

6 January 1982
MLD-2002

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS
FROM: Chief, London Bureau
THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT: Monthly Report -- London Bureau -- December 1981

I. GENERAL

- A. The second voice-grade circuit between Caversham and Vienna, funded by FBIS, became operational on 1 January. Initially it will be used for a continuous feed of Warsaw radio.
- B. Bureau management focused heavily on recruiting in January. Our efforts turned up a promising Cambodian applicant for Bangkok who accepted a provisional offer of employment on 5 January. We have been testing and interviewing 11 Polish monitor applicants for the Austrian Bureau, out of a total of 40 respondents to an advertisement. The most promising tests will be forwarded to the Austrian Bureau for assessment. On the home front, efforts began again to recruit a replacement for bureau technician [redacted] when the last applicant on the short list withdrew to take another job. Recruitment of a local boardman/cruiser for the ROSET installation awaits Headquarters approval of the position.
- C. At the height of the Polish crisis, Southern England experienced the worst December weather in 30 years. Several inches of snow plus subfreezing temperatures transformed the BBC parking lot into a dodge-em car rink. Inside Caversham Park was a tangle of TV cables as BBC, ITV and the U.S. ABC aimed their cameras at busy BBC Polish monitors in the Listening Room. BBC's Nine O'Clock News on 14 December ended with a brief interview with HMS David Witherow.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. On 6 December Warsaw radio broadcast recordings said to have been made during the Solidarity session in Radom in which several union leaders apparently took strong positions regarding confrontation with the authorities. A week later

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martial law was imposed on Poland, its normal communications links were cut and its public media all but disappeared. BBC immediately instituted an open watch on the domestic service, which reduced its broadcasts to a single national program from Warsaw-area transmitters, booked a second voice line to Vienna to ensure best possible reception, and marshaled all monitors with Polish capability and many cruisers to cover and look for Polish sources. BBC also beefed up its overseas operation to provide full coverage of Warsaw television, whose announcers donned uniforms to read the news. As the military's grip efficiently tightened and pockets of resistance were isolated, the bureau moved a steady, copious stream of information, not only items, but also a series of media behavior and other FYIs and messages. Gradually, Poland's media began to reappear: first, a new international service in various languages, then PAP for seamen in morse, its maritime press service, some of its transmissions in English and, finally, maritime radio broadcasts. After an initial interruption, receipt of a limited number Polish newspapers resumed at PMU, which faxed some interesting articles and airmailed several latest editions to Vienna for processing/scrutiny since its veteran monitor was away on holiday and its neophyte could not cope with the load. PMU began to receive some regional papers toward the end of the month in new format and containing mainly PAP-attributed material. After processing PMU will airmail these papers to ELAD. Other sources, such as the regional radios and PAP's morning casts in English, remained untraced as the year ended.

2. The media of other nations also proved to be good sources of information on developments in Poland. TASS was particularly valuable: In addition to filing reports of its own, it carried numerous PAP-attributed items otherwise unavailable. Moscow and East European radios provided a lot of unique "factual" reporting on the situation, and all Vatican Polish and some of its other broadcasts were covered to monitor the church's role. Every source in the bureau's coverage area was watched for reaction to events, which included several commentaries on Soviet television's Vremya newscast and Moscow's heated response to U.S. economic sanctions against the USSR.
3. At AG's request, the bureau mobilized resources to cover Moscow television's reportage of events connected with Brezhnev's 75th birthday. With no indication that there would be any special, live programming, the service was monitored intensively throughout the operative period with focus on the regularly scheduled newscasts. News footage of the arrival in Moscow of Bloc and other leaders

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and of award presentation ceremonies were recorded, video editorial reports noting interesting segments were filed, and television and radio coverage of leadership remarks were compared. Videocassette recordings of relevant newscasts as well as of two film documentaries on Brezhnev were expeditiously airfreighted to Headquarters for use in preparing the 23 December TRENDS. Other efforts to exploit Soviet television via its satellite system included monitoring of the "Studio Nine" international affairs discussion programs on the 5th and 26th. Work was split between Okinawa and London Bureau; the former handled the advance FYIs and out-of-turns, and London and BBC monitors did the fuller processing.

4. After a relatively long absence from the public eye and concurrent speculation about his state of health, CPSU Politburo Member Grishin reappeared at a Kremlin meeting on the 4th to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Moscow. The radio carried a live relay of the gathering, and the bureau filed text of his 48-minute speech. BBC increased its monitoring of German transmitters and editors coordinated closely with Cologne Unit to cover Schmidt's weekend visit to Berlin and meetings with Honecker. Numerous reports on the leader's activities and remarks and the final communique were filed at high precedence. An open watch was placed on Tripoli Voice of the Arab Homeland following the U.S. charge that Libya had sent a hit squad to kill President Regan and the latter's call for Americans to leave Libya but the initial reaction came from JANA. An interview with Al-Qadhafi in which he discussed Libyan-U.S. relations was monitored that same evening, the 10th, from London Independent Television, a source not usually covered. The bureau also played a key role in reporting on the 3-day wanderings of a hijacked Libyan airliner and the kidnaping of U.S. General Dozier in Italy.

B. Cologne Unit

1. A snow storm in late December obscured the Unit Chief's view of Cologne Cathedral and Cologne had a gloriously White Christmas, but normal activities suffered little disruption.
2. The unit provided a liberal file of reaction to the imposition of martial law in Poland and the U.S. decision to invoke sanctions against Poland and the USSR.
3. The unit processed from live coverage two government statements by Chancellor Schmidt during the month, the first on Brezhnev's visit to Bonn and the second on Schmidt's visit to the GDR.

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4. The Unit was informed by London Bureau on 7 December that traffic could now be accepted by London at 150 bauds, but this will have to await modifications [redacted] that may take 3-4 months.

C. Islamabad Unit

The Unit recorded and forwarded to Gulf Bureau two weeks of Uighur and Kazakh programming for training purposes. It also recorded casts in Xinjiang and Xizang and forwarded them to Hong Kong Bureau for comparison purposes.

D. Communications/Engineering

1. Wordage from both PMU and BBC was the second highest December total ever, 2,670,290 of them.
2. The air conditioner in the Autodin Room has been removed for overhaul. The compressor will be installed in the existing condenser unit on the roof when it is put back in service.
3. Obsolete nonexpendable teletype equipment is being disposed of in accord with regulations.
4. PMU has now been totally converted to Smith Coronamatic electric typewriters purchased with year-end funds. BBC did the electrical installation work free of charge, with the bureau providing the materials. PMU editors and monitors generally welcomed the changeover.

III. ADMINISTRATION

- A. A new teletype operator, [redacted] EOD'd on 28 December.
- B. Teletype supervisor [redacted] began extended sick leave on 8 December.
- C. Teletype supervisor [redacted] took a two-day word processor course starting 16 December, then prepared the attached production report on BBC Wordplex equipment. Next month, the task will be infinitely easier.

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IV. VISITS

To the Bureau: Junior [redacted] 31 December en route home from editorial training in Okinawa; Austrian Bureau Polish Monitor [redacted] 28 December - to assist the BBC's Polish team.

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Attachments
cc: Chief, Austrian Bureau
Chief, Cologne Unit