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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

SURVEY OF THE FUNCTION OF MONITORING PRESS  
AND PROPAGANDA BROADCASTS OF FOREIGN POWERS

Memorandum by the Director of Central Intelligence

1. During the war the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) conducted a Foreign Broadcasting Intelligence Service (FBIS) which monitored press and propaganda broadcasts of foreign powers.

2. The FCC was in the process of liquidating this agency when its functions were taken over by the War Department on an interim basis on 30 December 1945. The War Department has requested that the Director of Central Intelligence assume responsibility for the proper disposition of former FBIS functions with a view to determining the most appropriate Government agency to monitor foreign propaganda broadcasts on a continuing basis and make the necessary recommendations to the National Intelligence Authority (Enclosure "B").

3. It appears that this study should be undertaken as a matter of urgency. The Central Intelligence Group is prepared to furnish the steering member of an interdepartmental committee, and believes that such a committee should be organized at once to make the necessary study.

4. Paragraph 3 of N.I.A. Directive ~~NO 11~~ provides a procedure by which such a committee can be created by unanimous approval of the Director of Central Intelligence and the Intelligence Advisory Board, without reference to the National Intelligence Authority.

5. The memorandum in Enclosure "A" is designed to establish the proposed committee and give it the necessary directive. If all members of the Advisory Board concur in the draft without substantial change, a meeting will not be necessary. It is

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recommended that Enclosure "A" be approved, and that each member of the Advisory Board arrange for necessary implementation by his Department,

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ENCLOSURE "A"

D R A F T

C.I.G. DIRECTIVE NO.

SURVEY OF THE FUNCTION OF MONITORING PRESS  
AND PROPAGANDA BROADCASTS OF FOREIGN POWERS

Memorandum by the Director of Central Intelligence,  
with the Unanimous Concurrence  
of the Intelligence Advisory Board

1. a. During the war the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) conducted a Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (FBIS) which monitored press and propaganda broadcasts of foreign powers. The FCC was in process of liquidating this agency when its functions were taken over by the War Department on an interim basis on 30 December 1945.

b. The product of the FBIS was valuable to the State Department, to the intelligence agencies of the War and Navy Departments, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and undoubtedly to other departments and agencies.

c. Since the interim arrangements will cease at the end of the fiscal year 1946, it is essential that the ultimate disposition of former FBIS functions be determined at an early date.

2. By unanimous approval of the Director of Central Intelligence and the Intelligence Advisory Board an ad hoc committee is hereby established to consist of five members, one representing the Director of Central Intelligence and one representing each member of the Intelligence Advisory Board. This committee will promptly make a detailed study of facilities, resources and operations for monitoring foreign press and propaganda broadcasts, and will determine whether this service is of continuing value to existing Federal agencies. Its report will include recommendations as to:

a. Which resources, facilities, and operating functions should be continued in the national interest.

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Enclosure "A"

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b. What disposition should be made of preserved resources and facilities and what assignments should be made of responsibility for conducting the preserved operating functions.

c. What budgetary arrangements should be made.

3. The committee will submit a report of findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Director of Central Intelligence, who will then prepare suitable recommendations to be submitted to the National Intelligence Authority after obtaining the concurrence or comment of the Intelligence Advisory Board. The Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation will be invited to sit as a member of the Intelligence Advisory Board for consideration of these recommendations.

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Enclosure "A"

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ENCLOSURE "B"

12 February 1946

MEMORANDUM FOR REAR ADMIRAL SIDNEY W. SOUERS:

Subject: Monitoring of Foreign Propaganda Broadcasts.

1. During December 1945 the War Department was informed that the Federal Communications Commission was in process of liquidating its Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (FBIS) which monitored press and propaganda broadcasts of foreign powers. Although systematic coverage of foreign propaganda broadcasts was believed primarily the concern of the State Department, it was also valuable as an auxiliary activity to the intelligence functions of the War and Navy Departments. Other government agencies were served by the product of the FBIS. Therefore, as an interim measure only, pending any program the State Department might initiate, the War Department expanded its monitoring program to meet the need arising from the liquidation of FBIS (Tab "A").

2. The War Department, with the approval of the Federal Communications Commission (Tab "B"), accordingly employed former FBIS personnel and placed them on the War Department payroll effective 30 December 1945; and all FBIS facilities, including those held by lease or contract, were acquired by the War Department on loan or by transfer. The War Department arranged for the renegotiation of outstanding leases and contracts, which now constitute a charge against its current operating expenses. Pending detailed arrangements, it acquired by loan fixed facilities and equipment owned by Federal Communications Commission necessary to continued FBIS operations. See Tab "C" for the functional organization of FBIS.

3. It is inappropriate and outside of the scope of its responsibilities for the War Department to continue monitoring foreign press and propaganda broadcasts beyond the fiscal year 1946 (June 30, 1946). Another government agency should be prepared to

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continue the FBIS function after that date. It is therefore proposed that the Director of Central Intelligence assume responsibility for the proper disposition of the FBIS and its related Central Intelligence functions and make the necessary recommendations to the National Intelligence Authority with a view to determining the most appropriate government agency to monitor foreign propaganda broadcasts on a continuing basis. It is recommended that the War and Navy Departments be informed as early as practicable as to the ultimate disposition of FBIS.

