

May 27, 1958

**Memorandum for the Record from the President
[Howland H. Sargeant]. 'Review of Steps Taken to
Strengthen Radio Liberation Programming'**

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Summary:

AMCOMLIB President Sargeant records his discussion with founding Trustees Lyons and Levine on RL programming.

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AM CONFIDENTIAL

May 27, 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM : The President

SUBJ : Review of Steps Taken to Strengthen Radio Liberation
Programming -- Participants: Messrs. Eugene Lyons,
Isaac Don Levine, and Nowland Sargeant -- Date: May 27

Messrs. Levine and Lyons met with me at my invitation, following our morning meeting in which the Director of Planning presented the approved Country Paper. I said that the following steps had been taken to strengthen Radio Liberation programming and I wanted to bring them both up to date on these measures.

1. Effective as of May 26, 1958, Mr. Robert Shankland is reassigned as Program Advisor to the Slavic desks, and he will be assisted by Mr. Peter Dornan and Mr. Joseph Scott.
2. Responsibility for determining the news to be carried in the Russian-language program is assigned, as of May 26, to Mr. Robert Shankland as Program Advisor for the Russian-language output.
3. During a trial period of some 90 days, Mr. Charles Malamuth has basic responsibility for the output of the News Desk, including participation in the daily meetings at which the selection and preparation of news items are discussed and the review of all items which, after their preparation, appear to be in any sense dubious or controversial. In the event of dispute, the final decision is to be made jointly by Messrs. Bertrandias and Malamuth.
4. Mr. Victor Frank is reassigned as Special Staff Analyst in the Office of the Policy and Planning Advisor, Mr. Malamuth. His major function will be the preparation of special analyses of developments important to the radio. He will be called upon, from time to time, to furnish scripts on request, but he will not exercise any supervision over output, nor will he independently determine the content of any radio programming. His production for use in radio programming will be subject to the same review and same system of checks and balances as any other contributor, and his main function will be in the field of analysis.
5. A new and promising candidate, with ability in the Russian language and with good news experience, appears to be available to go in the near future to head the News Desk in Munich. For special reasons that I explained to Messrs. Lyons and Levine, we do not wish at the moment to identify this man publicly or to reveal any connection between him and the American Committee.

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6. The review of all personnel connected with programming in the Russian language is continuing but has not yet been completed. I assured them that it would be thorough and comprehensive.

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I said that these were the steps that I had found it possible to take up to now. I felt that the effectiveness of these steps could only be judged in the long run by the output of the radio itself, in which Messrs. Lyons and Levine concurred. I emphasized the necessity of finding personnel of highest quality and invited their suggestions. The following developed:

- a. Mr. Lyons suggested that I get in touch with Kingsbury Smith to see whether any of the INS men who are being let out because of the merger with the UP, would meet our needs.
- b. Mr. Levine inquired whether the officer who had been serving at the U.S. embassy in Moscow, Mr. Baker, who was denied permission to return, might possibly be available and have useful qualifications. I said that we were hoping that Mr. Patch and others might at least have an opportunity of talking with him.
- c. Mr. Levine mentioned that there might be some young officers now serving in the State Department who had returned within recent months from Moscow who might welcome a year-or-two break from any government service with an operation such as ours, but he identified no one specifically by name.

Mr. Levine suggested that Mr. Lyons might want to write informally to his old friend Mr. Malamuth and urge that he display every effort to cooperate during the trial period which I had mentioned, but Mr. Lyons felt that this was not a useful suggestion, and said that he did not plan to communicate informally with Mr. Malamuth, since he felt that it is now up to Mr. Malamuth to work out an appropriate relationship within the organization in Munich. Advice by letter, he had found, was seldom effective and seldom followed.

I then mentioned the News Manual which had been prepared early in 1958 in order to guide the News Desk in the selection and preparation of news items. I said that this would have to be studied to see whether it needed revision or modification as a result of the final approval of the Country Paper. When we have had a chance to make this review, I invited Messrs. Lyons and Levine to study with me the provisions in the manual, and to see whether, out of their experience in handling news, we could improve in any way the criteria and guidance we were giving to the News Desk. They both said that they would be glad to help and that I should let them know when that time had come.

We then concluded the meeting. We did not discuss in any way the evaluations of Radio Liberation programming which had been prepared by Mr. Levine or by Mr. Lyons, nor did the question of the name of Radio Liberation come up.

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