

February 1956

Report on Visit to Radio Free Europe, Munich

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Summary:

Analysis of RFE news operations by BBC Central European Service director Gregory Macdonald, who visited Munich from January 8 to January 23, 1956, at RFE's request. Accompanied by notes from the British Foreign Office and its Information Research Department. Macdonald had been asked by RFE officials to assess the objectivity and organization of the newscasts.

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FROM G. Macdonald
British Broadcasting
Corporation
to Miss Storey

No. 68/CE/GM

Dated Feb. 15

Received in
Registry— Feb. 16.

Incloses a copy of a report
on his visit to Radio
Free Europe.

References to former relevant papers

MINUTES

Acld. to Mr. Macdonald.

Mr. Macdonald has made a thorough investigation of Radio Free Europe's News Operation, at their request; his report contains some constructive criticisms and recommendations.

2. The BBC's attitude to news and comment is summed up on page 3. The drawback to this, which a propogandist station like RFE presumably seeks to insure against, is that an incompletely informed listener is not in a good position to draw his own conclusions or assess the weight to be given to "balanced contrasting opinions".

3. Mr. Macdonald, however, and I think we would agree with him, finds a marked tendency in the RFE newscasts to be too persuasive or polemical (p. 5). He also makes the point that the R.F.E. method of handling news can lead to giving listeners a distorted idea of the relative importance of world events (p.6).

4. The lack of any accepted general standard for the R.F.E. news operation as a whole, and the autonomy of the various regional desks, leads to a danger of inconsistency and even unreliability (pages 7-10 and 13-14). Mr. Macdonald therefore advocates reorganising and increasing the status of the Central News Desk in order that it should be the "upholder and coordinator of News standards." (Page 22). This would, of course, bring it more into line with BBC practice, where the Central News Desk, rather than the respective Service Heads, controls the regional news desks.

5. R.F.E.'s terms of reference are of course so widely different from the BBC's that they cannot be expected to operate in the same way as the BBC. Mr. Macdonald gives due weight to their peculiar problems in his report, but my own impression, based on the considerable mass of listener reactions received from refugees, is that R.F.E. would gain greatly in stature if it could improve its standards of reliability and objectivity. At present it appears to be popular enough with the broad masses, not least because it broadcasts for almost 24 hours a day to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary and is therefore easy to pick up, provided the listener is not in a heavily jammed area. But the more educated type of listener still tends to speak of R.F.E. as something not to be taken too seriously, in spite of the fact that the organisation appears

(Print)

(How disposed of)

G. Macdonald, BBC
from Miss Storey, 23 Feb.

(Action completed)

(Index)

9/2/57

15/4/57
JW

References to later relevant papers

(PR 34/76/57)

to have got over its initial period of hopeful excesses, when it apparently really believed it might cause the overthrow of the Communist régimes in a matter of months.

P.C. Storey

(P.C. Storey.)
February 28, 1956.

Mr. Reddaway.

Interesting

*NR
1Ran*

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

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TELEGRAMS AND CABLES : BROADCASTS, TELEX, LONDON

Reference: 08/CE/GM

15th February, 1956.

PR 134/5

My dear Penny,

Here as promised is a copy of my report on the News operation of R.F.E. It is all rather technical and, I imagine, dull. I may mention that the Budget, to which so much reference is made, has no financial significance but is the name given at R.F.E. to the raw material of their news output - more or less what we call "tape" in the B.B.C.

The report has only just reached Munich and I have been very cagey about it in Bush House, so will you please treat it as confidential?

Yours,

Greg

(MACDONALD)

Miss P.C. Storey,
I.R.D., Foreign Office,
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DOJ

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT ON
VISIT TO RADIO FREE EUROPE, MUNICH.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

My visit to Munich was between January 8th and January 23rd 1956, as an official of the B.B.C. with News and Programme experience, to study and make any necessary comments on the News operation of Radio Free Europe. This was my fourth visit to R.F.E. in a series which began in 1951. Since 1945, as Head of the Central European Service of the B.B.C., I have dealt with many of the broadcasting problems with which R.F.E. is concerned, for audiences in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Terms of Reference.

The general request made to me by Mr. Condon and Mr. Michie was to see whether in my opinion the News operation was sufficiently objective. My standard, naturally enough, would be that of the B.B.C., though I would take account of the differences between the two organisations, differences of status, history and operation. It was agreed that I should feel free to make suggestions for reorganisation, if a measure of reorganisation seemed necessary, within the present general framework of R.F.E. On my side I made the point that my interest would extend beyond the news-gathering mechanism and the Newscasts in the various languages to related aspects of the output, such as Press Reviews and News Comments.

Method.

During my stay in Munich I investigated as closely as possible, by talking with officials and by watching the operation, the News and Information Services with special reference to the Central News Desk. I followed the same procedure in the Programming Department with the Regional Desks, attending also a number of Programme and News Conferences. I read Monitoring Highlights (having visited the Monitoring Station on a previous visit); and I studied some of the latest assessment memoranda of the Audience Analysis Section (Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) together with a considerable number of separate interrogations.

In addition I went through the News Budget, at first the full and later the shortened X Budget, day by day. The Newscasts of two days (January 9th and January 16th) were translated for me from the various languages: I analysed these newscasts in comparison with B.B.C. transmissions in the same languages on the same days, and in comparison with one another, so as to gain an impression both of comparative news values and of professional news standards.

Both days chosen as samples were Mondays, but I do not think this fact distorted the picture. My misfortune was that the period of my visit was, from the point of view of news, almost uneventful. There were no sudden international crises, no widespread false reports requiring delicate decisions, although the difficulties of Mr. Dulles with the article in Life provided some political interest. The principal stories were the publication of directives for the Five Year Plan, President Eisenhower's 'soil bank' project, and the U.S. Budget, with Cyprus, the Middle East and political manoeuvres in Paris as continued developments.

Basic Assumptions.

Two assumptions governed my work. The first was that News is the foundation of radio operation upon which programmes are built. It is, so to speak, the chassis and engine which need bodywork for completion: the bodywork will not go far by itself. This consideration applies in two different ways to R.F.E., which has a unique advantage for quick and accurate reporting in its hourly spread of Newscasts by day and night to Iron Curtain countries, with ancillary press reviews and news comments, yet historically the News Department developed after the Programme Departments. This inversion of initial values is still significant in the total organisation of R.F.E.

My second assumption was that a distinction must be preserved between News and Comment - between the reporting of facts and developments on the one hand and the analysis or interpretation of facts which must always have in it an element of persuasion or polemic. I shall return to this point: its immediate relevance is that where the distinction is observed the listener will feel less suspicion that the news has been censored, angled or given emotional overtones for his benefit.