/a/ HOYT S. VANDENBERG  
Lieutenant General, GSC  
Asst. Chief of Staff, G-2

- 3 Incls:  
1. Tab "A"  
2. Tab "B"  
3. Tab "C"

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Enclosure "B"

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TAB "A" TO ENCLOSURE "B"

21 December 1945

Honorable Paul Porter  
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Porter:

The War Department is advised that the Federal Communications Commission is liquidating the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (FBIS), which monitors and digests propaganda broadcasts of foreign powers.

Systematic coverage of foreign propaganda broadcasts is believed primarily the concern of the State Department. It also is valuable to the War and Navy Departments. In the circumstances of these times it is an essential source of intelligence. As an interim measure, pending any program the State Department may initiate, the War Department plans to expand its monitoring program to meet the need arising from the liquidation of the FBIS.

It is proposed that all FBIS personnel, without change of grade or duties or accrued leave, be transferred to the War Department prior to 31 December 1945 and that the Commission hold the personnel together by continuing operations pending an orderly determination and transfer of those essential to continued operations.

It is considered important that agreement in principle to the necessary transfers be reached immediately in order to avoid loss of continuity and of experienced personnel. A mutually satisfactory settlement of the details can readily be made by representatives of the War Department and of the Commission. The G-2 Division will represent the War Department in this matter.

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Your acceptance of these proposals is requested. It will facilitate War Department plans to expand its monitoring program in the national interest.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ ROBERT P. PATTERSON

Secretary of War

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TAB "B" TO ENCLOSURE "B"

December 27, 1945

Honorable Robert P. Patterson  
Secretary of War  
Pentagon Building  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Secretary Patterson:

This will acknowledge your letter of 21 December 1945 proposing a transfer to the War Department of the Commission personnel who have been engaged in the monitoring of foreign shortwave broadcasts and further proposing the loan to the War Department of all Federal Communications Commission facilities which have been employed in that activity.

The Commission accepts the proposals made in your letter and steps are being taken immediately to effectuate the arrangements which you suggest. To this end representatives of the War Department and representatives of the Commission met this morning for the purpose of making detailed plans.

The Commission is pleased that the War Department has found it possible to carry on this important activity.

By Direction of the Commission

/s/ PAUL A. PORTER

Chairman

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FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF  
THE FOREIGN BROADCAST INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Office of the Director [redacted] positions)

Directs and supervises the execution of all the functions of the service; responsible for supervision of the field offices, coordination of the work of the various divisions and units, liaison between the service and the government departments which it serves.

Monitoring Division [redacted] positions)

Monitors (linguists) summarize in English and provide excerpts from significant broadcasts being received at the Silver Hill station. All broadcasts monitored are recorded. Important ones are translated in full, some as part of regular schedule, others in response to special requests. A Program Information Section in the Division maintains a complete list of foreign broadcasts by station, frequency and time, which is used as the basis for making up the monitoring schedule for all Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (FBIS) monitoring stations.

Publications Division [redacted] positions)

Prepares and issues mimeographed and typewritten reports on incoming broadcasts for rapid distribution to government agencies requesting them. These include a daily report of texts, summaries and excerpts of Far Eastern broadcasts prepared by Far Eastern Section; a similar report of European broadcasts prepared by European Section; a similar report of European broadcasts by Latin American Section; special reports in answer to queries. This Division maintains cumulating, detailed knowledge of the content of the monitored radio broadcasts of foreign powers. A Special Services Section serves the Division by maintaining files of background facts, names and places and serves as a center for telephone and written queries for particular information from other agencies.

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Operates general specialized teletype services to interested government agencies to provide rapidly factual information of what is being broadcast by foreign powers; receives and transmits to monitors and editors the requests from user agencies for specific subjects or kinds of information to be monitored.

Administrative Services Division [REDACTED] positions)

Receives stencils of reports from the Publications Division and transcripts from the Monitoring Division; mimeographs, collates and distributes by messenger and mail the reports thus processed; also receives, records, distributes and files incoming and outgoing correspondence, mimeographed reports, transcripts and recordings; maintains a messenger service.

Field Organization [REDACTED] positions)

The field stations are located at strategic points for the interception and reporting to Washington of foreign broadcasts not monitored in the Washington area. There are FBIS stations at Guam; Kauai, T.H.; and Portland, Oregon. These stations monitor, translate, edit and dispatch by radio and pouch to Washington, D.C., press and propaganda broadcasts of foreign powers. The London and Cairo offices have access to similar material monitored by B.B.C. and M.O.I. respectively and performs the same selection, editing and transmission functions.

The foregoing functional organization of the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service is substantially that taken over by the War Department effective 30 December 1945. It is subject to review prior to final approval by the War Department.

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