

May 1, 1958

Voice of America Russian Broadcasting Guidelines

Citation:

"Voice of America Russian Broadcasting Guidelines", May 1, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWHIP by A. Ross Johnson. Reference Ch3 136 in his book Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, CIA mandatory declassification review document number C05459063
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/115021>

Summary:

USIA guidelines for VOA Russian broadcasting policy, endorsed by the Committee on Radio Broadcasting Policy.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

CONFIDENTIAL

ESH
LS

39/5.1.3.1

35
T7

USIA BROADCAST POLICY

FOR RUSSIAN LANGUAGE BROADCASTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION - - - - -	1
ASSUMPTIONS RELEVANT FOR VOA GUIDANCE - - - - -	2
U. S. OBJECTIVES - - - - -	4
Long-Run U. S. Policy Objective - - - - -	4
Present U. S. Information Objectives - - - - -	4
POLICY GOVERNING VOA BROADCASTS - - - - -	4
PROGRAM CONTENT - - - - -	5
News - - - - -	6
Features and Commentaries--Their Objectives - -	8
Commentary on the News - - - - -	8
Americana Features - - - - -	9
Special Features - - - - -	10
Treatment of Soviet Internal Affairs - - - - -	11
Treatment of Soviet Foreign Affairs - - - - -	12
Defectors - - - - -	13
Emigre Activities - - - - -	13
Ethnic Considerations - - - - -	14
TONE AND APPROACH - - - - -	14
Cautions - - - - -	15
FURTHER GUIDANCE - - - - -	15

CIA HAS NO OBJECTION TO ☐
DECLASSIFICATION AND/OR ☐ RELEASE OF
THIS DOCUMENT ☐: 16-Feb-2011 ☐

42 2715
33 12

CONFIDENTIAL

Dept. of State, ISS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.

☒ Release () Excise () Deny ☒ Declassify

Exemption (b)(), E.O. 13526, 25x() ()

() Declassify after

With concurrence CIA 10/1/11 obtained

IPS by M. H. A. Date 7/15/11

84 w

CONFIDENTIAL

May 1, 1958

USIA BROADCAST POLICY FOR RUSSIAN LANGUAGE BROADCASTS

INTRODUCTION

It is a basic purpose of U. S. national policy to minimize the threat to the security interests of the U. S. posed by the continuing hostility and growing economic and military power of the USSR and the bloc which it controls. The U. S. also is determined to preserve the peace and to deter nuclear warfare, which could threaten the survival of our institutions and values. Therefore, the U. S. is pursuing policies conceived with a view to reducing the likelihood or capability of Soviet aggression and to effecting changes in the Soviet policies of expansion and subversion. These U. S. policies aim at (1) enhancing the political, economic and military strength and cohesion of the Free World and (2) stimulating evolutionary processes in the USSR which will contribute to the above objectives and which in the long run may lead to other desirable changes in the character and outlook of the Soviet regime.

The role of the Voice of America in advancing U. S. policy objectives with respect to the USSR is determined by the official character of VOA. VOA was established as an official arm of the U. S. Government with the function of explaining and interpreting U. S. policies and reflecting the life and thought of the American people. The official character of VOA is recognized by the people of the USSR who listen to its broadcasts. It is, therefore, incumbent upon each language service of VOA to explain U. S. policies and positions with precision and care, and to transmit programs the tone and content of which are such that the Government of the United States can accept unqualified responsibility for them. In order to fulfill its assigned role effectively, it is essential that VOA place even greater emphasis than heretofore on straight news and factual information about important U. S. and world developments, on exposition of U. S. policies, and on a valid delineation of the values, institutions and procedures which characterize American life.

The directive which follows should be read within the framework set forth above.

* * * * *

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

ASSUMPTIONS RELEVANT FOR VOA GUIDANCE

1. The Soviet regime will maintain its basic hostility toward Western governments, especially that of the U. S., and will strive to imbue its citizenry with a similar outlook.

2. The Soviet Government will maintain its determination to pursue its long-run goal of a Soviet-dominated world, albeit employing relatively more flexible and subtle means than those adopted during the Stalin epoch. (However, the Soviet Government will continue to give priority to (a) the security of the regime and the USSR, (b) maintenance of its hold over the satellites, and (c) retention of close ties with Communist China.)

