over-all” Federal Information Service reports of a fourth will be absorbed by the Office of War Information.

Has Full Power Over Policies

Mr. Davis will have full power, subject to Mr. Roosevelt’s supervision, to set policies for and to reduce or expand the public relations divisions of all government departments and agencies, except the Office of Inter-American Affairs.

In many respects Mr. Davis will have far greater authority than did George Creel, Chairman of the WAR INFORMATION COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION in World War I. Mr. Davis will act, however, with power over censorship as well as news and propaganda, as did Mr. Creel. He is in instructed to cooperate closely with Byron Price, director of the Office of Censorship, War Information, of facilitating the prompt and full dissemination of all official and public information which will not give aid to the enemy.

In giving Mr. Davis the power to decide what shall be made public by the Government, the President stated that it was “the right of the American people and of all other peoples opposing aggression to know all information which will not give aid to the enemy.”

The executive order consolidated in the new office the News Bureau and Information Division of the Navy Department; the Office of Censorship, War Information; the Office of Emergency Management, which has controlled the press relations of such agencies as the War Information Commission, the Office of Price Administration and the Office of Price Stabilization; the Office of the Coordinator of Information Service of the Office of Coordinator of Information, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, and the Office of Strategic Services.

Strategic Services Unit Formed

The intelligence and other special units which are now under the Office of Strategic Services will be directly connected with publicity which have been under the control of William J. Donovan, Coordinator of Information, will be transferred to the Office of Strategic Services under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This new agency is now to be headed by Mr. Davis, and the Office of the Coordinator of Information will be abolished.

A new COMMISSION ON WAR INFORMATION will be established.

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tion Policy will "formulate basic policies and plans on war information" and advise Mr. Davis. The Executive Order states that Mr. Davis has the final decision. On this committee will be representatives of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy; the Joint Psychological Warfare Committee; the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and such other agencies as Mr. Davis, with the approval of the President, may determine.

The President emphasized that Mr. Davis and Mr. Price, as Chief Censor, "shall collaborate in the performance of their respective functions for the purpose of facilitating the prompt and full dissemination of all available information which will not give aid to the enemy."

Two Divisions In New Office

The Office of War Information will be divided into two main divisions. The first will concentrate on dissemination of information within the United States and the second on foreign news and propaganda. Mr. Davis will have an administrative officer yet to be designated.

The President decreed that, in accordance with his own policies, Mr. Davis would have authority to issue "binding" directives to all departments and agencies of the government with respect to their informational services.

"He will have full authority to eliminate all overlapping and duplication and to discontinue in any department any informational activity which is not necessary or useful to the war effort," a White House statement said.

"While the actual information service of the different departments and agencies will continue to remain with such departments and agencies, their informational activities must conform to the directives issued by the Director of the Office of War Information."

Mr. Davis will be chairman of the Committee on War Information Policy. While this body will formulate policies, "the director, after consultation with such committee, will have full power as the executive head of the new agency."

Mr. Davis has power, however, to do as he pleases. The order states that "the director may exercise his powers, authorities and duties through such officials or agencies and in such manner as he may determine."

Powers of the Director

The director was authorized specifically to do these things:

1. Use the press, radio and motion pictures for informational programs designed to form an intelligent public understanding of the war and of government programs.

2. Coordinate Federal activities to assure "an accurate and consist-