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January 22, 1944

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STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

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The President today, by Executive Order, set up a War Refugee Board consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War, to take action for the immediate rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe -- racial, religious or political -- all civilian victims of enemy savagery.

The Executive Order declares that "it is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war".

The Board is charged with direct responsibility to the President in seeing that the announced policy is carried out. The President indicated that while he would look directly to the Board for the successful execution of this policy, the Board, of course, would cooperate fully with the Intergovernmental Committee, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and other interested international organizations.

The President stated that he expected to obtain the cooperation of all members of the United Nations and other foreign governments in carrying out this difficult but important task. He stated that the existing facilities of the State, Treasury and War Departments would be employed to aid Axis victims to the fullest extent possible. He stressed that it was urgent that action be taken at once to forestall the plan of the Nazis to exterminate all the Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe.

It will be the duty of a full-time Executive Director of the Board to arrange for the prompt execution of the plans and programs developed and the measures inaugurated by the Board.

The Executive Order follows:

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