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Chapter 4 CONTACTS WITH THE PUBLIC

Exactly what relationship should FBMS have with the American public? That was one of the early policy decisions that had to be made by the new service and approved by FCC. Actually, two somewhat independent questions had to be answered in deciding upon a policy: Should the public be informed concerning the purposes and methods of FBMS? Should final products of the organization be released to the public? The second of the two questions was more easily answered, as practical limitations on production soon made a negative reply inevitable. Finding an answer to the first question proved more complicated.

The Press and Commentators

Early reasoning was that there was no legitimate reason for hiding operations of FBMS. There was nothing to prevent any American from listening to foreign broadcasts if he had a shortwave radio, and such radios could be purchased freely in any city or village. FBMS was merely recording, translating, processing, and analyzing these broadcasts for the benefit of U.S. government agencies. Why try to make a secret of the activity or the reasons for it? FCC itself sought at first to inform the public concerning the new operation. On 19 March 1941 the FCC information office prepared a release for the

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press describing plans for the new service. Nothing was held back. The story placed the probable number of employees at 350 and listed the categories of skills that would be required. The sites selected for monitoring were not revealed, but it was said that recording would be done at primary listening posts throughout the United States and its possessions, and the material would be coordinated in a central Washington office. The FCC information office continued to issue such press releases, and on 25 August 1941 reported that the new service was at work and recording 600,000 to 900,000 words daily, with translators and analysts working 24 hours a day. This time the four listening posts already being utilized were identified, and the "beltline process" used in handling copy was described in considerable detail. One item concerning the relationship to the public was added this time. The story said that, "for obvious reasons, the reports and other findings of FBMS are confidential," but went on to explain that "public interest in the national defense invites some explanation of the general scope and work."

Of course news reporters were not satisfied to accept releases from the FCC information office. FBMS officials were queried and requests for more information began to pour in. On 9 July 1941 Harold Graves wrote a

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memorandum for Lloyd Free commenting upon his "embarrassment" at inaccuracies in the accompanying BALTIMORE SUN article, especially the "dragging in" of the Princeton Listening Post and the claim that FBIS was a joint project of FCC, Princeton, and the Rockefeller Foundation -- the "brain child" of Prof. John B. Whitton of Princeton. On 8 September 1941 FBMS officials were equally embarrassed by a syndicated article by Eleanor Ragsdale, who said that FBMS was "inaugurated and pushed through by Chairman Fly of FCC." It now was obvious that foreign broadcast monitoring was an activity that had some public appeal. There would be no problem in getting publicity. The problem now was to guide that publicity to make sure it did not mislead.

On 14 November 1941 the editor of the PORTLAND OREGONIAN wrote the Washington office asking permission to write up FBMS, with photos taken at the Portland bureau. William Carter had been contacted, but referred the paper to headquarters. Graves wrote Carter on 21 November 1941 outlining the first ground rules for such publicity. Undoubtedly his letter was written only after conference and discussion, for instructions to Carter were specific.* On 14 January 1942 FCC notified FBMS that no

* The letter noted that George Sterling had agreed that photos could be taken of monitoring operations. It would be all right to say that broadcasts from the Far East were being monitored, but quality and frequency of the broadcasts were not to be mentioned. The fact that checks were made daily on foreign efforts to influence U.S. opinion could be revealed, but specific instances were out. FBIS Records, National Archives.

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more photos of operations were to be authorized. Free wrote a report to FCC on 16 January 1942 explaining that the practice of FBMS had been to release information on methods and operations, but not on contents of reports and analyses. He defended this policy.* Other requests for information were pending, including one from a publication in Puerto Rico, so Free suggested a meeting with the FCC Chairman to work out a new war-time policy. Apparently this discussion resulted in some changes. On 4 February 1942 Free wrote the PORTLAND OREGONIAN apologizing for the long delay in answering its request and explaining that since the start of the war a "strict policy" had been adopted of allowing no further publicity. Yet on 10 March 1942 he wrote the editor of RADIO MAGAZINE that FBMS policy was to freely answer queries concerning "the mechanics of radio monitoring operations," but to maintain "absolute secrecy" concerning contents of broadcasts. A similar letter went the same day to the Milwaukee JOURNAL. It would seem that the strict policy of not releasing anything

* Free said that most of the information concerning methods and operations were obtainable in Congressional reports anyway, and he thought public information of FBMS activities was a morale builder, showing that democracy was not always slow and bumbling. FBIS Records, National Archives.