In other words the listener will conclude that he is being given news with the least element of propaganda - and we can be very sure that an increasing number of Central European listeners to R.F.E. and other Western stations are cynical judges of propaganda. They do not want to be given false hope; they do not want to be shielded from reality. This consideration must apply to the most intelligent-and therefore ultimately the most influential -- among them.

In concrete terms, the distinction between News and Comment means that news stories are written factually, not suggesting conclusions to the listener but trusting him to draw his own, that quotations from newspapers are sparingly used in Newscasts, and that press reviews give balanced contrasting opinions with a minimum of linking material which may influence the listener.

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II.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

I shall mention now some of the general impressions formed during my visit to R.F.E., before dealing with particular problems and suggested solutions.

Energy, Aims and Organisation.

I can say at once that I was impressed throughout not only by the energy but also by the idealism of the members of the R.F.E. staff with whom I was in contact. I was struck, on this as on previous visits, by the resources and the organising ability which lie behind the operation, so that although Munich is a bad news-gathering centre the deficiency is in great measure compensated by the efforts that have been made to create a network of fast-flowing information.

Moreover, R.F.E. has built up a body of expert knowledge of European affairs which would have been unimaginable in an American enterprise twenty years ago, not only on the research side but also among the editorial personnel both American and European, with a growing sense of cooperation among them which I know from B.B.C. experience to be essential. I felt a relaxed but businesslike atmosphere at conferences. In my conversations with the members of different News Desks I came to conclude that they were seeking to achieve and maintain high professional standards, though there seemed to be a lack of a common standard for R.F.E. as a whole; and, while some of them were newsmen by career there were many varieties of training and experience among them.

The Long Haul:

My next general impression was that R.F.E. had settled down to the expectation of a long-term operation. The first burst of enthusiasm, with the hope of immediate results, was over. This change was creating new policy problems and in particular it demanded a changed attitude towards News. But although the aim was objectivity, there seemed to be little agreement about what this standard must imply, especially in R.F.E. which is unique among radio organisations.

Theory and Practice

For R.F.E., now a settled institution among the stations broadcasting from the West beyond the Iron Curtain, in some ways the most powerful and in some ways the most vulnerable among them, is neither governmental nor national. Its origin and head office are in America but it is not a mouthpiece of U.S. policy. Broadly speaking, R.F.E. expresses the desire of the American people to achieve, in cooperation with Europeans, the peaceful liberation of European countries now under Communist domination. Yet when it comes to the output, which is the only real test of broadcasting, the language desks appeal as free national radios, as home services competing with those of the Communist-dominated capitals, with at least the suggestion that they are giving not only the truth about the free world but also the truth about the Communist orbit.

I do not doubt that the bulk of the listeners, like the minority of Communists, regard this as a convention: the bulk of the listeners tune in because the station represents information and sympathy through the mouths of their own people in exile, not least because indirectly it represents American policy and power. But for American policy it would not be there: the move of policy which may mean liberation will come from Washington. Many of the listeners, like some of the broadcasters, are not so much concerned for the absolute truth of the news as for whether it affords some hope.

Effect on Audiences.

This is natural and laudable on both sides, but it involves dangers which are increasing with so many years of political disappointment. From audience reaction among Iron Curtain audiences it is impossible to gain more than cumulative evidence over a long period - there can be no systematic sampling or polls - and over a long period I have come to the conclusion (confirmed during my recent visit) that the great advantage R.F.E. possesses in its hourly Newscasts is not fully exploited by the accuracy, objectivity and consistency of their information. Nor is the distinction between News and Comment sufficiently well preserved.

The Newscasts are to my mind in many respects very good, with the great psychological advantage that the stories are composed in the language of broadcast, but there is too marked a tendency in them to be persuasive or polemical. This is

a defect in News at any time, a defect of psychological warfare less obvious during periods when Western policy is active, but it can prove dangerous when the watchword is 'Coexistence' or now that the policy of Moscow is so much more subtle than it was under Stalin.

Dangers of Distortion.

If my latest visit was not during a time of big international news it was very interesting from one point of view, that hardly a better opportunity could be given to discuss relative news values. The Communists were still reacting tetchily to President Eisenhower's Christmas message. The question of peaceful liberation therefore became a talking-point in American newspapers. On January 9th Secretary Dulles made a statement to exile leaders in Washington and on the same day there was an outspoken article in the New York Herald Tribune, by Henry C. Wolfe.

For R.F.E. the statement, the reaction of exile leaders to it, and the article, went together, becoming major news of the day. This was all the more natural if the Regional Desks were acting as free national radios. Yet the convention of a free national radio was in this case a distorting mirror if in fact, from the standpoint of world news, the Dulles statement was not of outstanding importance and if the outspoken article in the New York Herald Tribune was only a coincidence or if both of them were related to the American elections, a factor of distortion of which R.F.E. was rightly aware in other contexts.

Bearing in mind the particular request made to me to judge whether in my opinion the News Operation was sufficiently objective I began to wonder how a greater degree of objectivity could be achieved in an organization which had so many conventional devices unknown in other broadcasting stations. It spoke at one and the same time with the voices of patriotic exiles and of generous-hearted Americans, though neither group of voices claimed to possess political power. Its proximity to satellite reception areas, and its deliberate display of special knowledge gained from refugees and defectors, as well as from excellent monitoring, created a heightened emotional temperature. Yet in the long run (and this was now generally felt to be a long-term operation) the liberation of the satellites was going to depend on policy and power, not on words, so that the most prudent as well as the most honest procedure was to keep the proportions right, especially in the News.

Standard of News Coverage.

It did not seem to me that enough thought had been given to News as the foundation of radio operation upon which programmes are built - and upon which the credibility of the station depends. Big and successful efforts had been made to bring into Munich, and to the Regional Desks, the raw material from Reuters and other Western agencies, from the monitoring of Tass, Tanyug and other sources, from the American and European press on the day of publication, and from R.F.E. reporters sent out for special events.

On the other hand, I could not find any accepted standard laying down that news coverage should be global, or that it should be Free World, or that it should be (what it is) an amalgam formed partly from world news, partly from American and some European press comment, and partly from the special interests of exile groups.

The Home Service Convention.

The final decision is not an easy one to make, but it seems to me that at the moment R.F.E. is neither supplying a consistently reliable service of world news (with a good deal of common ground between the information given by the various language services) nor is it in fact on the News side a number of free national radios, home services competing with those of the Communist-dominated capitals: partly because information already given by the Communists is regarded as known to the listener, and audience reaction shows that this is an arguable standpoint - partly because the information on internal affairs obtained from other sources, or about exiles and their doings, is often by any showing of minor importance.

Organisation.

