

25 March 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:   
Chief, DDI Executive Staff

SUBJECT : Agency Successes

STAT

In response to your request, here are some items culled from our files which may be useful in preparing any unclassified review of CIA successes. We presume most of these would be a part of a broader Agency statement concerning the subjects involved and be incorporated with other Agency contributions. We have written these to avoid specific references to FBIS and I would hope the final Agency paper would do the same. We do not want to jeopardize this particular source and method.

STAT

Director  
Foreign Broadcast Information Service

Attachment:  
As stated

Distribution:  
Original & 1 - Addressee  
          2 - O/Dir/FBIS  
Chrono & 1 - E&PS  
          1 - FBIS Exec Registry

STAT

### Moscow Involvement in Portuguese Politics

Prompt Agency translation and dissemination of major Soviet policy pronouncements in the Moscow press on developments in Portugal in July 1975 provided valuable input to a special memorandum prepared for Secretary Kissinger and for a subsequent protest registered with the Soviet Embassy by Hal Sonnenfeldt over Soviet interference in Portugal through the public media, a verbal protest the embassy counselor was instructed to take seriously and pass to Moscow.

### The 'Mayaguez' Affair

On Wednesday, 14 May 1975, while the U.S. mounted military moves to rescue the U.S. merchant vessel "Mayaguez" seized by forces of the new Cambodian government, the Agency was closely monitoring reports on developments from the Phnom Penh radio. A key item translated and relayed to the White House was the official Cambodian communique offering to release the ship, made too late to halt American Naval and Marine action to liberate the crew and vessel.

Disclosures that the Cambodians had made similar piratical attempts against a South Korean vessel on 4 May and a Panamanian ship on 7 May had been reported from media sources the previous week.

### American POW's

Agency monitoring of North Vietnamese broadcasts and radiophotos was credited with providing unique intelligence on the fate of American POW's during the Vietnam war. Often these sources carried the first confirmation, not only for U.S. officials but for their families, that a missing American military man was still alive, held by the North Vietnamese.

### Hanoi's Stand on Negotiations with Saigon

In the spring of 1975, analysis of North Vietnamese media made it clear -- weeks before the final collapse of the Saigon forces -- that prior indications of Hanoi's willingness to negotiate a peace with the Thieu government were no longer in evidence. This intelligence served to demonstrate that North Vietnamese confidence in final and complete military victory had reached a point where a negotiated settlement was no longer contemplated. This analysis thus contributed substantially to the U.S. assessment of Hanoi's strength and the impending outcome of the war.

### Information on Pathet Lao

Agency monitoring of clandestine and opposition radio broadcasts often furnishes unique, otherwise unobtainable intelligence on the plans, policies and actions of dissident movements. A prime example during the years of the conflict in Laos was the coverage of the Pathet Lao radio. Former Ambassador to Vientiane Charles S. Whitehouse has commented that without this Agency coverage of the Pathet Lao radio there would have been no way to know on a timely basis what Pathet Lao policies and positions on crucial issues were.

### Reaction to U.S. Leadership Crisis

At the time of President Nixon's resignation, there was concern among government circles about possible attempts by adversary governments to exploit the hiatus in U.S. leadership. Agency analysts quickly initiated a close study of communist media which made it clear that no attempts to exploit the political crisis in Washington were underfoot. On the contrary, there was found in the Soviet media a prevalent emphasis on a desire to maintain good relations with the United States. The concerns of top USG officials were thus greatly alleviated as the transition of power took place.

### October 1973 Middle East War

In the midst of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict and a threatening U.S.-Soviet confrontation in its wake, President Nixon had scheduled a news conference for 26 October. That same day, Communist Party General Secretary Brezhnev made a major address to the World Peace Congress in Moscow in which he discussed the U.S. military alert called the previous day and derided "fantastic rumors" of Soviet plans to intervene in the conflict. The translation of Brezhnev's remarks was made available by the Agency to the President in time for him to prepare a response to the Soviet leader for presentation at the press conference.

In the days immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities on 6 October, Agency monitoring of Cairo and Damascus media sources had resulted in reports on allegations by both the Egyptians and Syrians of Israeli troop build-ups and disclosures that military alerts were underway in the two Arab countries, thus providing one of the few indicators that the two nations might be contemplating military action against Israel.

### Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia

Agency coverage of radio broadcasts out of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, when the USSR and some of its East European allies resorted to military intervention to crush the liberal regime of Alexander Dubcek, provided a major intelligence contribution. Ambassador to the UN George Ball said this reporting kept the U.S. mission "better informed than any other delegation in the United Nations." Developments during the intervention were elucidated by the Agency's coverage of communiques released by clandestine Czechoslovak-controlled radios as well as the Soviet-operated "Radio Vitava." Mr. Ball noted in his assessment that the Czechoslovak delegation then in the UN also used the CIA reports to keep abreast of developments because it distrusted the instructions it was receiving from Prague.

### Cuban Missile Crisis

The importance of the rapid collection and dissemination of intelligence information from foreign media was never better illustrated than during the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. On the mornings of 27 and 28 October, as the Soviet-U.S. confrontation was reaching a flash point, President Kennedy was attending meetings of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council when messages from Soviet Premier Khrushchev to him were broadcast by Radio Moscow long before delivery to the White House via normal diplomatic channels.

The second message was the crucial one, announcing Khrushchev's decision to dismantle the missile bases in Cuba and return the missiles to the Soviet Union. The President was given copies of the two messages virtually paragraph by paragraph as they were received at the White House from the Agency's wire service. In an official announcement by the White House shortly after receipt of the 28 October message, the President said: "I am replying at once to your broadcast message...even though the official text has not yet reached me."

In an interview with a CBS television correspondent a month later, Secretary of State Rusk, in answer to a question about the urgency of communications involved in this situation, said "I think that there was a question of speed of communications through normal channels. The sheer physical problem of transmitting messages to people who use another language, requiring decoding and translation, with differences in office hours in their respective capitals, did remind us all over again that immediate communication is important: and I think these public communications turned out to be the fastest communications, so that this was, I think, the importance of the broadcast message on October 28. It was a fast response to the President's message of the day before and perhaps could not have been handled through the elaborate channels of code and translation and normal diplomatic patterns."

In a 12 December press conference, President Kennedy observed that "there was a delay, as you know, in the communications back and forth, in the Cuban affair. In some degree I think on one or two occasions it was necessary to rely

on open broadcasts of messages, rather than sending them through the coding procedure which took a number of hours."

In this instance, as in many others, Agency collection, translation and rapid dissemination of highly significant intelligence played a vital role in bringing the crisis to a quick conclusion.

#### 1962 Soviet Resumption of Nuclear Testing

The on-again, off-again nuclear testing of the United States and the USSR took a new turn in 1962 when President Kennedy ordered the resumption of atmospheric testing while the 17-nation Geneva disarmament conference continued to deliberate. The Soviets threatened to resume testing, the while denouncing Washington for its decision. On 21 July 1962, the Agency intercepted and reported a TASS domestic transmission which disclosed that Moscow had made the decision to resume nuclear tests. This intelligence was made available to the White House well before the public announcement made by the Soviet Government, permitting the White House to announce to the press that the Soviets had made this decision before Moscow itself was able to make the announcement.