3. The Soviet Union will seek to achieve its objectives through diplomatic, psychological and economic maneuvers and by subversion rather than by aggression and resort to force, although prepared to use force when expedient. Concomitantly, in propaganda -- domestic as well as foreign -- it will endeavor to fashion the image of a confident and militarily powerful Soviet regime motivated in its international actions by a longing for peace and the reduction of international tensions.

4. Despite the existence of major problems confronting the Soviet regime, and continuing elements of regime instability in the form of policy and personality differences, it seems unlikely that there will be in the near future any crucial weakening of the regime or any basic change in the nature of the Soviet political system.

5. Although it has given evidence of its determination to maintain the primacy of the Party in all fields and keep ferment within prescribed limits, the regime will continue the use of incentives and the encouragement of initiative to elicit popular support and the cooperation of various groups which are essential if the regime is to attain the economic goals requisite for the USSR's manifold commitments and the advancement of its political objectives. Whereas repression and terror might be used as a last resort should the dominant position of the Communist Party be threatened, the regime is fully aware that any significant reversal of post-Stalin internal relaxations would alienate important elements of the population, seriously inhibit essential economic growth and damage the Soviet's international status.

6. The people of the Soviet Union possess an interest
and curiosity

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-3-

and curiosity about the external world, particularly the U. S. This is likely to increase in proportion to enhanced educational opportunities and greater possibilities for contacts with the outside world.

7. Although available evidence indicates that VOA numbers among its listeners persons from all strata of Soviet society, U. S. policy objectives with respect to affecting the course of developments in the USSR require that VOA consistently address itself to that portion of its audience which is relatively more politically alert and potentially more influential i.e., middle and upper bureaucrats, intelligentsia in the arts and sciences, youth, Party officials, and military personnel, and skilled workers.

8. It is assumed that despite various discontents and even possible pessimism about and lack of faith in the future, most people in the USSR, and particularly those whom we wish to influence, feel that reliance on terror has diminished, welcome the more relaxed atmosphere, are proud of Soviet achievements in certain fields (e.g. political leadership of a world bloc, science, education, medicine), and are disposed to believe that the Soviet Government does not want war and is actively engaged in efforts to prevent war.

9. Although it is not clear to what extent the people to whom VOA directs its broadcasts dislike or disassociate themselves from the regime and/or the system, they are sensitive to, and may regard as unfriendly and even hostile, criticism by foreign government media, particularly criticism which is not objective and well-reasoned.

10. Among the groups which VOA is especially interested in influencing there will continue to be a ferment of thought and a questioning attitude toward various aspects of the functioning of the Soviet system. Whereas it is improbable that this will generate any attempts to bring about any basic change in the regime or the system, it is likely that there will be an increasing receptivity to outside ideas and information which suggest feasible means of improving the conditions of Soviet life in general and the well-being of members of these groups in particular.

11. Conditions which have prevailed in the USSR during the full course of its existence have served to develop in the peoples of the Soviet Union, including the groups VOA wishes to influence, a general attitude of political resignation based on a feeling that political developments in the USSR

can be

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-4-

can be determined only by a small group of Party elite. They are not inclined to think of themselves as having the capability of shaping major national policies and actions. Enlarged contacts with the Western world and further internal relaxations may contribute to a lessening of this fatalistic outlook.

U. S. OBJECTIVES

Long-Run U. S. Policy Objective: To have the Soviet Union abandon its expansionist policies, and conduct itself, under a government responsible to the will of the people, as a cooperative member of the society of nations. The form and composition of such a government is a matter to be determined by the peoples of the USSR.

Present U. S. Information Objectives:

1. To increase the knowledge of the Soviet people about the West, and particularly the U. S. so that their judgments and decisions may be based on fact.
2. To project an image of a reasonable, trustworthy and friendly U. S. so that in the event of any future crisis what the United States has to say will carry greater influence.
3. To persuade the people of the USSR that the policies and objectives of the United States are fully consonant with their legitimate objectives and aspirations.
4. To promote a desire for greater freedom, well-being and security among the people of the USSR.
5. To offer challenging and stimulating thoughts which will contribute to sustaining the ferment of thinking and to fostering evolutionary trends.

POLICY GOVERNING VOA BROADCASTS

Since VOA is the official voice of the Government of the United States, its broadcasts must conform with announced U. S. policy and its programs must be such that the U. S. Government can accept responsibility for them.

