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MEMORANDUM FOR: 303 Committee

SUBJECT: Report of the Radio Study Group (RSG)
on the Future of Radio Free Europe (RFE)
and Radio Liberty (RL)

1. I have reviewed the report of the Radio Study Group (RSG) on the future of Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL), and feel I must make one or two points that I think deserve your consideration and discussion when we meet to review the report.

2. The report is exceedingly well done, and I endorse both its analysis and, with one exception, the recommendations it sets forth. As the report concludes, I perceive no realistic basis upon which the Agency might continue funding the two radios without some admission of government support for their operations. A denial or "no comment" stance in response to queries about government support would indeed undermine the credibility of the Katzenbach Report.

3. I am concerned, however, with the tactical aspects of the method proposed for handling the press. Specifically,

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I refer to the wording of the scenario to be followed in the expected press conference. To contend that, since government support is being openly acknowledged, no exception to the Katzenbach policy is involved, would in my opinion be construed as an evasion of the issue. It would invite questions as to source and specific amounts. The failure to answer would provoke editorial criticism and a continuing attempt to get at the whole truth.

4. All things considered, I believe that our best course is to face the situation directly by making an exception under the terms of the Katzenbach report, and by admitting that it has in fact been made. I would therefore recommend that the wording of the scenario be revised to conform with this approach to our problem.

(Signed)

Richard Helms
Director

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