

May 3, 1956

INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING FACILITIES

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. More than one-third of the total wattage in transmitter equipment owned by the USIA has been in Government storage since 1954. Whatever the reasons for not using this equipment, it is considered that a re-evaluation of that decision is now in order because of two unfavorable changes in the over-all situation:

- a. Strengthened jamming force on the part of the Communists, making a stronger signal necessary if our broadcasts to regions already covered are to continue to be intelligible;
- b. Greater necessity for reaching populations in the Middle and Near East, and in Asia, as these areas become increasingly controversial in the world struggle.

2. Attendant problems are of course budget appropriations, time required for installation of equipment (18 to 30 months) and negotiations for adequate sites.

3. The OCB is responsible for coordinating all aspects of NSC #169 pertaining to international broadcasting.

4. The State Department has requested a review in the OCB with respect to the need for increased radio transmitting facilities. A copy of the State Department request that the OCB consider the desirability, as a matter of urgency, of the full implementation of NSC Action 1386b is attached.

CHRONOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

5. NSC 1386b is an action taken on #169. NSC #169 assigned reporting responsibility for the entire policy statement to ODM, but specifically assigned coordination responsibility for Paragraphs 2, 8 (a), (b) and (c) to the OCB. Paragraph 8 (b) reads "The Operations Coordinating Board shall coordinate the technical planning of all American official and unofficial international broadcasting operations."

6. Technical planning for international broadcasting during the last few years has centered around utilization of six megawatt broadcast transmitters, originally ordered by the State Department for VOA in 1951 for employment in the so-called "Ring Plan" to encircle the Orbit. Four short-wave dual-500 KW transmitters were for use in the United States (Baker East and Baker West) and two mediumwave 1000 KW transmitters were for use abroad in Greece and Turkey. All these transmitters were listed by USIA in 1954 as excess property, with acquisition cost (with accompanying equipment) shown as \$5,902,310, and "fair value" at 50%. This equipment has never been used but has in no way become obsolete. It is now stored at Bush Terminal in Brooklyn. The warehouse is under lease to GSA and there is no charge made to USIA for storage.

7. The records of the years between the placing of the order and the declaration of excess in 1954 show no directive for actual cancellation of plans. However, NSC 137 made a number of recommendations limiting VOA operations; the Secretary of Defense specifically recommended that further expansion beyond existing facilities of the VOA be suspended; and, as a result of a letter from the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, dated February 3, 1953, the record indicates the State Department agreed that obligation of any funds for construction would be held in abeyance (except for three projects which were then too far advanced to permit cancellation). Just when the expansion program was abandoned is not clear from the record. The Senate Sub-Committee on Government Operations criticized VOA expansion plans in the spring of 1953. Contracts were cancelled soon after this, and a year later on April 4, 1954, USIA declared excess the equipment ordered in 1951.

8. The exchange of letters between OCB and GSA followed in May, 1954; at the request of the OCB, the GSA agreed not to release any of this equipment without prior consultation with the Board.

NSC ACTIONS

9. Plans for the utilization of all six megawatt transmitters were approved by the OCB Technical Panel for International Broadcasting (TPIB) during 1954 and 1955. These plans were referred to in the ODM Progress Report to the NSC dated January 10, 1955 on Paragraph 8 of NSC 169. NSC Action 1317 taken February 3, 1955 on the ODM report revised the wording of paragraph II-C to read:

"Certain technical improvements which would increase the effectiveness of all U.S. international broadcasting should be carried out. The most significant of these technical improvements - the installation of higher power transmitters and higher gain antennas - should be initiated immediately, initially utilizing four of the five sic higher power transmitters already in Government possession but not yet installed."

10. This action, as approved by the President, was transmitted to ODM. It involved the revision of reporting, for which ODM was responsible. The new wording was in the papers referenced by the NSC when later action 1386b was taken. NSC action 1317 also directed ODM to submit for early NSC consideration recommendations based on the reference Progress Report and the views of the JCS, together with estimates of the costs of implementing such recommendations.

11. Prior to submitting recommendations to the NSC, the ODM referred to the TPIB the USIA plans on which they were based. At that time it was recommended that two-500 KW shortwave transmitters be installed at Tangier, two-500 KW shortwave and one 1000 KW mediumwave in the Greek area, and two 500 KW shortwave in the Philippines; one 1000 KW mediumwave was earmarked for RFE at Istanbul. It was also agreed that the plan which went to the NSC should recommend that the one remaining megawatt be installed in the U.S. These plans were submitted to the NSC on April 28, 1955. The papers referenced that day on Action 1386b were:

NSC 169 (Statement of Policy)

ODM Progress Report on Paragraph 8 of NSC 169 (revised) dated 1/10/55
Action 1317

NSC Memo dated 3/24/55 containing JCS views and costs of implementing
recommendations (as supplied ODM by Mr. Streibert)
requested in 1317

NSC Memo dated 4/15/55 giving Planning Board recommendation for
implementation

12. NSC Action 1386b "Concurred in principle with the activation, by the Voice of America and other US-supported international broadcasting facilities, of additional high-powered transmitters in appropriate locations, subject to normal budgetary review of the costs involved" and was transmitted to ODM for coordination, although OCB had been specifically charged with coordination of such in the referenced policy statement.