Within the present general framework of R.F.E., with its Regional Desks accorded a considerable degree of autonomy, I consider that there are organisational deficiencies because of which it is difficult to maintain a satisfactory standard

(1) My personal opinion is that outstanding news from the Communist orbit should be briefly registered in Newscasts, so that the needs of audiences for full coverage are satisfied. The items will not normally be given in the terms of Tass, P.A.P., C.T.K. or M.T.I., so this will not be the broadcasting back of Communist propaganda.

of objectivity in the News. There is no single man, or office, in H.F.E. with the responsibility to preserve the accuracy, objectivity and consistency of all Newscasts in all languages. At the present time the Political Advisor and his staff take News conferences and cooperate with Regional Desks to ensure the accuracy of Newscasts. Admirably though this is done, so far as personal knowledge and friendly diplomacy are concerned, it does not seem good in principle to have News under political direction, though one would expect the Political Advisor and his staff to be available at all times to give political information, or background to Western policies.

With objectivity the aim it would seem reasonable to think also in terms of accuracy and consistency. Yet there does not seem to exist at the moment any mechanism to ensure that the various News Desks really do interpret the same news in the same way (with whatever differences of national expression), that previous information relevant to a news story is supplied to all Desks, that there is continuity of information from one shift to another, and (not least important) that there is a systematic translation check on Newscasts so that standards can be kept in harmony.

In my opinion, within the Desks, there are at the moment wide differences of expertise in the handling of any particular story, depending on the special knowledge or even special enthusiasm of the sub-editor responsible: there may be a real expert in French politics behind one story but not behind another. There may be a tendency, from excellent motives, to overplay American events. Or perhaps (I do not wish to be dogmatic on necessarily incomplete sampling) the complex problems of the Middle East and Asia are underplayed. And in R.F.E. itself there appears to be a general opinion that up till now there has not been enough inter-communication between the Desks to ensure a reasonably consistent treatment of monitored news relating to all the various satellites.

News Seen as Trends.

One last general impression, not easy to express but closely associated with a judgment of news objectivity. Possibly the B.B.C. has got somewhere near a good standard because on the whole the English do not believe in "causes" (except in wartime) or in absolute principles, but wait for the vindication of truth out of conflict and contradiction. Certainly the best British journalism,

not uninfluenced by Common Law, preserves a fairly clear distinction between fact and comment, as does the best American journalism.

But America has a tradition going back to the Revolution of belief in immutable principles which will be vindicated. The American mind, politically and historically, is "dedicated to a proposition", so that news can be discussed in terms of trends and linked with future vindication. So we read in Special Guidance No.20 'On Objective Truth': "We believe that only the truth can win us credibility with our listeners. We have faith in our cause. We believe it must triumph in the end".

Again, England has not in modern history suffered defeat or partition, there have not been English emigré groups forced to do battle against a surrounding ignorance and indifference while hoping for a future liberation. But modern European exiles naturally interpret the news towards their desired ends; and it is worth remembering that Central European journalism has always favoured the feuilleton, the splicing of facts with observation and imagination, rather than straight news and separate comment.

These differences go very deep. In the B.B.C. tradition News is what has happened, set if necessary against a background of past happenings so that proportion is achieved. Representative spokesmen are quoted, to provide additional facts or to correct distortions of facts by others, the original distortion being quoted straight, with source, but without comment. Newspapers are not quoted as news unless (a) a sensation of subject or circumstance makes what the newspaper says news in itself - e.g. Pravda reflects Kremlin policy, or (b) there is widespread reaction to an event, in which case balanced quotes are given. If a single newspaper is quoted, or if a certain small group of papers are often quoted, (for example, the New York Herald Tribune, the New York Times and Washington Post) the listener may conclude that the quotes were chosen not to inform him but to influence him; and that conclusion is in the long run bad for the radio.

Speculation and Prediction.

In my study of R.F.E. it seemed to me that very little distinction was made between News and Comment despite a manifest desire to do so. In the interesting paper "On Objective Truth", p.2, they are grouped together: News Editors

impartially feed both; and the Daily Guidance from New York applies to both, thereby incidentally confirming the political direction of the News.

Equally important is the tendency in R.F.E. to regard News as a trend towards the future, so that stories indicate (sometimes predict) what is about to happen rather than what has happened. Where the trend goes wrong, as it did with the unexpected results of the French elections, there is a tendency to underplay the facts, although this must arouse suspicion in the minds of listeners. (There is no better sign of confidence in the future than the strength to give the bad news first). Or again, if the political advice is to underplay some confusing and unwelcome event, such as the misunderstanding over the Dulles article in Life, it may often happen that the facts will be given in Comment. In the long run this is bad for the prestige of the News if the listener has to find the facts in another part of the output or if he concludes that the News does not give him a complete picture.

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III.
PARTICULAR PROBLEMS.

The Budget

One cannot be long in Englischer Garten without realising that the size of the Budget is a constant preoccupation with officials of R.F.E. The file of material accumulated by 9 a.m., containing agency news, general monitoring, U.S.I.S. reports, and verbatim texts from R.F.E. New York and Europe, may run up to a quarter of a million words. In my experience a conscientious journalistic run-through takes about an hour and a half. Even the X Budget, because it retains the most important items, occupies an hour.

The question in my mind was whether everybody was equally conscientious in mastering the Budget. Admittedly the task is not always presented in such formidable terms, for the items come in small batches to shifts on duty. Still, in any radio work there are many who follow normal (or abnormal) office hours: there are many who have to read themselves in after leave or sickness. The question was whether the variety of material in the Budget slowed down work in the morning, whether the size of it was an obstacle to continuity of information.

I noticed one case where an editorial man at 11.30 a.m. did not know the most important story of the morning from R.F.E.'s point of view - nor do I blame him. The impression I gained was that the methods of digesting the Budget were not uniform. At one extreme were those who had it delivered and sat up in bed with it at 7.30 a.m. At the other extreme were the practised few who could strip it to what they considered essential - say Reuters and/or U.P. - in a very short time, thus defeating the purpose of a complete information-gathering service.

Nevertheless the full Budget, with its many disadvantages, has to be understood in terms of Munich as a poor news focus. The staff of the B.B.C. European Service take it for granted that the Dawn shift begins with the early

editions of the London and provincial papers: various reports about current news and the interpretation of it from many points of view show up the essentials and disclose contradictions of fact which have to be settled one way or the other. Staff coming in to Bush House in the morning have perhaps already read two or three papers, besides listening to the morning news. R.F.E. staff are restricted to the Sueddeutsche Zeitung and perhaps to the early edition of the Neue Zurcher Zeitung, with whatever they may have picked up on the radio.