The objectives of broadcasting to the USSR can be achieved only over a long period of time, and only if programming is

(a) designed to

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-5-

(a) designed to advance specific U. S. policies and objectives,
(b) prepared with the outlook and sensitivities of the groups
which we wish to influence in mind, and (c) consonant with the
official character of VOA.

PROGRAM CONTENT

To support U. S. objectives with respect to the USSR,
Russian language program content should:

1. Inform audiences in the USSR on all matters
meeting one or more of the following criteria:

a. U. S. interests are served by supplying
Soviet audiences with factual information on important
world news developments, particularly news which is
likely to be suppressed or distorted by Soviet infor-
mation media. Particular emphasis should be placed
on factual information concerning important U. S.
actions in the foreign relations field as well as
developments reflecting democratic processes at work
on the American scene.

b. U. S. interests are served by correcting
distortions disseminated by media reaching the peoples
of the USSR concerning particular issues of importance
to the U. S.

c. U. S. objectives are served by reporting
and amplifying, where appropriate through editorial
reactions, U. S. policies and positions on issues
about which the U. S. Government wishes the peoples
of the USSR to be informed, including U. S. policies
toward, and U. S. reactions to, developments in the
Sino-Soviet bloc, the uncommitted nations, and
countries with which the U. S. is allied.

2. Convey to Soviet audiences a sense of continuing
and traditional friendship of the American people for the
peoples of the Soviet Union, and the sincere interest of the
American people and government in their well-being.

3. Emphasize that the U. S. relies on peaceful
means in the conduct of its international relations. At the
same time, make clear that, while the U. S. will not provoke
war, it is determined to deter or resist acts of international

aggression

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-6-

aggression through appropriate actions of the United Nations and collective security arrangements.

4. Counter Soviet propaganda concerning the superiority of the Soviet socialist system (i.e. communism) and the "inevitable victory of Socialism" (i.e. communism) by conveying the Free World view that the free individual in a free society is the wave of the future, and by reporting evidence of continuing Free World unity, economic, technological and scientific progress, and political stability.

5. Encourage evolutionary change in Soviet political, economic, social and cultural life toward relatively more liberal forms by providing information concerning (a) methods employed by the peoples and governments of the U. S. and the Free World to solve concrete problems analogous to those existing in the USSR, (b) developments of a more "liberal" character elsewhere within the Soviet Orbit, and (c) attractive alternatives which are feasible within the present sociological framework of the USSR. Such information or ideas suggestive of practical and attainable alternatives to current forms and methods should be provided in such a manner as not to be subject to legitimate interpretation by listeners as an attempt or intention of the U. S. to interfere in Soviet internal affairs.

6. Encourage a questioning and critical state of mind toward Soviet policies and actions by providing factual information on and authoritative analysis of USSR policies and actions, primarily those related to foreign affairs. In preparing such materials, VOA must carefully consider audience sensitivity to foreign comment on Soviet internal affairs (Page 3, point 9 supra). VOA should endeavor to present subject matter likely to lead members of the groups we seek to influence to form their own conclusion that the specific Soviet policy or action discussed adversely affects either their own or national interests.

News: VOA has a special mission: to provide a reliable, objective and relatively full coverage of important news developments, particularly those outside the USSR. Objectivity requires reporting of events and developments less favorable, as well as favorable, to U. S. interests. (However, VOA, without appearing defensive or apologetic, should provide the necessary factual background to enable listeners to understand these events and developments in context.) Consistent with the foregoing special VOA mission, news presentation should place primary emphasis on U. S. news and on those world developments in which U. S.

interests

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-7-

interests are directly involved. Since available information indicates that the large majority of listeners to VOA are not daily listeners and that jamming effectiveness is not uniform, special attention should be given to repeating important news and keeping important news developments alive over a period of several days. News items for each program should be selected and prepared with a view to avoiding, whenever possible, a preponderance of items relating directly to differences or areas of conflict between the United States and the Soviet orbit. (Such an imbalance may tend to give a hostile ring to the broadcast as a whole in the ears of Soviet listeners we wish to influence.) To the extent possible, news should be presented in the light of the special interests of the audience.

1. Major attention should be accorded those internal and external affairs of the United States which would advance U. S. objectives with respect to the USSR.

a. Important U. S. diplomatic communications and important policy statements made by responsible U. S. Government leaders generally should be accorded extensive coverage.

b. While giving coverage in the news to legitimate viewpoints which are not necessarily in accord with the views of the U. S. Government, programming should, whenever possible, include materials setting forth clearly the U. S. point of view.

