

September 23, 1970

Stasi Report on West German Government's Attitude to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty

Citation:

"Stasi Report on West German Government's Attitude to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty", September 23, 1970, Wilson Center Digital Archive, BstU, Berlin, MfS HAXX ZMA 914. Obtained by A. Ross Johnson. Translated by Christian Ostermann.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/121499>

Summary:

This GDR intelligence report, based on information from SPD officials in Bonn, describes the concern of Brandt Government officials about the continued operation of RFE and RL in Germany, and claims that some officials would conditionally welcome Soviet bloc pressure on this issue.

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

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According to a reliable source, the attitude of the Federal Government towards the afore-mentioned stations was described by leading SPD officials at the beginning of September 1970 as follows:

The attacks by the Soviet Union, the GDR and some other socialist countries against the activities of the stations are harsh, and they could call into question the Olympic Games. The Federal Government is aware from various, not just official, sources that some of the socialist countries are relatively serious in their threat to boycott the Olympic Games in Munich if the stations do not terminate their activities.

The Federal Government is in a difficult situation on this issue, because it cannot afford to antagonize the Americans, who are running these stations. On the other hand it is not necessarily uncomfortable for the Federal Government to see mounting pressure from the East against the activities of the stations, as this would open certain possibilities for the Federal Government to raise this issue with the Americans and suggest that the stations might work from outside the Federal Republic. The current situation is that the Federal Government has recently extended the contractual licenses for both stations under pressure from the Americans. The contractual licenses are valid for 2 years, and can be canceled at the earliest after one year, with a year's notice. This means that the stations would be still active by the time of the 1972 Olympic Games. The Federal Government is at the moment not in a position to do anything against the activities of the stations.

This assessment was confirmed by the Bundespost [Federal Post Office], which however pointed out that besides the broadcasting license, which is granted by the Foreign Ministry, there is also a technical license. This technical license, which regulates the use of frequencies, is granted by the Bundespost. It is not attached to longer-term contracts, but can be canceled with six months' notice. The next possible date for cancellation is 31 December 1970, with a deadline [for terminating operations] at the end of June 1971. Withdrawing the technical license is thus a possible way of cutting off the activities of the stations at an earlier date than though the license awarded by the Foreign Ministry.

From SPD circles it was stated in this regard that this situation opened up a new perspective. It was hoped that, at the next frequency conference, the frequencies used by the two stations for the Federal Republic could be canceled under pressure from the East bloc countries, possibly even from the neutral countries. In any case, it would not necessarily be uncomfortable for the federal government if a solution could be found that was bearable for the federal government.

Due to security concerns regarding this source, this information cannot be publicized.