The point is that one way or another radio journalists have to read vast amounts of pre-digested news and comment. The Budget is unwieldy but not significantly different from acres of reading-matter in The Times or the Manchester Guardian - every London journalist has his own practised manner of dealing with these. On the positive side the R.F.E. Budget is a remarkable collection of material for daily broadcast use, including full texts of articles from papers in America and all over Europe which are often of the first importance and made available with a minimum of delay. Anybody who has a good knowledge of the Munich Budget is in many ways better equipped than his opposite number in London, my only reservation being that too much of the Budget expresses an American point of view. The existing tendency in the Language Desks to stress American news is thereby encouraged. More than once in Newscasts I found stories for example on the Five Year Plan, which were controversial comparisons between Russia and America rather than objective news reports.

The problem here is to make the best general use for broadcasting of the material available and at the same time to reduce the sheer bulk of paper which weighs upon everybody in a responsible position at R.F.E.

The Central News Desk.

It is essential to see the Central News Desk as a late-comer, or as a late organised unit, within the framework of R.F.E. Its functions are almost confined to intake and supply for the Regional News Desks, with a minimum of editorial control. There is, however, a measure of editorial jurisdiction in the power to withhold from circulation obviously false or misleading reports, mark doubtful points for information only, to flash sensational news to all Desks, and to mark up the more important items for the X Budget. In addition,

Central News Desk officials attend Regional and News Conferences. The list of principal stories issued at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. is no doubt a useful guide for News Desks. The final control of news lies with the Political Advisors, who can suppress or play down any item - though my impression is that this power is tactfully used and often subject to tactful objections from the Regional Desks.

To take first the Central News Desk for what it is and does, I can only express admiration that so much gets done, in such lowly and confined quarters, by such a small staff and with so little fuss. The work includes, in addition to what has been mentioned, the heading and referencing of stories, taking clippings from papers, and recording and transcribing reports from R.F.E. bureaux, as well as the distributing of Budget material throughout the building.

For the work involved it seemed to me that the staff was very small, especially when account is taken of normal holidays and sick-leave. I also noticed that the tasks of distribution are not made easier by the lateral expansion of the buildings at R.F.E. In a radio organisation based on hourly Newscasts the distribution unit is delivering to the Regional Desks twice an hour on the average, which did not appear to me to be sufficient, though nobody complained. In any case, distribution alone is a considerable problem which might only partly be solved by mechanical aids like pneumatic tubes.

I shall refer again to the position and functions of the Central News Desk, which could perhaps be reorganised without radically changing the basic structure of R.F.E. or damaging the autonomy of the Regional Desks.

Regional News Desks.

I was very favourably impressed by the enthusiasm and professional aims of the Regional News staff whom I met at work or in off-duty conversation and discussion. They gave every indication of a good team spirit; and the effort of every desk was to provide a lucid and up-to-date news service to R.F.E. audiences in the terms, and with the priorities, appropriate to the different national communities.

This means in practice that there are wide variations in the various language Newscasts being broadcast at the same time by R.F.E., for many separate judgments are being applied to the basic material. Most of the important topical stories are covered, for the autonomous Desks are linked together by the conferences,

by the Daily Guidance, and by the News Guidance sheet issued twice a day by Central News Desk. There are also informal consultations with the Desk Chief and with the Political Advisors. Although the following remarks will be critical, I have no intention to ignore many well-framed Newscasts, many clear and objective stories, much valuable information which the News Desks of R.F.E. broadcast throughout Central Europe so as to ensure, with other Western stations, that the Communist tyranny shall not possess a monopoly of the means of communication.

However, all the sensible arrangements for information and liaison inside R.F.E. do not in my judgment supply sufficient safeguards to ensure a reasonable objectivity - and in saying this I have not in mind a rigid or academic standard. Under a system where the raw material flows through almost unprocessed to five different editorial centres there are bound to be daily examples of the misapprehension or omission of important stories, and of the inclusion of stories not fully verified.

(Examples: Assuming always that translations are correct, the Polish Newscast of January 9th, Item 38, described the 'Soil Bank' project of President Eisenhower with, among other points, the phrase, "It would consist in the taking over by the State of some arable land by the farmers, who would be paid for it" - a suggestion of expropriation widely different from the President's actual proposal and creating a bad impression among peasant audiences. On January 16th the Bulgarian interview to Vision, with its suggestion of Russian interference in the sensitive area of South America, was picked up by the B.B.C. at 1900 G.M.T., but it seems to appear only in the Hungarian Newscast of R.F.E. and at 2100 C.E.T. The same transmission caught the Russian evacuation of Porkkala, otherwise neglected, and most Desks (not the Poles) stressed Monnet's plan for a United States of Europe rather than the real point of that day, which was Euratom, the discussion of a project of European Atomic Cooperation, on the lines of the Iron and Steel Community).

There are certain also to be variations of sometimes important subsidiary details, where one agency or another has been followed without verification of contradictory points. And there may be examples of rumours stated as news in the

hope of consequent fulfilment - a danger all the greater because the News staffs are intelligent and intensely political men who are often gambling on reasonable predictions - but these are not yet facts.

(Examples: The Hungarian Newscast of 1300 on January 9th, Item 27, says of the disturbances in Jordan: "It was officially stated that also Communists participated in the riots and it was believed certain that if the demonstrations were not Communist inspired they were at least fanned and exploited by Communists" - this would certainly need checking as an official statement. On January 16th both the Czech (headlines) and Hungarian Newscasts (Item 53 at 1800 G.E.T.) suggested that the U.S. Budget appropriated 64% for national security, as though it were arms expenditure, instead of distinguishing between defence costs and mutual aid programmes. The Rumanians on the same day (1702 G.E.T.) talked about three billion dollars earmarked "for endowing and instructing the allied military forces" - a phrase which could certainly be misinterpreted. As for predictions, the Czech Newscasts of January 9th confidently foretold that the Americans were planning for the beginning of this year the biggest hydrogen bomb tests yet; and also reported (Item 30) that President Eisenhower refused to confirm the report, saying that an announcement by A.E.C. should be awaited - this announcement was made three or four days later. On January 17th a report based on a single agency that Tito was to visit Moscow was apparently given by more than one Desk; it will no doubt be confirmed by a subsequent official announcement).

Another general criticism to be made is that much of the News is conceived in terms of psychological warfare; one feels that the sub-editor was selecting or forming every story with the conflict between Communism and the Free World in mind, so that he sometimes included items of no great intrinsic importance, thereby giving them a false emphasis, because they were vaguely uncomfortable for Soviet Russia. Arbitrary quotations from newspapers are often open to the same objection: the Bulgarians, for example, sometimes take a comment from one unnamed British, French or American paper and attribute it to the British, or French, or American press.

