

June 2, 1952

Office of Policy Coordination Requests State Department Views on Radio Liberty

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Summary:

Frank Wisner in a memorandum to Robert Joyce requests State Department views on policy guidance for Radio Liberty broadcasts, to be organized by the Russian émigré Political Center and adhering to a list of 21 prescriptions and prohibitions.

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APPROVED FOR RELEASE MARCH 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: ROBERT P. JOYCE
Policy Planning Staff
Department of State

SUBJECT: Request for Department of State Comments on Proposed
Basic Policy Guidance Paper for the Russian Language
Radio of the American Committee for the Liberation of
the Peoples of Russia, Inc.

1. Attached hereto is a paper which contains the proposed basic policy guidance for the Russian language radio that is in preparation as authorized under the project supporting the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, Inc.

2. As affirmed at recent meetings between responsible officials of this Agency and the Department of State, most of which were attended by you, this Russian language radio will go on the air only in the event valid emigre sponsorship has been established.

3. [redacted]
[redacted] to the European Representative of the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, Inc.

4. Your Department's comments on the attached paper are requested at the earliest practicable moment.

[redacted signature box]

Assistant Director for
Policy Coordination

1 Attachment

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1. The objective of the radio broadcasts, supported by the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, is to accentuate the disaffection of the peoples of the Soviet Union for their regime, and to encourage defection of occupation personnel, by enabling representatives of the peoples of the Soviet Union who enjoy freedom abroad to propagandize the population of the Soviet Union in terms denied "official" American radio activities. A Political Center qualified to assume leadership of the exiled peoples of the Soviet Union against their rulers is now in the process of organization. In the event that the Political Center is not established prior to the inauguration of radio broadcasts, broadcasts will be made in the name of a joint commission of Great Russian and non-Russian nationality groups. The organization in whose name broadcasts will be made will be a genuine creation of the Soviet emigration. The function of the American Committee is (1) to assist the Soviet refugees to create an effective organization of leadership, as it has been doing, and (2) to make available to them the means, radio facilities, and the like, with which they can communicate with their fellow countrymen behind the Iron Curtain.

2. The broadcasts supported by the American Committee are to be Russian broadcasts, not American broadcasts. They are to serve the interests of the Russian liberation movement, (not the "official" interests of the United States.) There will be no duplication of or competition with the broadcasts of VOA. The broadcasts will not aim to explain or defend American policy, propagate American ideas, extol the American way of life, build up American prestige, play American music, or in other ways encroach upon the field of activities of VOA. The radio of the American Committee is an organ of the peoples of the Soviet Union, as represented by a grouping of Soviet refugees who have associated themselves to assist in the struggle of their fellow countrymen against Communist oppression.

3. The radio of the American Committee will be a guest on German territory. In consideration of Western Germany as a sovereign host country, the radio will make every effort not to prejudice German security, and, indirectly, American interests therein. It will avoid the question of destroying or violently overthrowing the Soviet Government, and will direct the brunt of its attack against the Bolshevik party rather than the Soviet Government as such or its specific representatives.

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4. The broadcasts will be directed in the beginning primarily to the Soviet armed forces and the Soviet civilian personnel in the occupied zones of Germany, Austria, and the satellite countries. The technical facilities have been acquired and established to reach not only this pilot target audience but to reach well into the USSR itself. A Soviet citizen will risk his liberty and possibly his life in listening to these broadcasts, and the contents must be such as to justify his taking this risk. So that the programs may attain their definite objectives and every idea serve a definite purpose, a distillate of the best available thinking on such programming forms Attachment "A", and will be used for program guidance. Attachment "B" lists those whose careful consideration and thought form Attachment "A". This list does not include the names of those officers of the Department of State responsible for USSR affairs, whose knowledge and ideas in coordination with this memorandum will, it is assumed, form the ultimate guidance. Attachment "C" is the organizational and control concept.

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PROGRAM GUIDANCE

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With regard to the contents of the broadcasts, the following represents the considerations of the most knowledgeable individuals available, including recent Soviet defectors.