2. Special attention should be given news of educational or suggestive value -- i.e., news which will provide listeners with ideas or stimulate thinking which may engender limited developments in the direction of a relative liberalization of Soviet political, economic and social life. Such news would include:

a. Pertinent U. S. and Free World developments.

b. Cross-reporting of "liberalization" measures taken elsewhere in the Soviet orbit, manifestations of popular and intra-party opposition to the Communist system elsewhere in the Sino-Soviet communist bloc; and critical reactions in bloc or foreign Communist Parties to Soviet policies, actions or statements.

c. Statements and views expressed by statesmen and other prominent persons in neutral areas,

particularly

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-8-

particularly the Afro-Asian bloc, which are critical of communism and/or the Sino-Soviet system.

3. From time to time, output should include a news item which indicates indirectly the well-being and successful readjustment to life in the Free World of Soviet defectors and prominent defectors or escapees from elsewhere in the orbit.

Features and Commentaries - Their Objectives

Any and all features and commentaries should be designed to contribute to one or more of three objectives:

1. The presentation of factual data and necessary exposition on policies, objectives, and views of the United States and the Free World, particularly those which have some relation to the USSR and its peoples, so that VOA's listeners will develop an image of the United States as a peaceful, stable, responsible and reasonable nation which has the strength and determination to protect legitimate U. S. and Free World interests but is neither hostile to the USSR per se nor to its peoples.

2. Depicting those major aspects of American life which will increase understanding of U. S. policies and objectives, and convey an image of a society that is neither static nor stagnating but progressive in the arts and sciences as well as in economics and politics -- a society which on the whole is coping successfully with problems, many of which are similar to those confronting the USSR and VOA's listeners. It is important for credibility, balance, and listener appeal that such features and commentaries deal also with aspects of American life which are not a cause for pride, such as unemployment, housing in certain areas, school facilities, desegregation etc. VOA should seek to present these subjects in a way which would increase listener understanding of the nature of the problems involved and the ways in which they are being handled.

3. Indirect stimulation of those feasible evolutionary changes in the structure of Soviet society which would tend to reduce the likelihood of aggressive action by the USSR. Such materials ordinarily should concern U. S. or Free World practices and methods of solving problems, but they may also relate to Soviet internal developments. (See section on Soviet Internal Affairs Pages 11-12)

Commentary on the News: Commentaries should supplement the news by (1) providing fuller exposition of U. S. actions

and policies

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-9-

and policies; (2) analyzing and interpreting important world developments from the U. S. point of view; and (3) correcting distortion of and misconceptions concerning American policies and objectives, significant international programs and actions either sponsored or supported by the U. S., and international developments of major importance to the promotion of U. S. foreign policy objectives.

Essentially, such commentary should be designed to place the facts of the news in perspective and provide necessary background so as to make the news more readily comprehensible to Soviet listeners, with their different orientation and experience.

In commentaries on political affairs, attention should be given, as appropriate, to direct quotes from the actual makers of policy such as the President, the Secretary of State or the Under Secretary of State. Commentaries on the news, as all other commentaries and features, should be dignified and carefully reasoned, designed to gain acceptance by their logic and inherent honesty. They never should be sarcastic or flippant. Commentaries should avoid dogmatism, exaggeration and self-righteousness.

Roundups of editorial, Congressional and foreign official opinion should be used to depict American and Free World attitudes toward international developments. While editorial roundups should, where possible, contain a variety of responsible, reasoned reactions, editorials consonant with official U. S. views should be given particular emphasis.

Reviews of significant books, articles or statements of non-governmental leaders in public life may be used effectively as bases for commentaries interpreting and supporting national objectives and official statements.

Note: Broadly speaking broadcast time devoted to news should be given preference over time devoted to commentary, and in no case should adequate coverage of the news be restricted or important news items omitted in order to provide time for commentaries.

Americana Features: Features on Americana should serve to delineate those important aspects of the life and culture of the people of the U. S. which will (a) facilitate understanding of specific policies and objectives of the U. S. Government, (b) be of value in suggesting indirectly to listeners practical and feasible alternatives to current Soviet institutions and practices, and (c) correct Soviet distortions and misconceptions of the life and culture of the U. S.

