

November 20, 1951

CIA-State Department “Summit” Limits Scope of Radio Free Europe

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Summary:

Assistant Secretary of State Edward Barrett reviews Free Europe Committee plans with Allen Dulles and other officials. The State Department vetoes startup of Radio Free Europe Baltic broadcasting on grounds that it would duplicate Voice of America broadcasts and insists that the Crusade for Freedom be toned down. Dulles subsequently rejects the latter point in a handwritten annotation.

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

November 20, 1951

SUBJECT: Meeting at Mr. Barrett's Home on Tuesday Evening, November 20, 1951 to discuss USIE and OPC Relationships

PARTICIPANTS: For CIA For State

Mr. Dulles	Mr. Barrett
Mr. Wisner	Mr. Kohler
	Mr. Joyce
Mr. Braden	Mr. Barbour
	Mr. Davine

STATE DEPT. DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW

Retain Class'n ☐ Change to

X Declassify in part and excise as shown

EO 12958, 25X(1)(C)(3.5(c))

Declassify ☐ After

X With concurrence CIA (not obtained)

S by *ya. Wilson* Date 7/21/12

COPIES TO: Mr. Dulles, Mr. Aigner, ☐ Mr. Pruden,
P - Mr. Barrett, OIB - Mr. Kohler, S/P - Mr. Joyce,
and EE - Mr. Barbour

CONCLUSIONS:

It was agreed that:

1. The proposed ☐ broadcasts would not go on the air as scheduled and that a joint NCFE-VOA effort would be made to take care of the displaced personnel. Kohler to confer with NCFE officials re details.

2. That the next Crusade for Freedom would not be of the high-pressure and spectacular nature of this year's but would be something in the nature of a magazine and direct-mail approach, with all copy carefully cleared.

DISCUSSION:

At the opening of the meeting an agenda was distributed in which was included brief statements proposing what the proper spheres of operation of NCFE and VOA should be. These proposals were as follows:

1. Sphere of Activity for NCFE ☐

To provide radio facilities so that the potentially most effective emigre groups can speak from nearby points to their

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captive fellow-countrymen. By implication this would preclude acknowledged sponsorship by American, British, or any group other than the speaking emigres. It also implies that the broadcasts would be in the standard broadcast band.

2. Sphere of Activity for VOA

To deliver a radio message, by both medium and short wave, in the name of the United States Government and the American people.

These proposals were not agreed to in the meeting.

Following the first reading of these proposals, Mr. Bullen pointed out that the RFE Czech program does not now credit emigre groups but rather puts forward effective individuals many of whom are anonymous.

Mr. Wiesner advanced the suggestion that perhaps RFE activities should only be continued if they are supplementary and noncompetitive with VOA.

Mr. Kohler generalized this thought in a proposal that RFE should carry on covert or supplementary activities which will aid the official United States Government radio. Mr. Wiesner did not think the term "covert" could be logically applied in the case of RFE.

Mr. Joyce commented that at the present time the emigre committees connected with NSRF are so divided that RFE cannot ordinarily get authority to attribute blame to any one of the emigre groups. He did add that the committees are serving one of their original purposes in that they are keeping emigre group pressure from officials in the State Department.

[redacted] in response to a question, said that there is now very little recording of program material by emigre groups in New York. That was previously the basic arrangement but now the bulk of the material is originating overseas.

Mr. Barrett referred to the four questions which were posed by Mr. Barnard at the previous meeting and said that we ought to examine all RFE activities in the light of the following questions:

1. Is the activity one that is serving a useful enough purpose to justify the funds involved?
2. Can it be done better by this organization than by Government directly or by other existing organizations?

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3. Is it jeopardizing the existence and success of other important activities?

4. How can it best be financed?"

Mr. Barrett went on to say that according to best available estimates the USSR is now spending about two billion dollars a year on propaganda and directly related activities. Hence, there is considerable justification for multiple activities-- provided they don't adversely affect one another. He also said that some of the need for non-Governmental groups to participate in a "no holds barred" campaign has disappeared with the toughening attitude of the United States Government vis-a-vis USSR, but that we should study carefully the extent to which such more-extreme-than-government activities are still justified.

Mr. Barbour stated that the limit on what the United States Government may say is probably getting less and less but there will always be some such area which can better be handled by a non-Governmental organization.

Mr. Kohler stated that he does not see in practical terms what this non-Governmental area is. He mentioned that VOA is now using very strong anti-Stalin material and the principal yardstick is whether an item is effective propaganda or not. He pointed out that this same criterion would apply to the operations of a non-Governmental organization. Mr. Kohler added that he thinks that the RFE programming is probably a little more conservative than VOA because RFE is not so near policy and has to tread carefully on a number of issues.

Mr. Kohler said that he was not aware that it could. He added that if a third force group appeared which had something to say that we wanted said and could not say ourselves it would then be time to give them radio facilities.

Mr. Barbour stated that he feels that RFE could as a general rule take a more strident line than VOA.

Mr. Barrett raised the question as to whether the Czech operation was actually ideal and suggested that we ought to get more information on it.

