

OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD
Washington 25, D.C.

SECRET

November 6, 1956

PROGRESS REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING ASPECTS OF NSC 169

(Policy Approved by the President October 27, 1953)
(Period Covered: January 1955 - October 1956)

Note: The Operations Coordinating Board has responsibility for reporting to the National Security Council on Paragraphs 2, 8 (a), (b) and (c) of NSC 169 "Statement of Policy by the National Security Council on Electro-Magnetic Communications", which relate to international broadcasting.

Paragraph 2 directs the augmentation, under OCB coordination, of personnel and equipment to provide for additional radio monitoring.

Paragraph 8 (a) directs the establishment, under OCB coordination, of an effective mechanism for evaluating the technical effectiveness of U.S. international broadcasting, particularly to the Soviet Bloc; 8 (b) directs the OCB to coordinate the technical planning of all American official and unofficial international broadcasting operations; and 8 (c) directs the OCB to determine the feasibility of evaluating the program effectiveness of such broadcasting.

A. PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

1. USSR and Eastern Satellites. U.S. international radio broadcasts to the Soviet Union and the Eastern Satellites continue to be effective. * Available information and situations vary from country to country; however, indications are that, with respect to native-language broadcasts, there is a significant listening audience in the Soviet Union and a proportionately larger one in the Satellites. There is considerable evidence that U.S. programs are further disseminated by word-of-mouth. Of course, jamming is heavier in major population centers than in other areas. Jamming has not decreased during the past year, except possibly in Bulgaria, and there is some limited evidence that there may be an increased intensity, particularly in the urban areas of the other Satellite countries.

2. English-language and Music Programs. With respect to English-language and music programs, there is substantial listening throughout the European Soviet Bloc. These programs have not been jammed. There is evidence that other non-native-language programs are not jammed. The possibility of reaching important audiences in these areas through the use of non-native languages

* The meaning of "effectiveness" is that adopted in the ODM Progress Report on NSC 169 transmitted to the NSC Jan. 10, 1955: to be effective, international broadcasting can be expected 1) to reinforce attitudes; 2) to create the climate for the kind of attitudinal changes the U.S. desires; and 3) to help direct and stimulate actions beneficial to U.S. interests.

SECRET

SECRET

other than English is being explored.

3. RIAS audience. Though jamming remained a considerably deterring factor, RIAS continued to command a large audience in East Germany and among the German speaking population of Western Czechoslovakia and the territories under provisional Polish administration.

4. Change of political climate. The political climate has undergone a marked change or "thaw" behind the Iron Curtain, but differs considerably in character and degree from country to country. This thaw has permitted more news from outside and some open criticism of regimes within, but is still subject to regime control and surveillance. Reliance by people on foreign sources of information and comment will continue, however, and may be even increased in some countries by greater curiosity and newly-aroused interest.

5. Local competition. On the other hand, competition is also a growing element. While Radio Moscow domestic broadcasting seems to have lagged behind as a competitor (although it lately has had some critical attention from the Party daily, Pravda, and the Ministry of Culture), Satellite domestic broadcasts have improved markedly during the past year from the viewpoint of the listener. This change consists primarily of offering more entertainment, a relatively increased degree of objectivity in reporting news, and a reduction in the amount and blatancy of propaganda content. In the Soviet Union itself the termination of jamming of BBC Russian broadcasts created an additional competitive factor. The availability of a non-jammed Western newscast may discourage listening through jamming. However, during recent events in Eastern Europe, BBC Russian language broadcasts have again been jammed.

6. TV as a long-range competitor. The development of television is in the background as a long-range competitor to radio listening in the major cities. In this connection, it may be noted that guidance and other assistance is provided to a U.S. news film company that furnishes footage to the Central Television Studios in Moscow. This activity is experimental with the objective of determining if USSR TV output can be influenced.

7. Program Audibility. In order to further broaden our knowledge of program audibility in the target area, additional sources of information other than the present peripheral monitoring and limited target area monitoring must be resorted to. There is considerable positive evidence of impact derived from travellers, escapees, listeners' mail and other sources, but this evidence is not yet adequately correlated. Serious efforts are being made to improve co-ordinating arrangements for collecting and evaluating impact data of this nature.

8. Communist China. Persons returned from Communist China have reported that VOA listeners exist in Peiping, Tientsin, Chungking, Shanghai, Foochow, Canton and as far north and west as Kansu Province. Jamming is reported from monitors in Hongkong, Taipei, Bangkok and elsewhere. There has been evidence during recent months that jamming efforts directed against VOA Chinese-language transmissions are increasing. However, attacks by Radio Peking upon VOA Chinese-language broadcasts have been noted.

SECRET

SECRET

9. Near East, South Asia and Africa. Evidence of effectiveness in the Near East, South Asia and Africa has increased greatly in the past six months. VOA broadcasts to this area are not jammed, with the exception of Turkish and Persian, which languages are jammed by the Soviets sporadically and not heavily. This near absence of jamming, together with local promotion, has brought an average of 22,000 letters monthly, which is significant considering low literacy rates. As the political situation changes, new problems are created; but with other USIA media subject to growing operational difficulties, the importance of radio increases as a fast source of information.

