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27 September 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: CFE

SUBJECT: Considerations with respect to RFA

1. There are set forth below certain points of differentiation between the purpose and capabilities of the Voice of America and the purpose and capabilities of Radio Free Asia. It is believed that these points, while not all suited for inclusion in a formal memorandum to the Department of State, are pertinent to the problem and are "talking points" supplementary to Mr. Hussey's memorandum. Mr. Hussey has asked that these be set forth in a separate memorandum.

2. Voice of America is the recognized voice abroad of the American Government. Its essential function is to interpret, support, rationalize, and defend American foreign policy. In seeking this objective, it conducts a "Campaign of Truth", a program of world-wide news reporting and analysis which, by presenting world events in their "true" perspective, seeks to influence its audience in support of American foreign policy objectives and the objectives of the Free World. For the same basic purpose, it endeavors also to establish friendship abroad for the American people and appreciation of the democratic and American "way of life."

3. As is seen from the attached excerpts from a VOA publication, VOA concentrates its effort on the establishment of a rapport between the listening audience and the United States, stressing historical relationships, U. S. aid, real intent of U. S. policy (as in Indochina), etc. The limitations apparent in program content are not all imposed by policy considerations, and it is quite probable that VOA could enlarge and improve its programming, as it is constantly doing, without departing from basic policy.

4. The point of this paper is, however, that, even at its maximum effectiveness, VOA cannot, as an organ of the American government, contribute all that it is possible for radio to contribute to the psychological warfare mission in the Far East.

5. The limitations imposed by policy considerations are most clearly exemplified in the attached excerpt relating to content of South Korean programs. Until the declaration of the U. N. that Communist China had committed aggression in Korea, policy considerations made it possible for VOA to charge the CCP with aggression. A very potent weapon of propaganda was thus denied this country while the CCP made headway in laying responsibility on this country for the Korean conflict.

6. VOA must

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6. VOA must defend American "tactical" policy. As is well known, that "tactical" policy has, whatever the good reasons, caused this Government to be aligned in the minds of Asians with several very undemocratic and corrupt regimes and, in the case of Indochina, with an unpopular "colonialism". VOA can explain this policy but it must also defend it. Because it must defend American "tactical" policy, it must be behind rather than in advance of it. It can seek to influence Asian opinion. It cannot, with validity, express Asian opinion. It cannot lead Asian opinion.

7. RFA should exist not to compete with, but to supplement, VOA. There is need for an official American voice. But there is also need for an organ which can influence, express, and lead Asian opinion because it has no motivation but the well-being of Asia itself. There is need for an organ which, because it is not hamstrung with the inevitable drawbacks of tactical policy, can move ahead more freely to achieve the long-range objectives of American policy. The argument for RFA is, in other words, the argument for OPC - the need of official policy for a flexible arm which can work free of the demands of diplomacy and can establish, by means which do not require the day-to-day answerability of this Government, a more favorable framework for overt policy and action. ]

8. RFA may supplement VOA's support of American foreign policy objectives in the following ways:

a. It can lend hearing to honest expression of Asian views without tainting them with the stamp of official U. S. approval, thereby increasing the free exchange of ideas and opinions necessary to healthful self-government.

b. It can increase Asian acceptance of the "Campaign of Truth" by corroborating the "Truth" through indigenous speakers more readily believed because they are Asian and because they have reputation in Asia.

c. It can disseminate news without the strict demands of reliability required by the "Campaign of Truth". (On the whole, it must gain acceptance as a truthful organ, but it can carry "plants" for PW purposes whereas VOA cannot).

d. Because it is not answerable to the American public and Congress, it can lend hearing to views and opinions which, although in the long-range interest of U. S. policy, are momentarily unpopular at home which VOA might therefore not be able to air.

e. Because it claims a motivation founded in Asian self-interest, it can appropriately "slant" news commentary in a manner not always appropriate to VOA.