(Examples: Assuming always that translations are correct, the Hungarian Newscasts of January 9th gave prominence at 0600 and 0700 to a story from Guatemala that the distribution of land to peasants had speeded up since the overthrow of the

pro-Communist Arbenz Government (my own reaction was sceptical); on the same morning there was an odd story, (Item 49), keyed to the National Chinese News Agency at Taipeh, that the Soviet Fleet was carrying out manoeuvres from Shanghai; most desks on January 16th emphasised beyond prudence that Mollet would not "bay with the Communist wolves" though it was already clear that he could not take office without Communist support, and in the report of his speech nobody mentioned that he proposed the repeal of the Barange Law for aid to Church schools; and on the same day there was a general tendency to stress the democratic tendency of the new Egyptian Constitution, though the Hungarian Desk - which was reserved on the point - mentioned that MIG fighters of the Egyptian Air Force were flying over Cairo).

It is very difficult to deal with the characteristic aspect of R.F.E. Newscasts, that they are in part to be regarded as home services competing with the radios of the Communist-controlled capitals. As I have said, this is a radio convention, accepted as such by the Communist minority and by the national majority. But to judge by the Newscasts I have analysed, and by my experience of the working of R.F.E., this aspect of the News operation is far from consistent. One knows from experience that many items are used (for example, Western newspaper comments on the Five Year Plan) as counters to the highlights of the Communist output. Incidentally, some of the longer items, for example on political or economic developments, in all language Newscasts, were often brilliantly written and based on expert judgment, though they took the form rather of short News Comments rather than of News items. One knows also that R.F.E. editors are cautious about using in Newscasts statements made by refugees, for the more local these are the less subject they are to verification, while nothing is so likely to give a bad reputation to Western news broadcasts as a mistake about locally known facts. I was on the whole surprised to find how little of local colour, or of Soviet-reflected news, there was in the Newscasts I examined.

The degree of prominence to be given to the pronouncements of exiled political leaders must also be a problem under the R.F.E. radio convention: on the one hand the exiled politicians represent no real political power in the West and may represent no political power in the Homeland; on the other hand they become of importance if a Western statesman receives them officially, or if their

organisations are fostered, or if they are able to say exactly what their silenced compatriots at home would like to have said.

In most cases, however, to my mind, while it is natural for R.F.E. to use this material, to give it world-prominent importance is a distortion of news values. Perhaps the most useful balancing of the Newscasts will come from the decision already made to have a Monitoring Editor for the supply to all desks of stories from the Soviet orbit of which full use is not at present made. This will perhaps reduce the impression that the Newscasts are too American in substance for the home service convention to hold water; and it will also meet the objection that sub-editors are more keenly alive to developments in Paris than to developments inside all the satellites.

In my opinion the objectivity of R.F.E. Newscasts would be improved if more attention could be paid to the backgrounding of stories, either with antecedent facts or with sound political and diplomatic judgments. This is not an easy matter with frequent Newscasts composed by small editorial staffs; and R.F.E. has not had time to amass a strong collection of clippings and other easily accessible reference material. The importance of this point was recognised by members of the News Desks with whom I discussed it, but it was not often in the translated Newscasts that I came across a really well backgrounded news story with past facts to put the latest developments in proportion. The authority of such a story (to give only one example the item on Japanese-Soviet negotiations in the Rumanian Newscast of 1702 of 16.1.56) was immediate.

Finally, there was in all the Newscasts which I analysed a lack of logic or care in giving the sources of statements made. The references ranged all the way from "officially stated" to "unconfirmed reports". Ascription to "Congressional circles" or to "political circles" should be avoided, for here surely is the opportunity to give an informed background piece by the Political Advisor, introduced in some established guise, such as "Our Political Correspondent". This could be re-written on Regional Desks to preserve the national character of the output without changes of material fact.

Again, there should be caution about the quotation of obscure newspapers as sources, as in an item about an alleged anti-Government plot in Chile which began with the words "Rumours are circulating" and ended by ascribing the rumours to "El Mercurio". Iron Curtain listeners are not in a position to judge the authority

or the journalistic ethics of this particular paper.

Changing the Lead.

During my analysis, and in conversation with News personnel, I noticed that there was some difference of custom and opinion about the retention of the order of items in Newscasts. With hourly News transmissions it must frequently be the case that the relative importance of stories has not altered, yet there is a journalistic instinct to create interest with a new lead. In my experience this is unwise because it arouses a false expectation. It is especially unwise in Iron Curtain transmissions because the listener may be in danger, or may be tuning in under jamming, so that he needs no more than headlines to assure himself that the main news is much the same.

On the other hand, there is the argument that an important speech or Western declaration should be given priority all day, so as to saturate the reception area, although journalistically it is becoming staler and fresh news should perhaps be taking the lead. This is an old quandary of Iron Curtain broadcasts. In my opinion the lead should be changed journalistically, with headlines drawing attention to the speech or communiqué which continues to be given a prominent place over a long period.

Further, where there is an hourly spread of Newscasts, the opportunity exists for at least one recapitulation Newscast, giving a survey of the past twenty-four hours, and therefore recalling even important developments which may have faded back and dropped out of transmissions.

Election Year.

Throughout my stay in Munich, when the news was on the whole of a political character, I was interested in the treatment of American political developments, many of which are (or reasonably can be) related to party rivalries. The European Service of the B.B.C. has recently had the same problem of a General Election - political passions are raised, rash statements are made, and Press Reviews give the impression that there is no more national or bipartisan unity even in the field of foreign affairs.

My general impression was that R.F.E. was so much aware of election year

that there was a tendency to lay off or underplay too many American stories, on the ground that they were confusing, or that Congress would make big changes in Administration projects. This delicacy of approach on some American matters contrasted with enthusiasm on other occasions - there was no question of underplaying an American attitude towards Communism or in support of captive European nations. I am not sure whether R.F.E. reported Harriman's statement on January 19th that President Eisenhower had been wrong in his judgment of the Soviet Union. This was clearly electoral but made by a responsible Democrat and therefore part of the cut and thrust of the electoral debate, not all of which could be favourable to the Administration.

There is no intention on my part to underestimate the problem. On my own showing, caution is more than ever necessary with five separate Deaks! At the same time I think the guiding rule should be to lean on the side of frankness rather than of reticence, for Communist opponents will give distorted accounts of whatever is to their advantage; and many moves of primarily domestic and electoral significance build up into small international crises with worldwide reactions. In any case in Western democracies foreign policy is largely dictated by internal political considerations.

The Dulles article in Life was such a nine-days wonder, but a significant one because of the subject-matter of the confusion, for the Manchester Guardian reaction, and for the Communist distortion of the whole affair. The line in Munich was to lay off - at least in the early stages. This was natural because the developments were confusing, but the subject matter made this controversy one of primary interest for Iron Curtain audiences. The tendency was for comment to be made on it, however indirectly, even when little was being said directly in Newscasts.