10. Western Europe. There is substantial evidence of effectiveness of U.S.-produced radio programs in Western Europe. Programs, packaged in the U.S. or produced locally at the field post, are placed regularly on cooperating networks, and unattributed programs are placed on European outlets with the aid of West European broadcasters. There is no short-wave broadcasting from the U.S. to the general public in Western European countries. However, programs for relay over local networks are short-waved to France, Italy, and West Germany.

11. Far East. More than 50% of the daily output of the Japanese-language service from Washington is being rebroadcast over Japanese facilities, in addition to 26 subject programs a week being placed locally. In other countries of the Far East, there is increasing evidence of effectiveness. This is reflected in increased audience mail, more time available on local stations, and wider utilization in provincial areas of radio program materials.

12. Latin America. While there are no Spanish or Portuguese short-wave U.S. Government broadcasts transmitted to Latin America, there is an extensive placement on local stations and networks of programs locally produced or packaged in the U.S. Local radio is considered to be an effective medium. A survey in four countries in Latin America with respect to the effectiveness of broadcasting of a private U.S. international broadcaster did not reflect any significant evidence of effectiveness. U.S. Government support to this broadcaster, however, is being continued pending further review.

13. Munich conference of 1956. In August 1956 a conference was held in Munich, Germany to review the progress and problems with respect to U.S. broadcasting to the European Soviet bloc. Participants included representatives from each U.S. mission in the Soviet bloc countries, and operating and research officers from interested agencies in Washington. Similar conferences were held in 1954 and 1955. The summary statements appearing in the early part of this report reflect the views expressed at this year's conference.

14. Tone and content. Additional steps have been taken to refine the tone and content of all programs through a tightening of the policy application structure, through program review boards, by a greater effort to increase the flow of suggestions from the field as to content, format and production of programs, by more operational trips to the field by key personnel, through consultations with returning field officers, and by careful study of applicable portions of research results and field surveys. In all broadcasts there has been an increased emphasis on the projection of American policies and the American scene and, in the case of broadcasts to the Soviet Orbit, a correspondingly lesser emphasis on internal problems of countries to which we are broadcasting, this resulting in more balanced broadcasts than have been produced in the past.

SECRET

SECRET

15. Surveys. Increased efforts have been made to obtain more reliable data upon which to assess the effectiveness of radio broadcasting to the Free World countries. Twelve American research officers have been assigned to overseas posts and devote a portion of their time to radio; two are in training; and several posts are employing nationals of the host country to assist in making recommended surveys. Contracts with private organizations such as George Washington University and Gallup Institutes (overseas affiliates) have been utilized for surveys in some areas. Surveys have been undertaken in Southeast Asia, in Latin America, and in the Middle East. Radio research is now under way in France, after postponement to permit fair test of recent basic program changes. However, no progress has been made in conducting surveys in a number of important countries such as: Italy (lack of Italian Government cooperation and approval), Iran (lack of available qualified personnel and local research institutions), Indonesia (delicate political climate and neutralist attitude), India, Yugoslavia and Spain (high degree of political sensitivity.)

B. TECHNICAL EFFECTIVENESS

16. Jamming. It is estimated that U.S. broadcasts can be heard over extensive areas within the target countries despite strong jamming efforts which are more effective in most of the major population centers. The audibility of U.S. broadcasts also varies widely with the language, the target area, the wavelength, the signal strength and the time of day. Additional target area monitoring, especially in the USSR and Satellites, is needed to supplement the information from peripheral monitoring and to further identify reception trends, especially regarding the range of effectiveness of local (ground-wave) jamming, which is peculiar to major urban areas. There seemed to be no indication that the cessation of jamming of BBC Russian language broadcasts resulted in any increase or decrease in interference with U.S. broadcasts beamed to the USSR. Listeners' reports indicate a deterioration of medium-wave reception in East Germany and adjacent areas, particularly of RIAS, as a result of increased jamming and co-channel interference.

17. Monitoring behind the Iron Curtain. During the past year there has been no progress in the development of monitoring capabilities behind the Iron Curtain. Attempts to utilize non-technical personnel attached to the diplomatic missions in the target areas have produced only limited results due primarily to Embassy staff limitations and competing priorities. No successful effort has been made to assign technical monitoring personnel to missions in orbit countries in the past year. An inter-agency proposal to resolve this problem is now being considered by the U.S. Communications Intelligence Board. The feasibility of utilizing non-technical personnel attached to missions is also under study by CIA, State, USIA and Defense.

18. Monitoring in the Far East. It is estimated from peripheral monitoring in the Far East that Chinese dialect programs are receivable over wide areas, except where local jamming occurs on both medium and short-wave. Lack of internal monitoring prevents any estimate of the extent of such local jamming.

SECRET

SECRET

Russian and Ukrainian-language medium and shortwave broadcasts are probably less well received in their respective target areas than are Chinese-language broadcasts in Chinese-language target areas because of the greater capabilities of jamming stations in the USSR.

19. Technical capability. To improve the technical capability of placing a better signal in the target areas, a number of proposals have been made. The installation of two 500 KW short-wave transmitters at Tangier has been approved and funds are available. However, political developments in that area have made it necessary to delay actual initiation of construction. New facilities in prospect include two 100 KW shortwave transmitters under construction in the Philippines; and a replacement of the U.S.C.G. COURIER in the Eastern Mediterranean area by a 500 KW medium-wave transmitter, the proposal for which has gone to the Bureau of the Budget in the FY 1958 budget estimates, after having been rejected by Congress in the FY 1957 supplemental budget proposal.

SECRET