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TECHNICAL EFFECTIVENESS* OF
U.S. INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING
TO EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Brief Statement for use as Background
Information in Connection with Conference
of Chief of EE Missions, 1957

Caution: These conclusions should be used with caution since they are based for the most part upon information derived from monitors maintained at peripheral check points. Such information is considered valid for adjacent parts of the target area, but the specific area of validity has not been established. In some instances the target areas are close to the check point, but in other instances the distance is great. It is clear that such checks will not indicate the situation in the target area in the neighborhood of local (ground-wave) jamming stations. Peripheral checks are generally more valid for high frequency than for medium or low frequency broadcasts.

A. Broadcasts to USSR

1. Russian

VOA--The technical effectiveness of broadcasts in Russian decreased slightly in 1956 as compared with 1955 (based on information from four peripheral stations), and it is now estimated that in rural areas near the western borders of the USSR about 30 percent of the programs can be received satisfactorily on at least one high frequency. Rural reception further east is probably very poor, based on observations by [redacted] monitor and supplemented by embassy travellers to the Kirgiz SSR and eastern Kazakh in April and May 1956.

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*By technical effectiveness is meant the measure of the availability of a satisfactory signal in the target area for reception by an interested listener with a suitable receiver. The question of the effectiveness of the message of the program is not included here. Unless specifically mentioned otherwise, the comments are with respect to high-frequency broadcasting.

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Reception in those urban areas in the west which are affected by local jammers is probably comparable with that at Moscow where 5 percent of observed VOA main Russian-language programs were received satisfactorily during 1956.

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RLN--Reception of RLN is estimated to be somewhat lower than VOA Russian in rural areas of western USSR. Monitoring reports [REDACTED] and some other urban locations indicate virtually no satisfactory reception.

2. Armenian, Georgian, and other Caucasus Languages

VOA--Armenian rural reception is somewhat better than Russian, and Georgian is somewhat better than Armenian, based on observations at Tehran.

RLN--Rural reception of RLN programs in these areas is estimated to be somewhat lower than that of VOA. No reports have been received on urban reception.

3. Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian

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VOA--Rural reception of these languages was much better than Russian, based on observations [REDACTED]. About two-thirds of the programs were heard satisfactorily on at least one high frequency.

4. Ukrainian

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VOA--Rural reception of Ukrainian seems to be somewhat worse than the Baltic languages but better than Russian, based upon observations [REDACTED]. However, the distance to the target area from these posts make the reliability of the results less certain.

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RLN-- [REDACTED] monitoring indicated about 3 out of 10 Ukrainian programs were received satisfactorily, while [REDACTED] the figure was 1 out of 10.

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5. Uzbek

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VOA--Rural reception of Uzbek may be comparable to Ukrainian, but again the distance from the target area to the monitor post [REDACTED] make the reliability uncertain.

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B. Broadcasts to Satellites

1. Albanian

VOA is not deliberately jammed and is receivable satisfactorily a high percentage of the time.

2. Bulgarian

VOA -- Rural reception is fairly good and about 4 out of 5 programs can be received satisfactorily on at least one frequency. In Sofia, this figure is 2 out of 3. No systematic observations have been reported from other cities in Bulgaria.

RFE -- Rural reception is generally better since the increase in facilities on Bulgarian/Rumanian in January 1956. Nearly all programs are receivable on at least one frequency. No reports have been received from the target area.

3. Czechslovakian

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VOA -- Rural reception is probably satisfactory on at least one frequency on nearly all programs. Reports [redacted] indicate very poor reception due to local jamming. [redacted] has reported jamming centers in most of the major cities, so it seems likely that reception in these places is nearly or equally as poor as in Prague.

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RFE -- Reception conditions are estimated to be closely similar to those of VOA.

4. Hungarian

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VOA -- Rural reception is reported as possible on 4 out of 5 programs on at least one frequency, based upon routine monitoring [redacted] with a confirmatory check at the Yugoslav and Austrian borders in June. The improved urban reception caused by disruption to the local jamming service in the October rebellion has now apparently reverted to previous conditions, according to [redacted]. Here about 30 percent of the programs were audible on at least one frequency.

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RFE -- Rural reception is generally satisfactory on at least one frequency on most programs. The improvement which occurred at the time of the uprising in reception in Budapest lasted through January 1957, but by the end of February local jamming had begun.

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5. Polish

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VOA--It is now virtually certain that local jamming has been abandoned in Poland, although considerable jamming continues on Polish language programs from other Bloc countries. Reports from [redacted] in March indicate good reception even in Warsaw. About 90 to 95 percent of the programs are receivable satisfactorily on at least one frequency.

RFE--Reception is similar to that of VOA.

6. Rumanian

VOA--Peripheral monitoring indicates that rural reception in Rumania is not quite as good as in Bulgaria although the difference is slight.

RFE--Nearly all programs are receivable on at least one frequency in rural areas.

C. Medium Wave

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VOA--Reception of medium-wave programs in the USSR is generally poor as reported by peripheral monitors. Best reception reported was Estonian where about one-third of the programs on 1196 kc was received satisfactorily [redacted]

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VOA--Reception of medium wave in the Satellites is good only in Albania and Poland. Reception of Hungarian has averaged about 2 out of 5 [redacted] but only about 1 in 6 in Budapest. Reception of Bulgarian and Rumanian has been good [redacted] but monitoring along the borders indicates that jamming is much more effective there than [redacted]. Reception of Czechoslovakian at Vienna has averaged about one satisfactory program out of every five.

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RFE--RFE medium-wave broadcasts (in Czechoslovakian only) were virtually inaudible [redacted] in 1956, and less than one out of ten were audible in [redacted]

D. Long Wave

VOA--Between one and two out of every ten long-wave broadcasts in Russian were audible at the peripheral monitoring posts in Europe in 1956.

VOA--With the abandonment of local jamming in Poland, effectiveness of long-wave Polish broadcasts increased noticeably, and it is estimated that even in urban areas at least one out of every two broadcasts is audible. About one or two of every ten broadcasts in Czechoslovakian and Hungarian were satisfactorily received at the peripheral posts in 1956.

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