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COBAT

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Notes on European TV and Eurovision for consideration by
COBAT, compiled by USIA/TV after discussion with [redacted]

1. Eurovision is an eight-country cooperative venture, historically established as a "program exchange" project between England and France primarily at the time of the coronation.

2. Eurovision is cooperatively run by the European Broadcasting Union, and at a practical program operations level, by the EBU Program Committee, particularly Section TV-2 -- the "live" program working group. TV-1 is the film exchange group.

3. The TV-2 group has Jean D'Arcy (Program Manager of RTF) from France as the Chairman.

4. While each member of the TV-2 group has an equal voice, influence on operations is exerted pretty much on the politico-power basis that would be expected.

Thus, the most important members are --

- 1. England - Cecil McGivern, BBC
- 2. France - Jean D'Arcy, RTF
- 3. Italy - Mr. Pugliesi
- 4. Germany - Mr. Pleister

-- and probably in that order.

These members have a tendency to compose the "balance of power" guiding all Eurovision network broadcasting.

At the present time, the balance seems to be like this --



It may, as each country gains ground in the progress of television, work toward a balance like this --



Or, there is a good possibility that with the tremendous progress Germany is making in Television, and depending on the pressures each

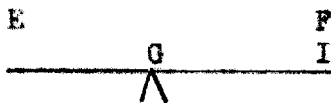
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participant is able to exert on the others, that Germany might be able to gain the balance position like this --



At this time, it would seem questionable that official U. S. Television could influence operations of Eurovision by working collectively with a group of any make-up within the current or foreseeable structure of either EBU or the Eurovision network itself.

Conversely, there is good reason to believe that working arrangements can be fostered with individual participants to advantage. There is reason to believe that U. S. Television networks might be helpful.

Unless the U. S. contributes substantially to the programming of the Eurovision network, it may well be that Eurovision will be wide open to Soviet Orbit programs, fed directly on the cable from the East.

Unlike commodities or other possible exchange items between the East and West, there are no restricting rules or control factors on such Television exchange. This would make the solution of the problem of Eurovision or some sort of Television "network" operation in Western Europe of even more importance.

In connection with all of the above, questions would seem to include --

- Are the people of the TV-2 EBU group the right people to work through? Or, are there others up above of better position to us?
- Recognizing that EBU is a "trade organization" and as such runs "the cooperative" Eurovision, would working with the EBU, per se, be either productive or effective, even if possible on a broad scale?
- Wouldn't it be advantageous to us to work separately with the four top members of EBU's TV-2, where it would be possible for us to move around within the "balance of power" field?
- Can we not counter the threat of Soviet Orbit Television program exchanges on Eurovision with U.S. originated programs, working through the individual member countries -- and perhaps even once more removed by working through established U.S. Television networks and then in turn through EBU members?
- Are these factors the guide lines we are looking for or is there a better, more obscure approach?

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