Wherever

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-10-

Wherever appropriate, facts or references should be included which would indicate an identity or similarity of American interests, experiences, or traditions with those of our audience. Americana scripts, as a whole, should present a picture of the economic, scientific and social progress of the U. S. and the inherent strength and popular endorsement of its institutions. At the same time, they should reflect the ability of Americans to look at themselves critically and the freedom of Americans to engage in criticism. They should also, over a period of time, convey to listeners in the USSR the basic principles of our culture -- e.g., regard for the dignity, equality and freedom of the individual; government as the servant of the people with defined and limited powers; freedom of conscience, thought and expression. The tone of such scripts should reflect vigor and confidence, but the content should evince appropriate modesty and restraint, so as not to offend by boastfulness or smugness. (This is particularly necessary with respect to materials relating to consumer goods and incomes in the U. S., where real or imagined invidious comparisons with Soviet conditions would be resented.) Americana scripts should inform; they should not draw morals or conclusions.

Note: The desirability of the interview as a technique of presenting various aspects of American life in interesting fashion, and the difficulty of finding persons with the requisite facility in speaking Russian, may require VOA on occasion to interview former Soviet citizens. In such cases, the interview should be devoted to those aspects or processes of American life of which the former Soviet citizen has intimate knowledge through his occupation or specialization and, as relevant, to other aspects of his daily life (e.g. hobbies, social activities, family life, etc.). The person interviewed should not make comparisons between aspects of life in the U. S. and his earlier experiences in the USSR. His status as a former Soviet citizen should be established only to the degree considered absolutely necessary to create a satisfactory personal identity. Except where the individual is an acknowledged expert in his field, VOA should indicate that the Russian-speaking person has been selected for the interview because of his professional qualifications and his fluency in the Russian language.

Special Features: Features advancing U. S. interests are appropriate on:

1. Conditions or developments elsewhere in the Soviet orbit or in other areas of the world, where the purpose of such a feature is (a) to counter misconceptions militating

against proper

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-11-

against proper understanding of U. S. policies and programs, or (b) to imply courses of action based on U. S. or Free World experience or achievements which might profitably be followed by the USSR. These features should be authoritative, objective and thought-provoking so as to stimulate questioning by listeners of the validity of the official Communist line on these subjects.

2. Anniversaries of historical or cultural importance or interest to VOA's listeners. Such features should reflect American appreciation of the achievements, particularly the contributions to world culture or American life, of the peoples of the USSR as a whole or as individuals. They also should recall past American contributions to the national life of the Soviet Union or Russia.

3. Exchanges between the United States and the USSR. Interesting and informative detailed coverage to Soviet visits to the U. S. should be designed: (1) to counter Soviet propaganda allegations on U. S. hostility to the USSR and the existence of an "Iron Curtain" preventing Soviet citizens from visiting the U. S.; and (2) to present factual information about various aspects of American life which may serve to increase understanding of U. S. policies and objectives, and basic facets of American life underlying them, or to stimulate listener thinking about desirable alternative ways of dealing with their own problems. VOA also should broadcast occasional features on American groups and prominent individuals scheduled to visit the USSR either under the official exchange program or private auspices. Emphasis should be upon the nature of their activities, problems and achievements as individuals seeking to fulfill their aspirations in the conditions of a free society.

Treatment of Soviet Internal Affairs:

1. Materials dealing with Soviet internal affairs (e.g. news items, editorial roundups, commentaries, features) shall constitute no more than a minor portion both of programming as a whole and of any single program, in the absence of official policy guidance to the contrary.

2. The purpose of references to or discussion of Soviet internal institutions and developments should be to stimulate the Soviet listener to think critically of these institutions and developments, and eventually to seek feasible alternatives to current Soviet methods and institutions, alternatives which would be in the interest of the U. S. as well as the Soviet listener.

3. Commentaries

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-12-

3. Commentaries or features on Soviet internal institutions or developments originated by VOA shall be kept to a minimum, shall be in strict accord with official guidances authorizing such commentaries and, to the extent possible, shall consist of reasoned views attributed to responsible and authoritative sources, official, press or academic.

4. Occasional features presenting interviews or round-table discussions with articulate Americans upon their return from the USSR may be broadcast. Such features should be designed to stimulate thought about matters such as greater latitude for artistic and intellectual expression; authority for managers commensurate with their responsibility; legal reforms to insure individual rights; more attention to consumer goods, agricultural production and dwelling construction, etc. Discussion should always be constructive.