In much the same way the line was to underplay the U.S. Budget, especially in the aspects of foreign aid and aid for refugees, on the grounds that its provisions would be altered by Congress. My own caution about the Budget would be to avoid too many billion dollar statistics, and terms of financial economics difficult for the audience to assimilate, but to give foreign aid and refugee aid projects as important: if Congress were to amend the figures, that also could be given in due course. (In the event I found that this policy was followed by

the B.B.C. European Service, but that the various R.F.E. Desks treated the U.S. Budget in a very unequal manner).

A third example, which surprised me, was R.F.E. caution over President Eisenhower's 'Soil Bank' project - Daily Guidance of January 10th advised: "Details of Presidential Farm Message might be considered too complicated for effective handling in radio broadcasts - furthermore it would be difficult to predict which will and which will not be approved by Congress". To me it seemed immensely important to report this, and to explain its implications: all of them significant or difficult of comprehension for Iron Curtain audiences.

It was an enormous plus for free enterprise agriculture which had an unstorable surplus; it was an attempt to reduce the surplus by avoiding both the destruction of crops and dumping; it involved the withdrawal of some land from crop cultivation (a difficult idea for peasants to understand); and it involved the possible sale of produce to Communist countries - which could mean blessed foreign aid in case of a bad harvest or of Communist mismanagement, but which could also mean that the West might find itself propping up Communist regimes at a critical moment. I could not find that these points were properly taken up by R.F.E. either in news or comment, perhaps because the initial advice was to play the project down.

Press Reviews.

Something has already been said about the use of newspaper quotations in Newscasts and about the primary need, for the sake of objectivity, to separate News and Comment. Even if one is not too rigid on this point - for journalistic customs vary and there may often be interest in some balanced quotations from authoritative newspapers to illustrate the news - it would still be advisable in my opinion to increase the Press Review content of R.F.E. schedules, perhaps closely following Newscasts, using them as a means both of more obvious balancing of opinions and perhaps also of a clearer 'Europeanisation' of Free Europe.

The Daily Budget contains a number of very interesting articles from many countries of which rather patchy use seems to be made. Sometimes they appear in Newscasts, sometimes in Press Reviews, sometimes as the basis of Comments. It seems necessary that for their intrinsic interest they should sometimes appear

in R.F.E. Newscasts - say, an outstanding article in a famous paper on one of the countries addressed - but it could well be repeated in Press Reviews. At the same time there seems little sense in giving as news a depressing survey of conditions in Soviet Latvia.

With the time available for most of the Regional Desks in the daily schedule I would suggest a regular scheme of newspaper and possibly also of broadcasting reviews (cf. the B.B.C.'s daily Survey of World Press and Radio) with the aim of letting opinion in the Free World speak for itself, with no gloss as editorial linking material. The very fact that there is sharp debate is of magnetic interest to listeners. I have in mind not only the American and British Press - both of them widely used by R.F.E. - but also the Press of France and Italy in all their lights and shades, of Germany, Switzerland and Austria, not forgetting periodicals. The purpose would be to give information and to widen the horizon of Central European listeners (without any concealment of unpleasant aspects from them). It seems to me that, for commendable reasons, many people in Munich are solicitous not to depress audiences with bad news. In the end bad news cannot be concealed. The alternative is to raise false hopes and to create illusions with a bitter anti-climax.

REPORT ON
VISIT TO RADIO FREE EUROPE, MUNICH.

IV.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I therefore make the following recommendations:-

- (1). The Central News Desk should be reorganised and its editorial function should be widened, in cooperation with the Political Advisor and with the Regional Desk Chiefs.
- (2). The Chief of the Central News Desk should be regarded as the upholder and coordinator of News standards: his staff to be of a size and of a journalistic calibre to command respect from the Regional Desks.
- (3). The Central News Desk should prepare basic News Stories of world news, based on incoming agency and monitoring material. These stories should go forward to Regional News Desks, together with relevant agency and monitoring material, for final editing in accordance with the national psychology of the Desk. But this basic News output should provide a central standard of material fact and a reasonable pointer to News priorities.
- (4). The Chief of the Central News Desk should have constant knowledge of R.F.E. News output in various languages, either by a system of translation or by the cooperation of bilingual personnel.
- (5). The editing of stories from satellite monitoring should also be a function of the Central News Desk, as this is for the convenience and information of all the Regional Desks. The monitoring material upon which these stories are based should not then form part of the Budget.
- (6). The Central News Desk should have better accommodation on the ground floor or first floor, not only for its prestige and for the morale of personnel, though these are both relevant factors. The recommendation is made as a means to relieve the problem of distribution by bringing the Central News Desk nearer to the Regional Desks. This should also improve News liaison.
- (7). The Chief of the Central News Desk or his representative should attend the morning Regional Meetings held by the Political Advisor, and should also as a

regular procedure give a survey there of the main stories that have broken since the previous evening. This process helps the coordination of News and Programmes; and Regional experts have an opportunity early in the day to suggest amendments or necessary items in the News output.

(8). The Chief of the Central News Desk or his representative should preside at the afternoon News Conference, with the Political Advisor or his representative in attendance for consultation. I see no reason to change the present system whereby the Chiefs of the Regional News Desks in rotation run over the news of the day, for this helps to stress their element of independence inside the common organisation of R.F.E. At the same time a News authority asserted with the tact at present shown by the Political authority could only serve to bring the organisation more closely together.

(9). Among its many other functions the Political Advisor's office should be available to the Central News Desk for short News paragraphs, as from a Political Correspondent, giving diplomatic or political background to complicated developments. These would serve either for direct use or as guidance for Regional Desks - a short and quickly circulated variant of a Background Paper, which takes much longer to reach the output.

(10). With an eye on the unwieldy Budget I recommend a further process of separation during the process of intake at the Central News Desk. If it is recognised that there should be a clearer distinction between News and Comment in the Newscasts, and that Press Reviews might be given even more systematically than they are at present, then agency material as a basis for News should be given separate distribution from press material as a basis for Press Reviews and Comment.

(11). In practice this would not mean that appropriate quotes from the Press could never be given in News stories or that (for example) an important article on Hungary in The Times or in the Osservatore Romano would be relegated to more leisurely Press Review treatment. My recommendation is that an editorial member of the Central News Desk - a Regional Copytaster - should be alert to Regional requirements. In separating out basic News material the Regional Copytaster would send the important verbatim text or agency tape straight to the Hungarian Desk for local treatment (alerting the Desk first by phone) and do a basic story

for other desks if the article seems to be of general European significance. But Press quotes or texts of secondary importance would go forward separately for consideration in Press Review or Comment. To my mind this method would be found by experience to simplify and to clarify the work of the Regional Desks, besides reducing considerably the bulk of the Budget.