1. Omission of Identification Signals

Such signals indicate to the Soviets that we are initiating broadcasting, and allow them quickly to narrow jamming on our wave length; they also may give the listener away. Signals thus lose their primary purpose of indicating to the audience the source of the program. The listener soon comes to recognize the voice of the announcer, making signals unnecessary. Although a recognizable voice also places the listener in some danger, it is still less dangerous to him than identifiable signals. It is, in addition, an important encouragement psychologically.

2. Omission of Recognizable Music Themes

The same restrictions apply to musical themes as to identification signals. Their use would make listening even more insecure.

3. Length of Programs and Items

The length of programs will be limited to 15 minutes which should be repeated over a 24-hour period. The items will be short and factual.

4. Music

Music is generally useless for the short propaganda programs envisaged. The music which the Soviets broadcast is equally as good or better than any which we could produce at this station. Unless it serves a direct propaganda purpose its use will be limited to background for certain dramatic features or for transition.

5. Exposition of News and Features

News is of first consideration in programming. The peoples of the Soviet Union are vitally interested in hearing the truth and in learning of events about which they hear nothing but which affects them personally. Straight news, news analysis, and news commentary will occupy some 70 per cent of total broadcast time, leaving the remainder to features. By presenting certain news items which the Soviet listener can easily verify, his confidence is gained, and it lends credence to other news items.

6. Arrangements: Interspersing

Programs will be rebroadcast continuously during the day. News broadcasts will contain 30-40 per cent straight news items, with the remainder commentary and analysis. News broadcasts will be interspersed

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with feature programs, but repeated more often than features. Best schedule of broadcast seems to be 6:00-7:00 a.m., 2:45-6:00 p.m., 9:00-11:30 p.m., local time.

7. Type of News: "Hot News"; Refutation of Soviet News

News will be concerned with major world events which can be shown to have a real and definite interest to our target audience. Regional news items will be stressed if they tangibly can be shown to affect the present or future of our target audience. "Hot News" is good on occasions, but not so important as to an audience which has continual and almost immediate access to news events as they occur. Soviet news will be refuted at the very earliest moment if blatantly untrue. The truth is of utmost importance in straight news items, which must be positive, not refutery and not dependent upon Soviet news items. They must be timely, however, in following Soviet emphases in newscasting even though the initiative remains with our station.

8. Information Denied Soviets

Such information will be supplied to our station, but will not be broadcast braggingly in terms of the democratic world, or in scattered sequence with no seeming purpose in mind.

9. Type and Composition of Features

Features will be dynamic and positive in their approach, and refutery only in rare instances. The voice of the announcers, as well, will be strong, authoritative, knowing. The features will employ material with which the audience is at least partially familiar: Soviet history, reversals in Soviet policy and the Communist Line; references to forced labor camps, purges; state controls over peasants and workers, and over science and the arts; are important composites. The questions to be left in the soldier's mind are: "Why am I here? Why are my living conditions and those of the people at home so poor? Where is our personal liberty?" Program material must make him think and lead him to discuss what he has heard with his comrades. Timeliness is a most important consideration.

10. Relevant Themes

Ideological themes are to be avoided unless accompanied by concrete examples to prove the subject theme.

Religion has basically a great influence upon most Russians, and will be mentioned in light of past and present Soviet attempts to restrict worship. Religion will not be a dominant theme, however, in the programming and will not be stressed.

Economic themes

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Economic themes are of great interest. Listeners are particularly interested in living conditions in the West, and in Western technical advances. They want to familiarize themselves with the peoples and ways of life in the democratic world. When used, such themes will be made completely believable and real to the audience; not of coming from an unattainable world, but from one close to hand, which understands their plight and is understandable to them - that which the Soviet people could enjoy were it not for the Soviet regime.

