

Fl. Flin/STCB

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File - COBAT

1. Purpose

To report on the progress of the OCB Committee on Broadcasting and Television and submit concrete project for immediate action.

2. Discussion

The President's Committee on International Information Activities recommended in its report to the President, dated June 30, 1953, that the U.S. should be prepared to provide assistance to television industries in other countries while those industries are in their formative stages. The 1954 ODM/OCB (Schramm) Report also pointed out the increasing importance of television overseas as a medium of communications. (cont.)

The OCB Committee on Broadcasting and Television (COBAT) was therefore established in December 1955, primarily to assure inter-agency coordination on projects involving assistance to foreign governments in developing their television services. COBAT's terms of reference state that the Committee will, among other things, "undertake the development of specific projects, including planning and arranging for financing, to counter Soviet television efforts into Free World areas."

The development of specific projects has so far been hampered by a number of factors that can be summarized as follows: No definition of policy on television and area of delegation of responsibility between the represented departments and agencies; endless staffing and time consuming coordination; unclear positions taken by the various Agency representatives on the Committee and last but not least arranging for financing. The report on recommendations concerning Television in Europe of April 23, 1956 adopted as a general guide for planning purposes, stated that "specific projects requiring additional authority or new funds will be submitted to OCB for appropriate action". In the absence of any possibility of financing them such projects have not been submitted.

At the present none of the represented departments or agencies has allocated funds available for assisting television industries in foreign countries

ICA has so far limited its offer of assistance and training to education only.

On the other side of the coin the Russians have offered and in some cases successfully assisted in training foreign countries in one form or another, as for instance, Egypt, Yugoslavia, and according to some of the most recent reports not yet fully confirmed, one or two Middle-Eastern and Latin American countries.

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This is one part of the overall picture. The other part concerns the fast developing Television picture on both sides of the Iron Curtain which the Committee has foreseen since its inception and to which it could not respond with adequate action recommendation without means of financing.

Significant developments in International Television are as follows:

A. Free World

Rapid growth of television in Italy which now has a total of 111 stations, the greatest number in any country besides the U.S.

Three new stations in Latin America in the period from July to September 1957. Five in the Far East area spearheaded by Japan and Australia an almost 40 per cent increase in TV sets.

Television was inaugurated in Cyprus on October 1, 1957.

The possible re-activation in Morocco after a suspension of two years.

B. Iron Curtain Countries

USSR: very heavy activity in television construction and planning in all parts of the country. The goal of 75 per cent television centers by 1960 has been raised to more than 100. The new television center in Moscow will be equipped for 12 channels; the goal for television receiving sets by 1960 is 8 million. The effort to activate television in the Satellite countries is a marked one. The most important one of these seems to be at this time East Germany. Where there is an estimated number of at least 150,000 television sets in operation. East German standards have been converted to those of West Germany. There is a clear plan to reach as far as possible into West German territory with very good television propaganda programs. The Television Council of West German Broadcasting Companies recently discussed the difference of East Zone television on the West German zonal border population. The Council urged West German television to pay closer attention to the fact that the East Zone is beaming communist propaganda to West Germany. It was felt that the quality of West German telecasts needed improvement. Also, in the field of exchanges in television films and personnel the Communist countries have become very active in the last few months. Austrian Television was offered Soviet films free of charge. The Stockholm television station received after the Moscow Youth Festival an unrequested shipment of about 300 pounds of newsreel type of film of the Youth Festival.

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A Soviet telefilm unit arrived in London to make a 60-minute film on the British way of life. A British team will make a similar film in the USSR. The Polish and French television services will exchange monthly a 15-minute newsreel program. Finally a very important and significant item concerning this situation: the last Schramm meeting that took place in Paris in September of this year came up with one conclusion pertaining to the growth of television, namely that eventually the one single threat to Western broadcasting beamed behind the Iron Curtain will be the development of Iron Curtain television.

3. Recommendations

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A. As to the mission to assist television industries in other countries while those industries are in their formative stages: The Committee feels that the Board should be apprised of efforts to establish various Agency and department positions in support of this premise.

B. As to the mission to develop specific projects to counter Soviet television efforts into free world areas, the Committee feels that the Board should be apprised of the efforts of USIA to develop plans for counter-measures, but that such plans will require financing in view of the 75 per cent cut in USIA's current Television budget.

5. / C. Immediately available Iron Curtain projects are submitted as attachments 1 and 2.

6. / D. The Committee is requested to review free world proposals which have been made informally in the past, principally Pakistan and Beirut.

7. / The representatives of the departments and agencies are invited to submit their views on this paper and the attached projects at the next meeting of the Committee on November 1, 1957.

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