

November 3, 1956

Comprehensive Guidance for Radio Free Europe Broadcasts

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Summary:

An authoritative, cautionary US government guidance, approved by Allen Dulles and Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert Murphy, conveyed to the Free Europe Committee that afternoon.

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Approved by G.W.D. +
D.H. Murphy, State.

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

Radio Free Europe

1. General

While Soviet troops remain in Hungary, RFE should say nothing which would provide an excuse for Soviet military repression and a resulting blood-bath or provide a pretext for a Soviet charge of U.S. intervention in Hungary during consideration of the issue in the UN of Soviet withdrawal. This applies not only to broadcasts to Hungary but to all targets of RFE. RFE must exercise particular restraint and responsibility during this difficult period.

2. Hungary

Events of the last two weeks have markedly changed the role of the Voice of Free Hungary, and the concepts of a radio broadcasting in opposition to the regime and as representing a peoples opposition are no longer valid. The objectives of RFE in Hungary should be to support the major objectives being proclaimed by the present Hungarian Government: the withdrawal of Soviet troops and UN action against the maintenance of Soviet troops in Hungary; free elections participated in by all political parties; the freedom of the press; dissolution of the AVH; the withdrawal of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact. These should be presented not as ideas of RFE but as the objectives demanded by the patriots and the present Nagy Government. RFE should refrain from giving tactical advice as to how these objectives should be accomplished. There is already evidence of some resentment among the patriots against what they consider to be gratuitous guidance from those outside.

At the present time when various Patriot radios and groups are taking different positions with respect to the Nagy Government, RFE should not take

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a position for or against this government, nor for or against various patriot groups. RFE should rather emphasize the need for the preservation of order and the need for unity among the Patriots in working in support of an interim caretaker government until genuinely free elections can be held.

RFE should fully report the support of the free world for the Hungarian peoples fight for freedom. The statements of President Eisenhower, Secretary Dulles and others; the twenty million dollar U.S. food and assistance offer; the action in the U.N. on the question of Soviet troops; guarantee of Hungary's neutrality and related questions; other actions of the free world to furnish medical supplies, food, and other assistance to the Hungarian people; the solidarity of youth, students, workers, peasants, women, political leaders and others in the free world with their counterparts in Hungary.

RFE should continue and possibly increase its broadcasts in Russian to Soviet troops using factual news and reports indicating the basic solidarity with and sympathy of the Soviet troops for the Hungarian workers, students and peasants, and their struggle for a free and decent life.

In cross-reporting to other Satellites, care should be taken to report the news factually with a minimum of polemics. The political commentary should be consistent with the above.

Finally, it should be stressed that we believe that RFE can make its greatest impact as a source of news. In commentaries, indirection should be used. RFE editors should be particularly careful during this difficult period not to assume the role of lecturing or giving tactical direction or advice to the people of any of the target countries.

3. Poland

The guidance already provided on Poland by Sponsor is still considered applicable. (The Polish Desk seems to have been carrying out this guidance

admirably.) In the case of Poland the role of RFE also has changed greatly, but not to the extent of Hungary. However, even in Poland, RFE should no longer take the role of a voice of opposition to the present regime, nor should it appear to be the spokesman of a peoples opposition. The role of RFE/Poland should be generally factual and not hostile to the present Polish regime, and it should note with approval the carrying out of programs for greater liberalization and greater freedom. Thus RFE broadcasting should be particularly careful to avoid any broadcasts which might appear to incite revolution.

4. Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Bulgaria

Since the thaw has progressed the least in these three countries, RFE's policy should remain essentially the same as that developed jointly with Sponsor last summer. (See August 7, 1956, paper "Agreed Policy Governing FEC Operations".) RFE in these countries can and should still assume the role of an opposition radio, speaking for a people's opposition. It is recommended however, that the proportion of news to commentary be increased in broadcasts to these three countries.