(12). With more careful and more systematic writing of basic News stories there should be systematic referencing of the date, time, initials of sub-editor, and sources of statements made. It would soon be found that these stories, filed with clippings, would strengthen the News Information section for the backgrounding of future stories. A comparable system should be used for stories initiated by the Regional Desks.

(13). The Chief of the Central News Desk should also have an advisory and liaison responsibility to arrange times and technical facilities for voicecast reports from R.F.E. Bureaux. A great deal of valuable material is at present being reported into Munich from R.F.E. points; and it is reasonable that most of this is in English (or in German or French) for general use. In my opinion the Regional Desks are none the less losing valuable opportunities for voicecast despatches in their own languages. The reason for this loss perhaps is not the cost of lines but rather a failure of organisation in the Desks and with the Centre.

(14). R.F.E. has been operating for more than five years and is taking long-term measures for the future. A system should be worked out for training members of the different Regional Desks, especially the News staff, in a common R.F.E. approach to their work. While some of the Newsmen are practical journalists of long experience, others come from different fields or have had no previous radio training. The national individuality of the separate Desks would not be impaired if everybody had foundation training in the simple technicalities of transmission and assimilation, some knowledge of the principles governing radio journalism - for example, the avoidance of too many statistics - and the same ideas about the practical means of attaining objectivity in Newscasts.

(15). As Munich is a bad newsgathering centre, despite the line and monitoring service that has been built up, there should be some systematic monitoring of the European Service of the B.B.C. in English, or the General Overseas Service, not as a model (for the priorities will always differ between R.F.E. in Munich and a

general B.B.C. Service from London) but as a useful guide to the latest news and news appreciation in a world centre.

In conclusion I take this opportunity to thank the officials and staff of R.F.E. for their kindness to me during my stay in Munich and for the readiness with which they met my requests for information about their work.

Radio Free Europe in Munich is a large organisation, so that an investigation of this kind led from one operation to another; and I am fully conscious that in the time available it was not possible for me to cover every detail. However, I may say that I learned a great deal from R.F.E. It will give me pleasure if I have been able to assist its work.

Despatched in Sept.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

S.W.1.

February 23, 1956.

FR134/5

Thank you very much for sending us the report on your visit to Radio Free Europe. We will keep the circulation suitably restricted, but your detailed analysis will be of great value to us.

Thank you also for your invitation to lunch on February 27, which I am delighted to accept. I hope you will have had a good week's rest after the exertions of Munich and report writing.

(P. C. Storey)

G. Macdonald, Esq.,
BBC, Bush House,
Southeast Wing,
Strand, W.C.2.

1956

PR

INFORMATION RESEARCH DEPT.

PR 134/16

3

FROM Foreign Office
Minute
Mr. Reddaway.

No.
Dated July '6
Received in Registry— July 20

Radio Free Europe.
Reported ^{3¹/₂} move from Germany
to Britain within the next two
years.

References to former relevant papers

PR 134/106(55)

MINUTES within

(Print)

(How disposed of)

Mr) Chaucery, Bonn
from IRD 23 July
JH) B.S. Bonn
from IRD 7 Sept

(Action completed)

(Index)

JH 26/9 4110/56
JH

References to later relevant papers

center

Minutes.

CONFIDENTIAL.

PR 134/16.

RADIO FREE EUROPE.

We hear from the B.B.C. that Radio Free Europe have it in mind to try to move from Germany to Britain within the next two years.

2. They were able to organise their present large set up in Munich because the territory was under American occupation, but the German Government have apparently been trying to get them to move from Munich for some time past.

3. I believe that the B.B.C. are about as welcoming as Lea's daughters, and I imagine that nobody will show great enthusiasm about allowing them to settle here.

4. On the other hand, we have a close and excellent liaison with them, and there is no doubt that they are on our side. Also, they are some of the few people in the world who are prepared to follow up talk against Communism with action.

5. So far we have only had advance warning of what may be afoot. For all I know the German Government may relent or be prepared to bow to pressure. It seems to me, however, that it is not too early to start thinking about this problem.

N. Reddaway

(G. F. N. Reddaway).
July 16, 1956.

Mr. ~~Map~~, American Dept.

Copied to: *MR 10/11*
Western Dept.,
I.P.D.

James. RFE is highly regarded in the US and any move to turn it out of Germany or keep it out of the UK. would almost certainly be resented in the US (particularly if linked with other signs of "softening" towards Communism on our part esp. East-West trade) of

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

N. Reddaway
18 Jul

MR Reddaway

Mr Gray

Minutes.

I think we should try to confirm this story? through Bonn. It raises very difficult problems.

Pl. 18/7

Pl prepare a "Dear Chancery" letter to Bonn & clear it with other depts concerned

NR
18 Jul

EE pm Desk

Draft to Bonn
only 19/7

I cannot see R.F.E. getting a warm welcome here. Could not Southern Ireland accomodate them?

Robert
6.00

B. U 15 Sep
Res 24/9

NR
17 Aug

A) BIS, Bonn to IRD 31/1/27

21 Aug

/lsc

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.



Minutes

We are passing this
 info on to the BSE.
 Whether it is a final
 answer on RFE's future
 is another matter.

2. Can ~~any~~ ^{The} explanation of
 para 3 seem to be that
 Mr Oppen's letter at
 PR 134 / 10 G of May 1955.
 GH.

Dr. J
 Jr.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Registry No. *1R134/16*

Air mail 102

~~SECRET~~
~~SECRET~~
Confidential.
~~SECRET~~
~~SECRET~~

R.H-G.

July, 1956.

Draft. Letter.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

To:
Chancery
Bonn.

From:
I.R.D.

American Dept. (Mr. Man.)
Western Dept. } a-a.
I.P.D. *[Signature]* 158

Mr. Reddaway.

Dear Chancery,

We have heard from the BBC that Radio Free Europe may have it in mind to move their organization from Germany to the United Kingdom within the next two years. If this story is true some difficult problems will arise here. We should be glad to know if you have any information confirming it.

Yours Ever
IRD

NR
19 Jul

RECEIVED
20 JUL 1956
SENT TO
TYPE *207*
23

FOREIGN OFFICE,

S.W.1.

July 23, 1956.

CONFIDENTIAL
PR 134/16

Dear Chancery,

We have heard from the BBC that Radio Free Europe may have it in mind to move their organisation from Germany to the United Kingdom within the next two years. If this story is true some difficult problems will arise here. We should be glad to know if you have any information confirming it.

Yours ever,
Information Research Department.

Chancery,
Bonn.

Minutes.

N. Dept.

A seems to me rather
early to start thinking
about these matters
now.

2. I doubt whether
R.F.E. would be welcomed
today.

3. In a year's time they
may be somewhat welcome
or on the other hand they
may be one of our best
allies.

W. H. Stewart

J. H. [Signature]
18/7

If the Americans pay,

it would be a good dollar

export!