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was relaxed very quickly.

Fly himself released a considerable amount of information for READERS DIGEST in the summer of 1942. Writing to the editor in answer to a request on 23 July, Fly listed a number of incidents demonstrating the value of FBIS intercepts, including the big play given by the Tokyo radio to a minor eruption in the Philippines and its failure to report the Mauna Loa eruption, thus demonstrating the fallacy of reports that illicit radios in Hawaii were passing information to the Japanese.* A SATURDAY EVENING POST article by David G. Wittels was written after the writer interviewed Robert D. Leigh and visited FBIS operations.** The manuscript was presented to Leigh before it was published, and he objected strenuously to parts of the article, in correspondence with both Wittels and the editor of the magazine. However, his objections were not to any revelations of FBIS operations, but to the false

* Other examples listed by Fly were interception of the Mexican President's speech declaring war on the Axis, making an immediate relay to Latin America by CIAA possible; conviction of Kansas publisher Court Archer on testimony provided by FBMS intercepts; accurate predictions based on FBMS material that Germany would launch a submarine war in the Atlantic and Rommel would not attack Cairo and Suez; and discovery through a Japanese admiral's speech that the Japanese were mistreating U.S. prisoners of war. FBIS Records, National Archives.

** "Hitler's Shortwave Rumor Factory," SATURDAY EVENING POST for 21 November 1942.

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impressions he felt the article gave the public concerning influence of the German radio. No effort was made to censor the article. FBIS officials spent some time later in correspondence with interested readers attempting to correct the false impressions Leigh had foreseen.

Newspaper and magazine writers continued to prepare articles giving information regarding FBIS, or based on material processed by FBIS, and frequently were given full cooperation. Graves, suggesting revisions in a BALTIMORE SUN article that he had been allowed to examine before publication, noted on 10 April 1943 that the article referred to "Japanese-born" employees of FBIS. He explained that there were no such employees, as all Japanese monitors in FBIS were American citizens, and Japanese could not be naturalized. Leigh promised a writer of FORTUNE on 2 February 1943 that he would read the article submitted to him and point out "anything of a confidential nature." Russell M. Shepherd, fourth FBIS Director, wrote the BALTIMORE SUN on 8 January 1946 thanking the writer of an article concerning FBIS, which he considered accurate and appropriate. Not all press material about the organization was that well received. An article by Peter Edson in the CHICAGO TRIBUNE on 31 July 1942 questioned the wisdom of recording and distributing "foreign radio lies," which Edson claimed would

get little attention if they were not so widely distributed by FBIS. He also criticized adversely a Daily Report which he had got hold of. Chairman Fly wrote to the Washington EVENING STAR on 31 December 1943 protesting a syndicated column by Helen Lombard which "attempted to smear" FBIS by charging that it prevented members of Congress from seeing its publications.

Public Use of Monitored Product

In the early months of the war, with approval of FCC, certain well known news commentators were supplied with some copies of the Daily Report as an experiment. Among those selected were Raymond Gran Swing, H. V. Kaltenborn, and Dorothy Thompson. This led to requests from other commentators, and some embarrassment for FBIS, but in most cases the net result was considered advantageous for FBIS. Swing continued to get the Daily Report, even after FBIS releases normally were funnelled through OWI. There was considerable correspondence with Miss Thompson and on 27 July 1942 she wrote: "I greatly admire the work that the monitoring service has done for us. I am greatly indebted for the only complete and intelligent original scripts of notable public addresses made abroad, for instance, those of Adolf Hitler." Later in

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1945 copies of the Daily Report were again released directly to some commentators, and then this practice was halted. On 21 February 1946 Walter Lippman wrote FBIS protesting refusal to supply him with a copy. Later, following another change in policy, he was put on the mailing list.

In the earliest days of FBMS, when emphasis was on radio propaganda analysis, it was not considered that the news media would have any interest in the product of foreign broadcast monitoring, though universities and certain educational organizations would. When war came, with new emphasis on news and intelligence from enemy countries and the closing of much of the world to U.S. newsmen, the picture changed quickly. FBIS was the source of much material suitable for use by newspapers and radio broadcasters. It still was considered inappropriate for FBIS to release its material to the news media, as plans were being worked out to centralize distribution of government information to the public.

The Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), under the direction of Archibald McLeish, was first set up for this purpose and various discussions were held concerning the best way for OFF to make use of FBIS material. On 18 March 1942 Chairman Fly wrote McLeish agreeing to an

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earlier suggestion that he place two liaison men in the FBIS office to sort out information to release to the public. McLeish wrote Free several times describing the categories of material his office desired and methods for handling it. He promised FBIS would be publicly credited for any information used by the press or radio. It soon was apparent that OFF still was thinking in terms of propaganda analysis, and had no conception of the value of FBIS material as a current news source.

OFF did not last long, and in a few months its function of funneling material to the news media was taken over by the Foreign Service Division of OWI, with Matthew Gordon in charge. Gordon advised FBIS that he wished to set up a news ticker service, based to a large extent on the FBIS A Wire, to serve private news media. On 11 September 1942 Leigh reported to FCC that he had come to a "definite understanding" with Gordon. His office would get FBIS publications, in addition to the A Wire. FBIS would refer all public requests to OWI and would revert strictly to the function of providing information to government units. Later it was agreed that in certain instances material would be distributed directly from FBIS with prior OWI approval. This practice applied in handling leader speeches,

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received directly from FBIS, and in providing Daily Reports to a few commentators, such as Swing, who previously had been getting the material. Because of the greater accuracy of FBIS speech releases, OWI attempted to get all news agencies and the press to use FBIS versions rather than some others available, and so informed Fly in a letter dated 23 October 1942.

This arrangement proved quite satisfactory to FBIS. On 9 November 1942 NBC requested regular Axis propaganda material from FBIS for daily broadcasts. Leigh did not approve of the nature of the series planned by NBC, but he was saved the unpleasant task of refusing the materials by referring the request to OWI. Leigh was so well satisfied with the system that on 2 January 1943 he wrote Nelson Rockefeller suggesting that CIAA set up a similar system for release of information concerning Latin America.

Of course, as the practice became established, certain officials in FBIS did find flaws. The original agreement was that material from FBIS going out on the OWI ticker would be accredited to either FBIS or FCC. Many news purveyors, feeling that FBIS was a competitor while OWI was assisting the press, preferred to credit all material to OWI. Leigh in a memorandum on 21 January 1943 assured Grandin that the news media rather than

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OWI were responsible for the incorrect accreditation, and suggested that he confer with Gordon concerning ways to pressure news handlers. Edward Rand from Puerto Rico on 9 August 1943 sent some clippings with items monitored in Puerto Rico but attributed to OWI, and expressed surprise to learn that OWI was "duplicating" FBIS monitoring. Williams from San Francisco wrote to Edward Hullinger on 23 February 1944 complaining that an article in BROADCASTING MAGAZINE, based on FBIS monitoring, failed to mention FBIS. A later check showed that the false attribution was the work of the magazine, not OWI. FCC officials noted the slights, but Leigh in a memorandum to Commissioner Minderman on 1 May 1944 argued that it was better to let the matter ride, as FBIS considered that furnishing material to the newspapers was only an incidental part of its job, and did not wish to exploit the conception that this was its major function. This did not mollify the complainants, but on 14 July 1944 Fly wrote Matt Gordon that he was "happy to know" that under the new contract OWI would "oblige" users of FBIS material to give proper accreditation to either FBIS or FCC.

The FBIS contribution to the news media was great all during the war years, even though much of the material was attributed to OWI. An office study

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reported on 15 January 1945 showed that one-fourth of the material going out on the A Wire and through the Daily Report had been getting into the press. In January 1944 the Associated Press in San Francisco formally requested that it have direct access to the wire file sent from West Coast monitoring posts to Washington. The request was referred to OWI. Gordon wrote Charles Hyneman on 21 October 1944 that the four major U.S. news agencies -- AP, UP, INS, and Transradio Press -- had made daily use of FBIS monitoring received through OWI, and were highly appreciative of the service they got.*

Among requests for FBIS services were many from universities and educational organizations. Princeton and Stanford Universities, both of which halted their monitoring operations when FBIS was launched, got its publications from the start. On 20 June 1941 Graves received a request from the Institute of Pacific Relations, with the explanation that it had been served by Stanford until its listening operations were halted

* The letter contained the following passages: "And as the letters from these organizations testify, this has been an important service both to the news gathering, media and to the American people. Since these agencies have been kind enough to express these things to me on various occasions, I thought that you would like to have this letter, since your organization has furnished the major part of the monitoring material which has made our work effective." FBIS Records, National Archives.

