

May 26, 1970

**Memorandum, John Ward to the President,
RadLibCom [Howland H. Sargeant], 'RL Broadcast
Position Statement on the "Nationality Question" in
the USSR'**

Citation:

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Summary:

A CIA liaison officer provides RLC President Sargeant with the verbatim views of "higher authority" [here, the State Department] on the referenced RL document.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The President, RadLibCom

ATTENTION: Assistant to the President

SUBJECT: RL Broadcast Position Statement on the "Nationality Question" in the USSR

1. The BOT has received a reply to its request to higher authority for the comments and/or concurrence to the Radio Liberty BPS on the Nationality Question.

2. The reply received by the BOT is quoted in its entirety for your information and action:

"Higher authority has reviewed the proposed annex to the Radio Liberty Policy Manual which is designed to govern RL broadcasts to the USSR dealing with the "Nationality Question" in the USSR. This "Position Statement" presents comprehensive guidance on broadcast treatment of the governmental, economic, cultural and educational aspects of the "Nationality Question." This thorough treatment also raises the familiar problem of over-emphasis on "separatism" which was discussed in a previous exchange of correspondence on broadcasts to Uzbekistan.

"The authority appreciates the position stated on page 4 that: "Radio Liberty does not take any position as to what the future political or social order of any nationality within the present boundaries of the USSR should be. . . ." However, the objectives of RL's broadcasts, as listed on page 3 of the paper, put considerable emphasis on "self-determination," "self-government" and on propagating the "conviction that all peoples of the Soviet Union should enjoy the right to be self-governing." At the top of page 4 the reference to "full self-determination" also carries the implication of support for separate status or independence for the various nationalities that live within the USSR.

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"The problem is one of emphasis and tone in the broadcasts. Our long-standing policy has not included encouragement of national separatism to the extent of independence for the many and varied groupings within the USSR. In order to be entirely clear on this matter the proposed Annex should include a specific disclaimer along the following lines:

"In its output, Radio Liberty takes care not to be identified with a program of separatism and dismemberment of the USSR, which can only alienate and unite all Great Russians, who still constitute the dominant and ruling element in the USSR and the primary target of RL broadcasts."

Furthermore, in order for the Annex to be consistent with this policy the references to "self-government," etc., mentioned in paragraph 2 above should be appropriately modified or deleted.

"The policy stated above in paragraph 3 is not intended to restrict the broadcasts in fields which do not involve national or political independence. It appears to us, therefore, that RL should focus primarily on the short-term aims of greater democratization and freedom for all peoples within the USSR, including the right of cultural and religious self-expression and appropriate representation in the decision-making organs of the Soviet Party and Government. The long-term goal should be to encourage increasing responsiveness on the part of the central authorities to the needs and views of the different nationality groupings in the USSR."

John Ward

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