

1 October 1975

[Redacted]

Deputy Chief, London Bureau

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Dear Art:

Subject: Standardization of Sourcelines

This responds to your letter of 8 August 1975 on sourceline standardization progress achieved at the FBIS-BBC Working Group's 31 July meeting. I'm sorry it has taken this long and I'm primarily at fault. As the new boy on the FCS block, I am insisting that I have a clear understanding of existing problems and issues. Gaining insight into this business of sourcelines has not been easy and I have repeatedly kicked back FCS comments to the staff for clarification or further study.

We are in agreement, apart from some minor phrasing, with the sourceline principles set forth in the 31 July meeting's minutes as far as voice material is concerned. But the questions I raised with the staff invariably resulted in distinctions between voice and press agency sourcelines. Our efforts to combine the two mediums in one paper resulted in positions with too many exceptions and qualifiers. We then opted for listing voice and press agency sourceline principles separately. But some of the suggested formulations would legitimize positions on press agency sourcelines which I question. I want to study these more closely and seek additional opinions. Therefore, our comment and suggestions on the minutes are confined to voice sourceline policy. (See Enclosure)

I trust our separation of voice and press agency sourceline principles will not throw a spanner in your works. If it does, don't hesitate to detail the problems from your vantage point. If the need arises, please explain to the BBC that our caution on press agency sourcelines and the wording on voice sourcelines is intended to avoid future disagreement wherever possible. We believe that the eventual agreements will be the definitive documents on sourceline formulation for years to come and we should arrive at precise language and positions where possible.

The working group has done a remarkable job of bringing the two points of view together. But we realize that there will be certain areas where we must agree to disagree, hoping that existing gaps can be closed at a later date. This may result in certain broadcasts and transmissions being given different sourcelines by our two organizations. But the important thing is that each of us will know what the other is doing so the respective sourcelines can be readily translated from one system to the other.

Our comments and suggestions on the sourceline principles for voice broadcasts, keyed to the minutes' numbering system, are contained in the Enclosure. We hope to have our thoughts on press agency sourcelines in your hands in two weeks.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Chief, Field Coverage Staff

Enclosure
As Stated

Distribution:

- Original & 1 - Addressee
- 1 - C/Ops
- ~~1~~ - Ops 9-0 file
- 1 - Reading file
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ENCLOSURE

FCS Comment and Suggestions on Voice Sourceline Principles

Agree
1.01 (i)

1.01 (i)—This statement is correct for all present voice sourcelines which include the word "Service," but we see a possible difficulty in the future. If a nonofficial broadcast station having "Service" as part of its name were to start operation, we might want to include that word in a sourceline, at least initially. Perhaps the paragraph could be expanded to read: "The word 'Service' to be eliminated from all sourcelines unless it is necessary to include it as part of a station's name."

Agree
1.01 (ii)

1.01 (ii)—We are in agreement with the intent, but the paragraph as phrased makes no distinction between official broadcasts on the one hand and semi-official and nonofficial on the other. This should be rephrased to be consistent with the principle enunciated in 1.03. We suggest: "The word 'Domestic' to be used for official broadcasts intended for a domestic audience." Thus we would use "Brasilia Domestic in Portuguese" but "Rio de Janeiro Radio Ministerio da Educacao e Cultura in Portuguese." Our understanding is that the domestic sourceline would be applied equally to official broadcasts at the national, regional or city levels and to programs for minorities. (Examples: Moscow Domestic in Russian, Tacna Domestic in Spanish—for Radio Nacional, Tallinn Domestic in Estonian—for FM, Peking Domestic in Mongolian). Exceptions would be regional and local broadcasts in the PRC and possibly the programs for Moscow Oblast. We would be interested in the BBC position on Moscow Oblast.

Agree
1.01 (iii)

1.01 (iii)—Here again, we feel the phrasing must be narrowed. We suggest using the phrase "official broadcast" for "transmission."

Agree
1.01 (iv)

1.01 (iv)—We understand this to mean that where the phrases "General Overseas Service," "World Service," "Overseas Service," "International Service" or "External Service" appear in sourcelines now, the word "External" will be substituted. We are in agreement with this, but "Transmissions" should be changed to "Official Broadcasts." As a point of clarification, FBIS intends to use "External" in some cases and to name targets in others but never to include both elements in the same sourceline. We will use "External":

- a. When the foreign target is unknown, vague or unrealistic.

b. When the enumeration of multiple targets would make a sourceline too long or complicated. We would use "Prague External in Czech and Slovak" rather than "Prague in Czech and Slovak to Europe Africa Far East and Australia".

c. When a station, such as Radio Australia, changes targets every time a transmitter joins or leaves a transmission service and it would be impractical to stipulate them.

d. When a station, such as Bern or Stockholm, repeats the same material to successive targets. The inclusion in the sourceline of any of the targets would be meaningless because the station is making no special effort to tailor material for it. The inclusion of targets for such broadcasts would give undesirable emphasis to what is actually the accidental combination of favorable reception and monitoring availability which caused it to be chosen for coverage.

We will specify the foreign target of official broadcasts when doing so serves to enhance the consumer's understanding of the monitored material. For example, we include targets in sourcelines for international programs from Radio Moscow (except in Russian) and Radio Peking (except in Chinese). We include them selectively in some sourcelines for semi-official international broadcasts: "Fukien Front PLA in Mandarin to Taiwan" and "Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in English to Africa." On the other hand, we would regard a sourceline such as "Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic to the Arab World" as overkill. As a rule, we do not include targets for private international broadcasts, even when they are well defined. (Example: Quito's HCJB) We reject the claim of the Recife station that it is broadcasting "to Pernambuco, to the world" as hyperbole.

1.02—This paragraph, like 1.01 (iv), can be interpreted to mean that either organization may impose the inclusion of targets on the other or that each organization may deal with each of these sourcelines as it sees fit. Your cover letter explains that the latter interpretation (which we prefer) is correct, but it would be better if the agreement clearly stated that choice is optional rather than binding.

1.03—The first part of this is dealt with in the emendations proposed to 1.01 (ii).

1.04—No problem.

1.05—For your information, in present FBIS usage the only situation in which inclusion of the country is mandatory is for broadcasts and presscasts from Santiago Chile.

1.06--This paragraph suffers from the same ambiguity as 1.02 and it also tends to oversimplify the sourcaline formulation policies for presscasts. We will deal with this point separately in our press agency submission.