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MEMORANDUM FOR: CFB
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1. The question has been asked: "Why a Radio Free Asia?" It is proposed to answer that question in terms of our objectives in the Far East and the effectiveness of radio in accomplishing them, but not, in this paper, to discuss the technical problems of the utilization of radio in Asia.

2. We must, however, consider the preliminary problem that the effectiveness of radio depends upon the listening habits of the target audience and the availability of the means of reaching that audience. Our target audiences are, in order of priority, China, Southeast Asia, Japan, the Philippines and India. The listening habits of the people are much the same throughout the area, being largely conditioned by the lack of cheap electricity and lack of the means of buying radio sets. Listening in Asia is largely community listening. Sets are located in the cities and in inns, shops, schools and other gathering places. Only in Japan is there widespread home ownership of radios. In China and in the rest of Asia, and to a lesser degree in Japan, the potential audience reached by each set is considerably larger than in the West. Not only do you have a larger direct listening audience, but you also have the indirect audience composed of neighbors and passers-by who, listening consciously or unconsciously, are affected by the output.

3. This situation enhances the value of broadcast impact per set because of two further factors. In the first place, an urban audience tends to be less conservative and more flexible in receptivity than a home or country audience. In the second place, the habit of listening in large groups and in urban gathering places tends to provoke more widespread discussion and thus additional dissemination.

4. The audience potential we have been discussing is limited, at least in China, by the external controls which the Chinese Communist Government has imposed or can impose. These include strict prohibitions against listening to anything other than government programs, plugging or blocking of sets so there can be no selectivity (This has not yet been done, so far as is known), strict control of the ownership of sets and jamming of the outside programs. That there is, nevertheless, considerable surreptitious listening can be fairly assumed both from the size of the flow of programs directed against China from the outside and the reactions exhibited to the content of these programs by the Chinese Communist radio. It is assumed, for the purposes of this paper, that it is both

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feasible and practicable to reach that audience within China. Needless to say, there is a considerable free field outside of Communist-dominated China. Here, the audience and receiver potential can be more exactly determined and is limited only by the factors of availability of electricity and sets.

5. In the growing awakening of national and individual consciousness in Asia, perhaps the most significant phenomenon is the tremendous thirst for news, for information - the driving urge to talk, to discuss, to write, to express, acquire and exchange ideas. The demand for outside news and ideas is probably largely satisfied by existing facilities now directed at the area. The flow of propaganda from both sides is known to be heavy. But radio facilities for the Asians themselves, which are not under the domination or control of government or political party, are notably absent. The free exchange of facts and ideas by radio for Asians is little possible through existing facilities. "Why cannot the USIS disseminate articles into the local dialects, preferably on communism as it applies to the Philippines?" asks the Cebu Republic.

6. It is this lack that Radio Free Asia proposes to fill. Entirely aside from its covert propaganda usefulness to the United States, RFA proposes to speak to Asia in the vernacular of Asia and about the things with which Asians are most concerned. It proposes to assist and encourage Asians in fighting communism and in establishing or recovering their independence through the spreading of truth in Asia about Asians. It proposes to tell the Cantonese what is happening in Shanghai, the Fukienese what is happening in Korea. It proposes to tell all of Indochina how the forces of Ho Chi Minh are daily losing more of their character as nationalists and becoming just another force of international communists. It will speak in the language the people can understand of the problems of land and crops and life and death in their own areas and communities. It will tell the Chinese of the hopes and promises which a free and peaceful China hold for them, of the benefits of an independent, responsible peaceful government recognized and accepted by the other free nations of the world and not dominated or influenced by foreign ideology or pressure.

7. This is not now being done, and cannot be done by any service now available to us. The Voice cannot do it for two good reasons. In the first place, it must follow the established lines of United States Foreign Policy. In the second place, as an openly acknowledged agency of the United States Government, it cannot speak with complete candor against a foreign state, nor can it openly attack the practices or pronouncements of such a state. Furthermore, the weight of the impact of the official transmissions of a government agency - and this is true of any government - is less than that of a private agency. The people of Asia are suspicious of all the outside world, and particularly suspicious of Western governments. This is not to say that the Voice of America is not and cannot be effective, but merely to point out that there is room and need for independent private activity as well.

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8. The Voice of

8. The Voice of America is limited in what it can do by both policy and political considerations and in what it uses by the need to protect sources as well as avoid antagonizing other governments. A private radio enterprise would be free of all such limitations. It could even take a line directly counter to overt policy, for propoganda purposes. It could test public reactions to possible lines of policy or action by proposing them on its own transmissions. But these considerations, while valuable in establishing the effectiveness of a private radio enterprise, do not go to the heart of the matter. The basic argument for a Radio Free Asia is that it is absolutely needed in Asia for the services it can supply.

9. Asia wants to hear and talk about itself. Radio - private radio - can supply that want. There is an audience to be reached. And there is a vast and fertile field in which to work, untrammelled by the normal and accepted limitations of official agencies. It is submitted that, within the limits of technical and financial considerations, there is a valid and compelling reason for Radio Free Asia.

10. It might be suggested that the doubts which have been expressed concerning the need or usefulness of a Radio Free Asia appear to be based in the last analysis upon doubts as to its technical feasibility or technical effectiveness, rather than upon the substantive need for the type of operation Radio Free Asia proposes to engage in. The two questions should not be confused. The first question it would appear is clearly answered by the fact that there are existing and operating radio facilities in the area directed toward the target and those facilities are in the process of expansion.

[Chief, PI/K]

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