ODM FOLLOW-UP

13. Subsequent to NSC Action 1386b, in May 1955 the ODM wrote to USIA requesting that agency to proceed with the desired activation, and further requested that ODM be kept informed on a quarterly basis. In June 1955, Mr. Streibert replied to ODM that it was USIA's interpretation that the NSC action was "permissive" and that action to be taken was to be determined solely by the Agency. In July 1955, USIA informed ODM that it was conducting a survey of the problem and expected to report in early autumn. In September, ODM inquired of USIA whether there were then any indication of implementation plans. In November, USIA informed ODM of plans to install two-500 KW shortwave transmitters at Tangier. (This was one of the four megawatt installations for which cost estimates had been submitted to the NSC at the time action 1386b was taken.)

SEPARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

14. Also in November 1955, the ODM-OCB agreement was formalized regarding reporting to the NSC on #169. The TPIB work program (Board Assistants 7/8/55) had recommended that coordinating and reporting responsibility for all technical matters relating to U. S. international broadcasting rest with OCB, while aspects of electro-magnetic communications other than international broadcasting should be left under the coordinating and reporting responsibility of ODM. This recommendation had been made with ODM concurrence. On November 29, 1955, ODM wrote to OCB:

"It is suggested that OCB take necessary steps to recommend to the NSC appropriate revision of the memorandum which transmitted 169. Such a revision should specify that items 2, 8a, b, and c of NSC 169 are those for which OCB will assume reporting responsibility."

15. After that date ODM did nothing further relative to 1386b. ODM was fully cognizant of the fact that OCB was then preparing a Progress Report on NSC 169 and had assumed both coordinating and reporting responsibility for those portions of NSC #169 which were concerned with international broadcasting.

~~SECRET~~

REPORT TO THE NSC

16. The first OCB Progress Report on NSC #169 (Paragraphs 2, 8a, b, and c) was transmitted under date of February 7, 1956. The transmittal letter read:

"With the concurrence of the Office of Defense Mobilization, the Board recommends to the National Security Council that formal responsibility for reporting progress under Paragraphs 2, 8a, 8b and 8c of NSC 169 be assigned to the Operations Coordinating Board, which has been charged with the coordinating responsibility for the implementation of these paragraphs."

17. ODM's report on NSC 169, which has not yet been transmitted to the NSC, states that arrangements made with the OCB transfer to the Board all reporting on those items of 169 which concern international broadcasting.

18. The OCB Progress Report on NSC #169, with reference to technical planning (Paragraph 8b) reported under summary statement of operating progress on major NSC objectives:

"With reference to the action taken by the NSC authorizing in principle the installation of four high-powered transmitters overseas, plans are now under way for the installation of only one of these units. Present budgetary plans do not include provision for installation of the other high-powered transmitters."

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

19. During the past year, RFE abandoned plans for Istanbul where negotiations for a transmitter site were unsuccessful; the OCB requested GSA to release one megawatt for RFE use in Lisbon and one megawatt for USIA at Tangier; and just recently RLN, another US-sponsored international broadcaster, expressed interest in using one of these units. In March, 1956, USIA advised that in addition to the installation of two-500 KW shortwave at Tangier, it was planning to install one 500 KW mediumwave transmitter to be operated at one half power, 250 KW, in the Greek area and two 100 KW shortwave transmitters in the Philippines. These plans are in lieu of those originally submitted to the NSC for two-500 KW shortwave and one 1000 KW mediumwave in the Greek area, and two-500 KW shortwave in the Philippines.

PRESENT STATUS

20. Upon receipt of the memorandum dated April 3, 1956 from the State Department (attached) the question of full implementation of NSC Action 1386b was referred to TPIB and COBAT, which are set up to assist the OCB in coordinating the implementation of national security policies relating to international broadcasting. These two working groups jointly studied the coverage of present U.S. broadcasting facilities directed toward the Middle East, the Balkans, Southwestern and Central Russia, Asia and the Far East; considered coverage which would be accomplished with the presently proposed 250 KW in the Greek area as compared with what could be covered with two-500 KW shortwave and one 1000 KW mediumwave in that area (as submitted to the NSC); and studied in like fashion the coverage of two-100 ?

KWs in the Philippines as compared with that of two-500 KWs in that area (as submitted to the NSC). Implementation of the original plans would mean adequate coverage of the Middle East, the Balkans, Southwestern and Central Russia, Asia and the Far East, involving 750,000,000 more potential audience - now being actively worked upon by opposing forces.

21. The working groups noted that the steadily increasing jamming capabilities of the Soviets had not been matched by any improvement in U.S. technical broadcasting capabilities; and that the broadcasting facilities of VOA totalled 14 million watts, 6 million of which were in storage.

22. A joint paper was adopted and sent forward to the Board Assistants recommending that the Board urge the responsible agencies to take necessary steps to achieve full implementation of NSC Action 1386b, "with budgetary provision therefor", as a matter of urgency. The quoted phrase was included in the recommendation because the NSC action had read "subject to normal budgetary review of the costs involved", and no request had yet gone to the Bureau of the Budget for funds to implement NSC Action 1386b. The working groups recommend that the Board urge the responsible agencies to budget the necessary money.

23. The figures on the estimated cost for installations recommended in the NSC action total roughly 17 million dollars. From this total may now be subtracted the cost of the planned Tangier installation (approximately three million dollars) for which funds are available.

24. The working groups, in the joint paper referred to in paragraph 22 above, recommended the following actions:

- a. Expedite the project in the Tangier area.
- b. Implement the original plans in the Greek area on land where base rights have already been negotiated (install 1000 KW mediumwave and two-500 KW shortwave transmitters) rather than present plans, which are considered inadequate, for one 500 KW mediumwave transmitter to be operated at one-half power - 250 KW.
- c. Implement the activation of two-500 KW shortwave transmitters in the Philippines as originally submitted to the NSC, in addition to the two-100 KW shortwave transmitters recently proposed.