

September 1, 1957

Policy Guidance for Radio Free Europe on UN Special Session on Hungary

Citation:

"Policy Guidance for Radio Free Europe on UN Special Session on Hungary", September 1, 1957, 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 1426273.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115017>

Summary:

International Organizations Division drafts policy guidelines for RFE broadcasts

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

9.
[copy] 1957

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAR 2007

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RFE/UN Special Session on Hungary

A. Basic premises:

Despite regime and Soviet bloc efforts to attribute the Oct-Nov. 1956 events to counter-revolution inspired by fascists and western imperialists, the vast majority of Hungarians know that it was a genuine revolution against the Communist system and Soviet domination, participated in by the entire Hungarian people.

Hungarians are conditioned to expect little tangible result from the United Nations session. They know the line their representatives will take at the session and that they will be aided and abetted by other Soviet orbit nations. They probably expect, in a general way, that the free nations will condemn the Soviets and their own regime. They will watch with special interest the positions taken by Poland and Yugoslavia. They will have almost equal interest in the positions taken by the neutralist Africa/Asia countries.

Hungarians, by and large, will be interested in the United Nations verdict on their revolution and its suppression by the Soviets. But this interest is likely to be less acute than their interest in any indications of action by the United Nations to recognize the legitimacy of the Revolution's aims, especially any action proposed in the United Nations to take any steps which might alleviate the present repression in Hungary and find means by which Hungarian aspirations can be realized. Despite their bitter disappointment that the west failed to provide material support to them at the time of the revolution, they cling to hope that somehow the free nations can help them.

B. Basic broadcasting policy:

To provide the true and unvarnished facts before, during and after the UN session. Commentary will be at all times unemotional and it will deal with the facts, not speculation about what is fact and what is falsehood. It should be anticipated that the debate in the special session will produce many dramatic condemnations of the USSR and the Hungarian regime, and that these will be accompanied by proposals for drastic action. Broadcasts will treat the condemnations and proposals with great care, treating them as evidence of free world reaction to the Soviet and regime brutality, but avoiding any statements or implications that they presage action by the United Nations.

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G. Guidance:

Before the convening of the special session on 10 September, RFE's objectives will be:

1. To inform Hungarians that the forthcoming UN session has focused the attention of the people of the entire world on Hungary. Not only the free world but the people of other captive nations to whom the facts have been made available in spite of the efforts of the Soviets and their regime to distort the facts.
2. To report objectively on the public statements of leading free world figures with respect to the coming session, laying emphasis wherever possible on the statements which concern continuing interest in the welfare of Hungarians and the need for continuing examination of the treatment accorded Hungarians by their regime.
3. To explain the background and nature of the Special UN Committee, and how it went about its work, emphasizing the fact of its membership being representative of small nations from all parts of the world and the unanimity of their findings.
4. To explain that the purpose of the special session is not only to provide a means whereby the entire United Nations may take official cognizance of the report of the Committee which it appointed, but possibly to consider means whereby the United Nations may take some peaceful action to alleviate the conditions which gave rise to the revolution in Hungary and which continue to exist even in the face of world condemnation.
5. To explain to Hungarians that although the official Hungarian representation at the UN session will be made up of men who can be expected only to parrot the Soviet line, the free world is determined to recognize the truth, and its representatives are determined that the truth about the Revolution and about present conditions in Hungary will receive a thorough airing.
6. To assure Hungarians that RFE will do all in its power to keep them currently informed on the special session and that it will report factually on the position taken by the Hungarian regime and the Soviets in order that Hungarians may themselves judge the adequacy and truthfulness of the position which will be taken by the regime and the USSR.
7. Without predicting or prejudging the issues which will be debated at the session, to point to the indications that the Soviet-orbit will attempt to obscure the real issue of

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Hungary by the injection of other issues such as Algeria and the Middle East, which are separate and distinct issues.

During the special session RFE's objectives will be:

8. To meet its commitment to full and objective reporting as promised in item 6 above.
9. To provide full coverage of free world press reactions and the public statements of world figures.

RFE objectives after the session will depend, of course, on the outcome. No matter what the outcome may be, however, RFE has the continuing task of factual and objective reporting.

The foregoing pertains especially to broadcasts to Hungary. It should be applied with equal force to RFE broadcasts to other target countries.

D. Background:

RFE broadcasts to its target countries cannot be expected to have great effect on the outcome of the special session. It is important, however, that RFE directors have information on the plans and aims of the western nations if RFE is to discharge its responsibility of providing its target audiences with full and intelligent reporting, and its responsibility as an unofficial spokesman of the West. As of this time the specific tactics are not known; details depend on the outcome of negotiations between the sponsor and other interested areas toward the development of a unanimous position. Some general plans may be stated with reliability at this time:

1. To gain maximum exploitation of the Special Committee's report by the adoption of a resolution that will place the weight of world opinion, particularly Asian opinion, behind the Committee's report as a point-by-point refutation of the Soviet version of the events in Hungary in October-November, 1956, to the end that the report and its conclusions will stand as a damaging blow to the Soviet position throughout the world.
2. To make maximum possible use of the Assembly discussion of the report as a means of publicizing the present wave of repression in Hungary, including the trials, indiscriminate arrests, and deportations.
3. To seek further action by the United Nations with respect to the current situation in Hungary. In this connection, to secure the continuation of the Special Committee or some other group charged by the General Assembly with responsibility for a continuing scrutiny of Hungary and for searching out peaceful means for bringing about greater realization of the aspirations of the Hungarian people.

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