

24 April 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: COBAT meeting of 25 April 1958

1. John Broger, of Defense, announced that the Armed Forces Network is planning to establish twenty-eight FM radio stations in France with French equipment, and five FM stations in Spain. The French Government requires that the AFN stations be FM so that the audience will be limited to US forces. Nevertheless, Broger believes that these stations will further increase AFN's European ghost audience which, according to Broger, numbers in the hundreds of thousands. He stated that 125,000 notes from Germans were received recently in response to an AFN disc jockey request program.

2. Mr. Robert Bauer, Acting Chief, USIA TV, briefly reviewed his very recent European trip. He reported first that from discussions with members of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) he would say that EBU members are very cool to Eurovision East-West program exchanges. EBU fears protracted long discussions with the East regarding specific programs.

3. In West Germany, Mr. Bauer encouraged German TV to acquire the cooperation of the German movie industry, particularly in supplying feature presentations at reduced cost for showing in Berlin. He stated that German TV officials admitted they had never thought of this idea and are eager now to develop it.

4. Sender Freie TV in Berlin has requested AFN to schedule features for US forces every evening from 6:00 to 7:00 P. M., peak listening time. He believes that these programs will attract a wide West and East Berlin audience, in spite of English language soundtrack. While Mr. Bauer can see no legal or technical difficulties involved in such programming, he does believe that the *n* Fernseh-Kommission der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der West-deutschen Rundfunkanstalten, the large central West German TV commission, might become concerned with too much political identification of West Germany with the US. Mr. Bauer also announced that Gunther Neuman will initiate a new monthly political cabaret program for SFB. SFB has also scheduled programs especially designed for East German youth.

5. According to Mr. Bauer, West Berliners are watching East Berlin TV in large number and seeing many Czech films, German lip-labbed.

6. Mr. Bauer believes there is a large audience behind the curtain for German and Austrian radio and television. West German TV, including SFB, now reaches three-fourths of Eastern Germany, and with the boosting of SFB's coverage expected in June 1958, will reach all of Eastern Germany.

7. Mr. Bauer stated that the Italians reported that so many Yugoslav viewers are watching Italian TV, they have requested RAI to supply Italian language texts! RAI is planning on a TV center in Pantelleria, an island SW of Sicily, which could be viewed in North Africa.

8. Austrian TV receives approximately five hundred letters weekly from behind-the-curtain listeners. Approximately forty per cent of these are from Czechoslovaks, a few of which are from locations close to the Polish border. The Austrian (Vienna) TV signal is also received 30 miles west of Budapest. From discussions with Chancellor Raab's Press Chief, Bauer reported that the Austrians want to build a TV station in the northern tip of Southern Austria, which would increase Austrian TV coverage of adjacent satellites. The Press Chief commented that the Austrians would insist that a Northern Austrian station first be built to more adequately reach the populous region of Northern Austria before they approve funds for a station in the south. The Government would welcome financial assistance for the construction of the southern station, as they would in our financing a joint production of a political program. Bauer stated that the Austrians would welcome not only our money but our covert assistance in the actual writing and production of these programs, which are believed to cost approximately \$2500 per half an hour.

9. Mr. Bauer's remarks on Austrian neutrality were meant to imply that the Austrians have changed considerably since 1955-56. He states that Austrians now answer Soviet charges of non-neutral radio and TV programming with clear statements that Austria is committed to military neutrality only.

10. Mr. Bauer reported that although there is some minor difference in the technical characteristics between Austrian, German, and Czechoslovakian television, the Czechs are able to receive West German and Austrian TV by means of using a small, inexpensive conversion mechanism.

11. SFB officials impressed Mr. Bauer with their belief that Eastern Europe will not jam West German and Austrian television.

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