11. War/Peace: Rebuttal of Soviet Peace Offensive

The question of War and Peace is naturally of great interest to the audience. It will not be approached with vitriolic harangues against the Soviet preparation for war, but rather by stating, simply and truthfully, the reasons for rearming of the West and the necessity for protecting the free world's systems from Stalinist control. By all means, the Soviet peace offensive will be debunked but in terms which show up its falseness, not by mud-slinging or invective. There will be no discussion of the destruction or violent overthrow of the Soviet government.

12. Freedom Campaign

There will be a constant and clear delineation between the Russian peoples and the Communist bosses in the Kremlin, and a distinction between the Soviet leadership and such groups as the Red Army, the security police, and the rank and file of the Communist party.

No freedom campaign will discuss open revolt, rather ways of passively sabotaging the regime, and, at the proper stage, the encouragement of defection.

13. Interpretation of the West

The West will be presented to Soviet listeners not as an entity of which they have little understanding. The feelings of the Soviet peoples towards the West must not include jealousy. They must be shown that the attainments of the West have been accomplished by the concerted efforts of free peoples and that the Russian peoples, too, can accomplish the same once freed from the Bolshevik yoke - that they, as free men, can accomplish as much and more in Russia.

14. Interpretation of Russia

Comparisons will be drawn between the free world and the USSR, emphasizing the differences in relationships between government and people. Whereas Stalin and the Politburo emphasize the state over the individual, this radio will accentuate the importance of human rights, liberty, and the ability of a person to determine his own future - these general themes solidly backed by concrete examples close to the experience of each listener. This material on Russia must be exact and true.

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15. Humor

Programs will be founded on a more solid and dignified style employing sarcasm and irony when appropriate. Humor, when used, will stress the political anecdote.

16. Attacks on Stalin: Politburo

The peoples of the Soviet Union who hate the Soviet regime associate Stalin with all the evils they have suffered, as they do to the Politburo. The communist system in general will not be attacked, since practically everyone in the USSR is forced to be part of the communist system whether he likes it or not. The top men, the bosses whom all the Soviet people will recognize, are vulnerable to attack, but not to vitriolic personal vilification.

17. Analysis: Disaffection

There will be few theoretical analyses of past Soviet actions. Rather, the facts will be presented to speak for themselves. Future moves of the Stalinist regime will depend upon its past pattern of action.

Disaffection from the Soviet regime will be encouraged. The listeners must know why the Soviet regime must have its concentration camps, its horrors, its completely uncaring attitude for the Russian people in order to perpetuate itself. The Soviet audience knows of these horrors but must learn the Soviet regime's responsibility for such things. All to separate the people from the regime will be done.

18. Acknowledgment of Past Mistakes in Policy and Strategy

This radio will not be defensive, but will remain forceful, dynamic, positive in all broadcasts. The Soviets have made equally as many, if not more, mistakes than the West, and their mistakes will be attacked. Past mistakes of the Western world due to lack of understanding of the Soviet, particularly the forced repatriation of former Soviet citizens to the USSR following World War II, must be acknowledged as something mistakenly done in a spirit of cooperation with war-time allies. The Russian peoples themselves were originally misled by the Bolsheviks, after all. General Vlassov will not be mentioned due to the controversial nature of his name and symbol.

19. Defection

Defection will be encouraged by direct as well as indirect appeal. Directly they will be advised what not to do as well as what to do in order successfully to defect.

An assurance of friendly reception, care, and aid in successfully integrating the defectors into the Western economy and cases of successful defection will be included in the broadcasts.

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Tensions between the regime and the people will be encouraged.
Nationality tensions and separatism will not be encouraged.

21. Additional "Points"

1. The nationality question will not be touched.
2. There will be no American type of program. It will be completely Russian in approach and content.
3. There will be no promises, claims, or offers made unless they can be fully substantiated.
4. The East-West, two-camp, approach will be avoided where possible.
5. There will be no threats.
6. The radio will never speak in the name of any one emigre group, or discuss the political aims or aspirations of any emigre group or groups.
7. The radio will not discuss the future geographical or political framework of the USSR.

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