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"in favor of FBMS." Later, Matt Gordon approved release of publications to the organization. Harold Graves showed a tendency to honor requests from institutions, but he was overruled. During the war a number of universities wanted FBIS publications for use by the Army Specialized Training Program and the Civil Affairs Training Schools on their campuses. These requests were granted, with the understanding that the publications would be protected as confidential documents by the university libraries until the end of the war. After the war some of these libraries sought to get missing copies in order to complete their files, and in a few instances their desires were met. After the war new requests also continued to come in, and they were honored whenever possible until 10 June 1946. Then the War Department decided that for reasons of economy the publications would have to be restricted to government offices.*

* General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, head of CIG, wrote on 8 January 1947 that his organization, having assumed responsibility for FBIS, hoped to rescind the 10 June 1946 War Department order and make FBIS materials available to "the American press and radio for use in the public interest," but for the time being, because of budgetary limitations, would continue the War Department policy. His letter did not mention university libraries. FBIS Records, National Archives.

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Amateur Radio Fans

Perhaps the single group of Americans most enthusiastic concerning establishment of FBMS in early 1941 was the growing fraternity of amateur radio fans. These individuals, many of them teenaged youths with a goodly sprinkling of physically handicapped, were familiar with the vibrant activity of the air waves. Next to the FCC engineers, they probably knew more about what was being broadcast for American ears than did any other group in the United States. Several magazines already were published to serve them, and they had a national organization. Many also were highly skilled in radio techniques, with not a few having built their own receiving sets. As soon as the first news releases on FBMS were published, the office at 316 F Street began to hear from these radio fans. Some wanted fulltime jobs with the new organization. Some wanted information on methods to be used by FBMS. Quite a few wanted to aid the infant listening post by contributing information on frequencies and programs.

FBMS was able to make use of quite a number of these amateurs. One of the first regular consultants hired following CSC approval of such employment was Charles A. Morrison of Normal, Illinois. He was editor

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of GLOBE CIRCLER, one of the magazines for ham radio operators. Graves wrote Morrison on 25 November 1941 telling him his appointment had been approved and outlining the contract terms. He was to provide FBMS with all information he could assemble on foreign broadcasts and file weekly reports when he had sufficient material. His pay was to be \$25 a day, but not more than \$100 in any one month. He agreed to keep his position confidential and to use FBMS stationery only in corresponding with FBMS.

Mr. Morrison worked for FBIS several years, but was only one of several such consultants. Another was Thomas Jones, a 19-year old invalid of St. Petersburg, Florida. He received a contract in 1943 and continued to work until his death long after the war. In addition to reporting on radio frequencies and new programs, Jones also frequently recorded broadcasts not heard in regular FBIS stations and mailed in the records for processing. On 20 May 1944 Dr. Leigh wrote a "to whom it may concern" letter testifying to Jones' status as an FBIS shortwave consultant. Jones had requested the letter so that he could get priority for purchase of a new receiver.

The section of FBIS that benefited most directly from reports of consultants, amateur fans who wrote voluntarily, and the radio magazines, was the Program

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Information Unit. By 1945 "Program Schedules of Foreign Broadcasters" was being published regularly twice a year and had wide circulation. The value some quarters placed on this publication is attested to by Loring B. Andrews of the Planning Division of OWI in a letter to Graves on 2 July 1943. Mr. Andrews was "distressed" to learn that Roger C. Legge, head of the Program Information Unit, was about to be drafted into the armed forces. The writer said he was "amazed at the magnificent job" Legge had been doing with only two assistants, thought he was the right man in the right place, and hoped he could stay there. He described Legge as a "ham" of ten years' experience, "living, breathing, and eating shortwave every day."

Legge was only the first of several amateur radio fans whose services were of value to FBIS in this position. Another was James G. Wedewer, who though physically handicapped, became a capable radio engineer and took part in several of the surveys leading to establishment of radio monitoring posts in the islands of the Pacific. During the last of his nearly 20 years with FBIS he was head of the much larger Broadcast Information Service (BIS), successor to the Program Information Unit. A writer for one of the amateur fan magazines who visited Silver Hill in later 1944 was

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impressed with Wedewer.* Before the end of the war, capable radio technicians were hard to find, and the ranks of amateur fans supplied many able FBIS engineers and cruising monitors.