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f. By giving expression to varied sentiments of varied Asians, it may play on a variety of emotions and attitudes without regard to the consistency expected of an official voice.

g. It may secure outlets, such as government-controlled Radio National Indonesia, now denied VOA by the Indonesian Government, and the innumerable outlets of Formosa, now unused by VOA for U. S. policy reasons.

h. It may engage to a much freer extent than VOA in political warfare:

(1) It may give hearing to significant Asian political opinions which might not otherwise gain audience.

(2) It may influence the development of leadership, by giving hearing to selected leaders and withholding it from others.

(3) It may bring into open discussion, e.g. through sponsorship of debates, issues and questions relating solely to Asian problems, and, through the very presentation of these issues, help to force decision or action. It may do so without the necessity of taking responsibility for the content of the debates and without implying, as such a VOA-sponsored debate would do, any necessary connection with American policy.

(4) It may assist local governments in the solution of local problems through providing a forum of discussion or an avenue of influence (for example, a program for the Chinese in Indonesia seeking to establish the loyalty of Chinese to the Indonesian Government as against the CCP.)

(5) It may encourage the open~~y~~ subversion of Iron Curtain governments, e.g. calling upon the Chinese to support the guerrilla movement, a stand probably politically infeasible for VOA.

It is believed that the only legitimate objection to RFA would stem from a belief in its impracticality in light of the present Asian listening audience. It may be VOA's view that the current audience in Asia is too small to warrant the effort required of two major radio organizations, and that VOA can successfully take care of the small audience that exists. As Mr. Hussey has indicated in his paper, VOA's attitude toward the enlargement of its own program to a very great extent answers such an objection. It may also be pointed out that VOA is engaged in an effort to expand the listening audience through the development of cheap radios and "drop" radios. RFA may well give effective assistance as the "cover" for the distribution of these devices, particularly in areas behind the Iron Curtain, where they may expand the listening audience of both VOA and RFA.

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Excerpts from VOA in the Far East, a publication of the VOA Program  
Evaluation Branch, dated January 1951.

Over-all Content

"In describing events in the Far East, the VOA broadcast to that area pointed out the almost unanimous support given by the U. N. to the action in Korea, and the advantages of a free democracy over the regimented body-and-soul controls practiced across the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. The VOA also presented news on the life of Oriental-Americans, using editorials and commentaries from the Chinese press in the U. S. as an illustration of the freedom of thought and expression enjoyed by the population in the free world. In general, the picture of life in America and in the free democracies has been portrayed in VOA Far Eastern languages broadcasts in much the same manner as in broadcasts to Iron Curtain countries.

"One of the objectives of VOA broadcasts is to explain that the U. S. Far Eastern policy supports nationalist aspirations, while opposing Communism...."

Content of South Korean programs

"Policy limitations prevented VOA from using many promising propaganda lines such as atrocities, formal accusation of the Chinese Communists with aggression in Korea, Soviet involvement, etc. / i.e. before the UN declared the Chinese Communists guilty of aggression. /

"In covering the world-wide situation and life in the U. S., the VOA has given ample evidence of the U. S. role in Point Four programs in Asia, ECA operations and the sacrifices borne by the American people in connection with expenditures involved in these programs. U. N. and U. S. plans for the post-war reconstruction of Korean industries and cities damaged as a result of military operations have also been amply covered."

Content of Indonesian Programs

"The basic objective of the VOA program to Indonesia is to provide worldwide news coverage with recognized veracity, and to provide "slow-speech" news in English as an educational feature. In addition, features on American life endeavor to present the good life in a democracy and to point out the lack of personal, political and economic freedom under Communism."

Content of Indochina Programs

"The VOA Vietnamese program includes news and features about the U. S. and American relations with the Far East. As far as a program of short duration permits, VOA broadcasts to Indo-China such features as commentaries on the U. S. State Department's booklet No. 3972 on U. S. foreign policy, which

received wide