Mr. Wiener reported that the French are now taking active steps to form a national committee. He also said that the British were making some moves in that direction but had not gotten far. Mr. Barrett said that instead of a national committee for France, Britain, U.S., and so on, there ought to be a committee for free Europe which would really be international in character. Mr. Dulles said that an international committee would be very difficult to organize and even more difficult to operate. What would be better in his opinion would be three national committees with a permanently sitting coordinating group, probably in Paris.

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Mr. Barrett said that he felt we might somehow profit by the devices worked out by American political parties-- organizations such as New Dealers for Willkie, "Young Democrats for Dewey" and so on.

Mr. Kohler raised the question of what we are really after in Eastern Europe. He said that he didn't think we needed propaganda in Eastern Europe because the Russians are doing our work for us.

Mr. Joyce did not agree with this and referred to the NSC basic documents in which we are directed to increase tension in Eastern Europe and try to release the USSR's hold over its satellites and roll back the Soviet borders to the 1939 line.

Mr. Barrett said that he felt it was most important for us to get news and ideas to the people in Eastern Europe. Mr. Kohler added that two radio voices-- VOA and RFE-- are worse than one when they are not clearly distinguishable by the audience. Mr. Wisner said if we needed more volume to Eastern Europe we should step up the Voice of America.

Mr. Barrett recalled the fact that Mr. Kohler feels that there is nothing that needs to be said to the [] that cannot be said quite adequately by the Voice of America. Mr. Dulles raised the question of how the [] plans of RFE could be called off if it is decided not to put the programs on the air. Mr. Kohler said that in his talks with John Hughes and Adolph Bore he had the definite impression that the personnel which had so far been lined up for the [] program could be taken care of in other ways. He said it would be better to have a headache for a couple of weeks than to live with the problem for a couple of years. Mr. Dulles pointed out that a responsible group of American citizens had participated in the planning for this and other RFE activities and that they and their proposals could not just be casually dismissed. Mr. Wisner said he felt that a perfectly logical explanation could be advanced, that political conditions have changed and that the State Department is now able to carry on the [] job; therefore, RFE's resources could be applied in other directions. Mr. Barrett recalled that the request from the State Department for the [] broadcast by RFE had come at a time when State did not have the financial resources to undertake such programs. Mr. Kohler said that the [] program need had first come to his attention in the winter of 1949-50. Mr. Dulles reminded the group that in May, 1951 the Department of State had approved RFE broadcasts in the [] languages. Mr. Joyce said that this same approval had come as recently as August 8 of this year from the Department. It was generally agreed that in spite of these commitments conditions had changed and it was important now that RFE broadcasts did not go on in the [] languages. Mr. Kohler then said that he would get together in New York with RFE representatives to help them take the heat off RFE in connection with any cancellation of the [] languages broadcast plans. He said that he would do this within a week.

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Mr. Wisner asked if the present policy of the Department would allow subversive broadcasts to this area. Mr. Kohler said there was no necessity for subversive broadcasts since we had not recognized the Soviet rule in these areas and were working with what we felt were the legal governments.

Mr. Dulles said that close liaison between [] and RFE in New York were needed and he was told that arrangements had already been made for regular meetings between [] of RFE.

[] said that RFE has just about completed work on three stations in Lisbon which are powered with 50 kilowatts each. These have been intended for relaying purposes only, with the programs originating in Munich being sent to Portugal and then played back by short wave to Hungary, Rumania, and so on. Mr. Barrett made the suggestion that perhaps more radio operations could be justified simply on the basis of tying up Russian facilities and making some progress in the electronic war.

Mr. Dulles raised the question of what should be done about the Crusade for Freedom next year. Mr. Barrett said that he felt that the present type of campaign was harming the total United States effort and making people ask the question whether the Voice of America is really needed. He did say that to his surprise no serious questions came up in the last Congress concerning the apparent duplication between Radio Free Europe and VOA. Mr. Barrett suggested that instead of the present type of Crusade for Freedom, a low-pressure program should be conducted. He said that something along the line of the tuberculosis seal campaign in magazines, with coupons, and so on, ought to be tried out. [] then said that Abbott Washburn was only getting into high speed on the Crusade and that in the next few years he hoped to be able to work the Crusade for Freedom up to a point where [] could be raised. Mr. Dulles suggested that Mr. Washburn be brought down to Washington at an early date and given the idea of the low-pressure campaign. Mr. Barrett raised the question of explaining the rest of the RFE budget if the mail order approach raises only []. He felt that an anonymous donor could take care of that problem but Mr. Dulles did not agree on this point. Mr. Dulles raised the question of whether the Crusade for Freedom has value in making the public more aware of the international political situation. It was said that this question could not really be answered. Mr. Barrett felt that it probably made the public more aware in certain respects but on the whole created more problems than it solved.

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[redacted]
[redacted] He should then
be brought in for a discussion of this whole problem. In closing,
Mr. Barrett suggested that the four questions posed by [redacted]
[redacted] He suggested that CIA appoint
one person and that State appoint whether to work as a team to do this
job. Mr. Dulles said that he would prefer to see a record of this
meeting and have a chance to discuss it with his colleagues before
appointing such a person.

P - John Devine

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Cleared by Mr. Krusen - CIA

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