

March 29, 1962
Memorandum from Howland H. Sargeant to the
[AMCOMLIB] Board of Trustees

Citation:

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Summary:

AMCOMLIB President Sargeant forwards to CIA a copy of Dupuy's Memorandum of March 27, 1962, and stresses the importance of including preparations for publicity in taking policy decisions.

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TO: BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FROM: HOWLAND H. SARGEANT *HHS*

DATE: March 29, 1962

I attach a memo that Catharine Dupuy has sent to me under date of March 27th and I know she will make her views clear in the course of her visit with you during the last part of this week. I just want to add that in discussing this matter with Cord, the main point I was trying to make was the difficulty of using effectively the instruments of persuasion that exist unless policy makers and decision makers come to understand the importance of making adequate provisions to assure a maximum impact from these instruments. This is a hardy perennial with me. I don't know how many times in the days when I was responsible for the Voice of America I was engaged in making a hard plea for this kind of recognition and treatment of the official government radio. A few times I succeeded -- more often, I failed. But I have never given up trying to keep in front of policy makers these considerations that really determine in the long run whether we get maximum effectiveness or not from these programs of persuasion.

To quote one of my favorite authors:

"We best persuade abroad when we take the right action as part of a grand strategy -- and do everything we can to explain the action and to gain acceptance for the meaning we intended to give to our action, since the psychological response to any action is not automatic."

Attach.

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AMCONFIDENTIALMEMORANDUM

March 27, 1962

TO: Mr. Sargeant

FROM: Catharine Dupuy *CD*

SUBJECT: Memorandum for the Record, March 20, 1962

I am very much disturbed by the understanding reflected in the referenced memorandum that my complaints or criticisms were directed against the immediate contacts in my efforts to gain information and background materials for our coverage of U.S. resumption of nuclear testing.

In my earlier memorandum I tried very specifically to make it clear that I felt that they had done everything they could to assist RL in proper handling of the story. The main point of the memorandum was to bring out the fact that the decisions involved lay higher up and were not made with a full appreciation of the propaganda and public information problems involved. Thus, I am not surprised that VOA suffered from the same handicaps.

Frustration is an inevitable part of the business we are in and something all of us have learned to put up with every day. If it were merely my personal frustration that had been involved, there would certainly have been no reason to take the time to write a memorandum of record, and I would scarcely have bothered.

The whole point of my memorandum was that this was a signal instance of a problem we face quite regularly, one which is shared to varying degrees by others involved in information activities. It would seem to be a meaningful instance to use in our efforts to increase the awareness of policy makers of the importance of information activities and the need to make adequate provisions for those activities in high-level planning. I appreciate the fact that in this case the decisions were made on a very high level. If it is not possible to bring the problems to the attention of the decision makers at this moment, I would hope that we might be able to find an opportune time, or at least have the facts marshalled to present our point of view convincingly when we see another difficulty arising.

Since these are real and serious problems for our information efforts, it seemed to me worthwhile to bring them to the attention of those concerned. I would like to assure you once more that it was not at all stimulated by pique or lack of appreciation for the strenuous efforts which were made to assist us, nor from pure frustration, which

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I have learned to live with long since. If my memorandum is understood on those grounds it has certainly failed in its purpose.