

## **November 26, 1956**

### **Review of Radio Free Europe Hungarian Broadcasts**

#### **Citation:**

"Review of Radio Free Europe Hungarian Broadcasts", November 26, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWIHP by A. Ross Johnson. Cited in his book Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, CIA mandatory declassification review document number MORI 1376098, 1376099.

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#### **Summary:**

Cord Meyer informs Allen Dulles that Radio Free Europe (RFE) Hungarian broadcasts did not incite revolution or promise outside military intervention. He encloses his memorandum of November 16, 1956, on monitoring and program control of RFE and RL.

#### **Credits:**

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#### **Original Language:**

English

#### **Contents:**

Original Scan

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**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Director of Central Intelligence  
**VIA:** Inspector General  
**SUBJECT:** Radio Free Europe - Review of Broadcast Policy and Content

This memorandum is for information only.

1. Attached as Tab A is a statement of present broadcast policy and content review procedures in effect within RFE. Attached as Tab B is a memorandum transmitted by RFE to the President concerning RFE broadcasts during the period October 23 to November 4. This memorandum is specifically responsive to allegations made by various people to the effect that RFE incited the Hungarian people to revolution and/or promised or implied outside military intervention during the revolution.

2. Based on a review of some thirty political commentaries in English translation, we believe that:

- a. RFE broadcasts were generally consistent with U.S. policy toward the satellites;
- b. RFE did not incite the Hungarian people to revolution;
- c. RFE did not directly or by implication offer hope that outside military assistance would be forthcoming to the Hungarian patriots;
- d. RFE went somewhat beyond specific guidance in identifying itself with certain patriot aims and in offering tactical advice to the patriots. We did not consider these significant policy violations.

3. We are arranging for the review by Hungarian language specialists of tapes of actual broadcasts during this period. We estimate that this will require some thirty days to complete once qualified personnel are made available. These people have been requested.

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4. Also, we are actively engaged in determining what would be required to conduct post script spot checks of active language scripts to all five satellite outposts. From information at hand, we do not believe that it is necessary or feasible to post script all broadcasts to all target countries. We are certain that it is not feasible to review all scripts prior to broadcasting.

5. Recent events in the Soviet Bloc profoundly affect not only Radio Free Europe but all RSO operations. This requires a reexamination of this entire activity. We will come forward shortly with our proposals for revisions in both the policy and operational fields.

**RODNEY W. JONES, Jr.**  
Chief

International Organizations Division

Attachments (2)

- Tab A, Monitoring and Program Control of RFE, November 17, 1956
- Tab B, Radio Free Europe, 26 November 1956

IO/ [ ] (26 November 1956)

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NOV 28 1956

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence**

**WFA: Acting Deputy Director (Plans)  
Chief, Psychological and Paramilitary Staff**

**SUBJECT: Monitoring and Program Control of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty**

This memorandum is in response to your request for information on the methods of monitoring and program control applied to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

**1. Radio Free Europe**

a. RFE strategic policy is based on a policy handbook written in 1952 and supplemented by twenty-seven strategic guidances on major events as they arose. The handbook and all of the guidances were reviewed and approved in Washington.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] the same policy handbook has been revised [Redacted] but the revision has not yet been approved by the agreement of the Free Europe Committee, General Goltzberger.

b. Daily tactical policy originates primarily in Berlin. All political communications concerning Berlin inside the target countries and the USSR are prepared in Berlin. The policy guidance for these communications is provided by the Political Advisor's office in separate daily meetings with each of the country desks. No written statement of the daily guidance is prepared.

c. Most international commentary and news of America is written in New York. A daily international commentary paper is prepared by the New York policy staff, copies of which are sent to Washington. In addition to the foregoing policy publications, guidances are occasionally sent from Washington to New York, particularly at times of major developments in the target area. These guidances are sometimes sent in written memoranda, but more often, because of the need for speed, they are forwarded directly by telephone to New York.

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2. Radio Liberation

a. To insure adherence to policy guidelines and editorial accuracy, Radio Liberation records all of its programs and subjects them to careful review by U.S. supervisory personnel. A policy manual prepared in 1958 provides the basic strategic guidelines for Radio Liberation broadcasts. Day-to-day tactical guidelines is provided by the U.S. Advisory Staff in Munich and New York.

b. The machinery for program content control works approximately as follows:

(1) Finished scripts written by the line language desks first are scrutinized by the American advisors responsible for the output of the respective desks. These programs must be reviewed without approval of the advisors.

(2) Once the programs are reviewed, they are played back for checking against the approved scripts before being transmitted to the transmitter station by landline.

(3) The transmission of these reviewed programs to the transmitter station is monitored by an expert linguist to be sure that the final recorded version matches the approved written script.

(4) Finally, a permanent record of all broadcasts is maintained for any post-broadcast checking that might be required.

c. Thus, actual day-to-day program output is supervised and controlled by three different stages of pre-broadcast editing and review. For the first two weeks of the current edition, this control was actually exercised by a representative of the President of the American Committee for Liberation in New York. That Radio Liberation broadcast its original material, exclusive of news and world news reviews, without prior policy review in New York. During the period in October through 5 November, the only material originated by Radio Liberation itself which was

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approved for broadcast consisted of "don't shoot" messages addressed to Soviet troops in Hungary. After 5 November, Radio Liberation was permitted to resume its normal program originations, but under the added personal supervision of the President's Deputy in Europe.

CORD MEYER, JR.  
Chief  
International Organizations Division

IC/ [redacted] (16 November 1956)

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