Prisoner of War Information

Amateur radio listeners also indirectly influenced another facet of FBIS contact with the public. Tokyo started broadcasting names of prisoners of war held by the Japanese in January 1942. By summer Berlin was transmitting such information and Rome soon followed. By the spring of 1943 the programs from the three transmitters carrying names of prisoners sometimes ran as high as 20 a day. Some of the broadcasts merely gave names, addresses, next of kin, and identification numbers of prisoners. Others actually carried statements supposedly made by the men. FBIS began processing these broadcasts as soon as they started, but it was June 1943 before the practice of keeping a card file of all such names was started. At first the broadcasts were handled as any others, but on 2 June 1943,

* The magazine was QST. In its edition for January 1945 it described the visit to Silver Hill and had the following passage: "This fellow James Wedewer mentioned above can give you the location of any listed shortwave or broadcast station throughout the world. We had quite a talk with this lad and picked call letters out of the 'blue sky' to test his ability to recognize the station. His quick identification was amazing."

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following discussions with the War Department, a special wire was installed to carry only names of prisoners of war and prisoners' messages. It was called the E Wire, and went to the office of the Provost Marshal General. If the broadcasts carried other material of news or intelligence value, they also went on the A Wire. On 10 September 1943 the E Wire was abandoned, with all prisoner information funneled through the A Wire, which also went to the office of the Provost Marshal General.

Needless to say, enemy broadcasts of prisoners' names and messages got immediate and widespread attention. The Provost Marshal General wrote FBIS on 13 November 1942 asking that all such broadcasts be mailed to him as soon as possible, saying their interception was especially significant because of Japanese failure to report to the International Red Cross. Dr. Leigh replied on 18 November, informing the Provost Marshal General that all FBIS stations had been instructed to record and process every intercepted broadcast carrying a prisoner's name.

The broadcasts also were heard by amateur radio listeners, and their reports aroused a wave of public interest. Amateurs began to write or phone the next of kin mentioned in a message and inform him of the news. Some tried to profit from the situation, notifying the next of kin that information would be given after payment

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of a fee. FBIS reported on 4 March 1943 that it heard of one California couple that had received 50 phone calls and 80 letters telling that their son was held prisoner by the Japanese. Government officials felt that further action was imperative. A meeting was held in the Office of Censorship on 3 May 1943, attended by two representatives from FBIS. It was decided that as little public attention should be called to the situation as possible, but that an effort should be made to discourage the amateur practice of notifying the next of kin. Censorship preferred not to attempt any legal action, but to resort to persuasion. Stories were released informing the public that POW broadcasts were for the purpose of enemy propaganda, and could not be accepted as accurate. It was following this meeting that the E Wire was started, so that information could get to the Office of the Provost Marshal General sooner and next of kin notified officially.

Discontinuance of the E Wire followed an unexplained request from the Provost Marshal General on 9 September 1943. A query to his office elicited the information that Office of Censorship had asked that the service be discontinued. Mystified, FBIS officials sought an explanation from Censorship and learned that the FBIS service "was no longer needed," as the work of monitoring

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POW broadcasts and notifying the next of kin had been assigned to the Women's Auxiliary Volunteer Service (WAVS), a private group organized in Los Angeles. When pressed for a further explanation, Byron Price, chief of Censorship, explained that the system followed by FBIS had not eliminated the black market. He acknowledged that FBIS service was prompt, reports often reaching the Provost Marshal General in as little as 15 minutes, but it took three or four days to get the information out to the next of kin. Besides, Price explained, he thought it was bad to have a U.S. government agency "distributing enemy propaganda."

At the time of this Censorship decision FBIS was averaging 50 names of prisoners daily and processing 4,000 words of prisoner broadcasts. The work continued, as the Army and Navy wanted the information, as did the Canadian and Netherlands missions. Dr. Leigh continued the discussion with Censorship, pointing out that a group of amateurs had been encouraged to duplicate the work of a professional and official monitoring system.* Price

* Leigh disposed of Price's argument that a government agency should not distribute enemy propaganda by pointing out that the Women's Auxiliary Volunteer Service included on each telegram to a next of kin the following wording: "This message has been received and transcribed by the official listening post of the WAVS, authorized by the U.S. Government to act in its behalf." In other words, the Government was officially authorizing amateurs to "distribute enemy propaganda."