COM 18/7

Mr. H. H. [Signature]

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

P.W. entered
copy
M.H.
20 Jul

CONFIDENTIAL.

RADIO FREE EUROPE.

We hear from the B.B.C. that Radio Free Europe have it in mind to try to move from Germany to Britain within the next two years.

2. They were able to organise their present large set up in Munich because the territory was under American occupation, but the German Government have apparently been trying to get them to move from Munich for some time past.

*a rival of Namlyn's?
SH*

3. I believe that the B.B.C. are about as welcoming as Lee's daughter, and I imagine that nobody will show great enthusiasm about allowing them to settle here.

4. On the other hand, we have a close and excellent liaison with them, and there is no doubt that they are on our side. Also, they are some of the few people in the world who are prepared to follow up talk against Communism with action.

5. So far we have only had advance warning of what may be afoot. For all I know the German Government may relent or be prepared to bow to pressure. It seems to me, however, that it is not too early to start thinking about this problem.

(G.F.E. Reddaway).
July 16, 1956.

Mr. Han, American Dept.

Copied to:

Western Dept.,
I.P.D. *[initials]*

Mr. Morris *[initials]*
Mr. Hubblewhite
G.I.D. Lucas.

} may care to see.

19/vii

J.R.D. *[initials]*

[initials]
17/7.

PR



British Information Services,
 British Embassy,
 (22c) Bonn,
 Friedrich Ebert Allee 77.

August 21, 1956

31/1/27

CONFIDENTIAL

134/16
A

Dear Information Research Department,

Your letter PR 134/16 of July 23 about the possibility of Radio Free Europe moving to the United Kingdom.

2. We hear from the American Embassy that Radio Free Europe have absolutely no plan whatever to move to the United Kingdom. The only plan they do have is to find and set up a studio in London for the purpose of recording programmes to be mailed, or possibly sent over a programme line to Munich and other places for broadcasting. The purpose of this is to relieve over-crowding in their Munich studios and also to make better use of some people they employ on contract in London.

3. The Embassy add that the proposal was discussed with the Foreign Office some time ago and that the Foreign Office should know all about it. Unfortunately, as this is at second hand, the official with whom we spoke did not know with what department of the Foreign Office or with what individual their plan had been discussed.

Yours ever,

Information Research
 Department,
 Foreign Office,
 London, S.W.1.

BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICES

July

CONFIDENTIAL

(PR 134/16)

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

September 7, 1956.

Dear Information Services,

Thank you for your letter No. 31/1/27 of August 21 about Radio Free Europe's rumoured move to London. Their representative here did in fact mention the matter of the studio in connection with a request in May 1955 for our help in securing duty-free import of recording equipment that they needed for the studio.

Yours ever,

INFORMATION RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.

British Information Services,
BONN.

CONFIDENTIAL

(PR 134/16)

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

September 7, 1956.

Dear Information Services,

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Yours ever,

INFORMATION RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.

British Information Services,
BONN.

PR

INFORMATION RESEARCH DEPT.

PR 134/10

1956

3

FROM General Post Office, External Communications Department, to Miss Puleston General Department

No. Department

Dated 29/20/56

Received in Registry 16th April

21st April

Facilities for Radio Free Europe Circuits with G.P.O.

Has Foreign Office any objection to G.P.O. meeting requirements?

References

PR 134/11/55/G

MINUTES

Our reasons for supporting and helping RFE, and for welcoming the establishment of an important RFE centre in London, are set out in ^{para 2 of Mr. Rennie's} submission of May 25, 1955 on PR 134/11/1955 G. The G.P.O. should be advised to give RFE maximum assistance.

Hugh Overlin
23/4.

General Dept
D. 25/4

I have informed Mr. Hopkinson, G.P.O. in the sense of the last sentence of Mr. Overton's minute. G.P.O. would be grateful if we would confirm by letter.

J. S. Puleston.
26/4

Draft.
Ho.
4/5.

(Print)

Flag A.

(How disposed of)

Mr. C. J. Gill, G.P.O.
from Mr. Overton 4 May

(Action completed)

(Index)

JH 5/5

15/1/5
JH

Enter
PK
E



134/10

GENERAL POST OFFICE
EXTERNAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS EXECUTIVE
UNION HOUSE, ST. MARTIN'S-LE-GRAND,
LONDON, E.C.1

Telephone : HEADquarters

Telegrams : Gentel Cent London
Phongen Cent London

In any reply please quote : 29220/56

Your Ref :

GT 11/8

6th April, 1956.

Dear Miss Puleston,

Hopkinson of my division spoke to you the other day about a visit we had received from representatives of Radio Free Europe. Radio Free Europe wanted to discuss various questions concerning arrangements for broadcasting programmes from new studios to be opened in London. It appears that if various factors are settled to their satisfaction they will set up a big centre in London from which they will transmit broadcast programmes chiefly to Munich. They will also need to keep in close touch with Munich on many matters concerning their general administration. They also enquired if we could provide two permanent radio circuits to Lisbon, also for the transmission of broadcast material.

Between 1st September, 1956 and 1st March, 1957 they are likely to require one programme transmission circuit and one teleprinter circuit between London and Munich for about two hours daily. After 1st March, 1957 they would require these facilities on a full time basis. So far as the Post Office is concerned we could meet their first requirements without difficulty and we

/could

Miss D. E. Puleston,
General Department,
Foreign Office,
LONDON, S.W.1.

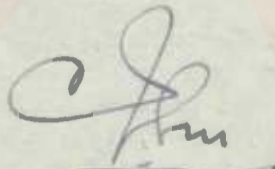
RECEIVED IN
 C.B.
 17 APR 1956
 SENT TO REPT.
 184

21 APR 1956

could probably provide the full time facilities by the middle of 1957. For various reasons we do not think it possible to provide circuits to Lisbon by radio. We have not so far examined the possibility of providing the programme circuits to Lisbon via France and Spain.

We should be glad to know if there is any Foreign Office objection to our meeting the requirements of Radio Free Europe if in fact they place definite orders.

Yours sincerely,



(C. J. GILL)

Despatched in Sept.

FOREIGN OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W.1.

(PR134/10)

May 4, 1956

Thank you for your letter no. 29220/56 of April 16, 1956 to Miss Paleston regarding facilities for Radio Free Europe to broadcast from London. I write to confirm that there is no Foreign Office objection to your meeting the requirements of Radio Free Europe as outlined in your letter and we should be grateful if you would give them all possible assistance.

(H.F.A. Overton)

C.J. Gill Esq.,
General Post Office,
External Telecommunications Executive,
Union House, St. Martin's-le-Grand,
E.C.1.