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Perfectly, Perfectly Clear

By Herbert Block

During the darkest days of World War II, Winston Churchill delivered a one-paragraph message to the people, which began: "The news from France is very bad. . . ."

He could have done it differently. He could have said: "My fellow citizens: As your Prime Minister—and Prime Minister of *all* the people—I want to talk to you tonight, in my most sincere manner, about a problem which faces me as the man who holds the highest office in our land. I refer to the stories and speculations and rumors printed in the newspapers and broadcast over the air waves which would have you believe that conditions are not good, that we are in deep trouble, that all sorts of terrible things are happening. Now I respect the right of newsmen and commentators to have their say—false and vicious and slanderous as the things they say so often are. And though it is not the politically safe or easy thing to do, let me say candidly and clearly that I would not pretend for a moment that everything is absolutely perfect in this great country or this great world of ours. But I think you are probably as tired as I am of hearing our country and our allies run down by prejudiced people who do not represent the majority of our splendid citizens, and who never tell you about all the good things that are happening. As you know, it is my policy to act boldly and decisively in each and all of my many crises. Accordingly, I am now making to you an unprecedented announcement. This morning I appointed, for the first time in our nation's history, a Good News Commission. This commission, which will have the full power of the nation's law-enforcement agencies behind it, will report directly to me. I will then. . . ."

But enough.

The news from Washington is bad.

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Herbert Block (Herblock) is cartoonist for The Washington Post. This is the foreword from his latest book, "Herblock's State of the Union."