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consented to a meeting with Elmer Davis, Chairman Fly, and the Provost Marshal General, where it was decided that FBIS itself should send telegrams to the next of kin as soon as a prisoner broadcast was prepared for the Provost Marshal General. A format for the telegrams to be sent out was decided upon. Also on 10 November 1943 FBIS wire editors again started filing prisoner information to the Provost Marshal General on a special wire, this time called the PM Wire. Fly wrote to Congressman Clifton A. Woodrun telling him of the new service, as the cost of sending the telegrams was not provided for in the FBIS appropriation. Woodrun approved the project before it was started. It was decided that each telegram should warn the recipient that the broadcast was enemy propaganda.*

In addition to the expense, this service absorbed a great amount of time. About 2,700 telegrams a month were sent, and many of them elicited replies, often with requests for more information. Leigh's staff in the following six months was forced to spend a great deal of its time in answering such letters. The WAVS did not

* Each telegram read as follows: "The name of John Doe has been mentioned in an enemy broadcast as a POW in Japanese (German) hands. The purpose of such broadcasts is to gain listeners for the enemy propoganda which they contain. But the Army (Navy) is checking the accuracy of this information and will advise you as soon as possible. FBIS of FCC." FBIS Records, National Archives.

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receive with good grace the notification that its services were no longer needed. The women pleaded for authorization to continue the work, arguing that it was of value despite the duplication of FBIS activities.

The new system was not entirely successful, for amateur listeners continued to notify the next of kin. Many recipients of telegrams wrote thanking FBIS, but adding that the same information had been obtained from several other sources. Many sincere amateurs wrote asking if there was anything wrong with their continuing to listen to the broadcasts and to notify the next of kin. Leigh patiently replied to each one, explaining that there was nothing illegal about listening to the broadcasts, though it was illegal to repeat enemy propaganda, and at any rate the amateur listeners were merely duplicating FBIS activities. Many touching letters were received from persons who had heard of the service but had not received telegrams. Their husbands or sons were reported missing in action, or they had not heard from them for a long period, and they wondered if FBIS had any information. These letters, too, received careful answers. Most of those who received telegrams were deeply appreciative, and some high in their praise of FBIS. One woman wrote on 25 February 1944: "It is a pleasure to come across a

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government bureau doing the very good work you are doing."* Many newspapers carried stories telling of the FBIS service, and the net result was much good will for FBIS. A Philadelphia reporter who was preparing a critical story on notification of next of kin called FBIS and got a full account of the way the service was handled. She still wrote the critical story, but centered her wrath on the Provost Marshal General for slowness in following up FBIS notifications.

When Charles Hyneman became Director of FBIS in 1944 a long second look was given the system. It had become obvious that many amateur listeners still were reporting POW broadcasts. Correspondence with relatives of prisoners was taking an inordinate amount of time, though Hyneman was careful to handle all such correspondence. As late as 13 January 1945 a memorandum to his staff cited delay in answering some queries from next of kin and declared that "no business in FBIS is more important than giving prompt answers to such queries."

* Not all were that appreciative. A man wrote from Corpus Christi, Texas, on 30 March 1944 denouncing FBIS for "wasting the government's money" by sending "such unimportant messages by wire." He said his mother, who had a weak heart, was called to the telephone in the middle of the night to take the message and had a heart attack and almost died. "And all this," he finished, "for a message that didn't amount to a tinker's dam," for it told nothing they did not already know. FBIS Records, National Archives.

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Assistant Director Edward Hullinger reported to Hyneman on 5 July 1944 that he had discussed the telegrams with Byron Price, who was of the opinion that under the circumstances it was hardly worthwhile to continue them. At any rate, Axis propaganda had greatly deteriorated and the government was no longer concerned about the size of its listening audience. Hullinger also talked with the Provost Marshal General, who agreed that the service could be dropped. The primary consideration for FBIS was the cost. The prisoner broadcast service was costing \$60,000 a year, and FBIS was having serious budgetary problems.

The Provost Marshal General formally agreed to discontinuance of the service on 4 August 1944, and telegrams to next of kin were stopped immediately. The PM Wire, paid for by the War Department, was continued until September 1945, after the surrender of Japan. No similar service was undertaken during the Korean war, and none has been offered during the Vietnamese war, though the FBIS Wire Service has continued to run broadcast information concerning prisoners of war.

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