5. Americana-type scripts should, in general, not contain references to analagous Soviet institutions or developments. On occasion, however, such references may be necessary in order to establish a basis for comparison enabling the listener better to understand the topic under discussion. In these instances, references to Soviet institutions should be made in a dispassionate and factual manner. Comparisons should be strictly analytical, and the scripts should not draw conclusions: the listener should be permitted to draw the proper conclusions for himself on the basis of the facts presented.

Note: It is imperative that every reference to Soviet internal affairs be scrupulously accurate. Special care should be exercised to ensure that materials dealing with Soviet internal affairs reflect U. S. and VOA objectivity. For balance, output should contain some acknowledgement of aspects of Soviet life considered favorably by Soviet citizens (e. g. education, science, medicine, theatre).

Treatment of Soviet Foreign Affairs: Features on Soviet foreign policy and actions in the international sphere should be presented within a framework of U. S. or Free World views of or reaction to such policy and actions. They should provide VOA's listeners with information unavailable to them through official Soviet sources and be prepared with a view to making apparent the contradiction between Soviet practice and propaganda, especially as related to Soviet espousals of a reduction of international tensions and its alleged policies of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries.

U. S. and world

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-13-

U. S. and world condemnation and censure of certain Soviet policies and actions should be brought to the attention of Soviet listeners in an expository manner devoid of preachment. Such features should emphasize, in terms understandable and convincing to the listener, the damage to Soviet national interests inherent in such policies and actions.

When available, useful views expressed by responsible officials in other, especially "neutral," countries should be accorded particular attention.

Defectors:

1. VOA periodically should carry news items which indirectly indicate the well-being and successful adjustment of resettled Soviet defectors and the considerate handling of any current Soviet defectors.

2. An occasional commentary or feature may be prepared on a resettlement or success story involving a defector from the USSR which is of special and unusual interest. (It should not be directly stated that the subject was a defector. This should be indicated only indirectly by reference to appropriate aspects of his past.)

3. VOA output occasionally may include as news items defection and escapee stories, statements by defectors and escapees, and summaries of interviews conducted through non-VOA channels with defectors and escapees, provided that such stories, statements or interviews are intrinsically newsworthy.

4. Commentaries or features, including radio interviews, may also be carried in instances concerning a current defector who is well-known in the target area or who makes public significant information which would be of particular interest to our target groups.

Emigre Activities:

Activities of Soviet and Russian emigres, and emigre organizations, may be reported in the form of news items when the event or statement deserves attention on the basis of its intrinsic news value. (Such items should have obtained news treatment in one or more responsible, prominent non-emigre Free World newspapers or journals.) A feature or commentary may be carried provided specific prior policy authorization is obtained.

Ethnic ConsiderationsCONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-14-

Ethnic Considerations:

The U. S. is acutely aware that there are many ethnic groups in the multi-national Soviet Union whose interests and aspirations are often in conflict with each other. Many of the national minorities aspire to a greater degree of autonomy, have been accustomed to looking upon Great Russians as their historical oppressors, and are often the most persistent opponents of the Communist system. At the same time the Great Russians constitute the overwhelmingly largest single ethnic group in the USSR and have strong feelings of nationalism.

Whenever dealing with this controversial nationality issue VOA should bear in mind that the U. S. Government, as a matter of policy, does not wish to pre-determine any boundary, government or governments which may evolve from the present territory of the USSR. In all output to the USSR VOA should accordingly avoid giving the impression either that the U. S. favors any form of division of the USSR or conversely that the U. S. would protect the indivisibility of the Russian State.

TONE AND APPROACH

1. VOA should build a reputation for reliability, objectivity, sincerity and reasonableness which will enhance understanding and support for U. S. policies and programs. Broadcasts should be factual and unemotional. Programs should inform and educate, not preach and advise. General emphasis in presentation should be positive, stressing the constructive purposes of the Free World, rather than merely anti-Communist.

2. Tone and approach should be such as to be regarded by listeners in the USSR, with their peculiar background and conditioned attitude, as reflecting the interest and concern of the U. S. in the welfare of the peoples of the USSR, rather than hostility by the U. S. to the USSR or its regime.

3. Description and commentary on conditions in Western countries should not be prepared in terms of direct comparisons with Soviet conditions, except when such comparisons are clearly integral to the presentation.

4. In pursuing policy objectives, VOA should avoid tone or materials which could be construed as vituperative or inflammatory.

5. Broadcasts should eschew personal attacks on leading Soviet figures, unless this is provided by officially authorized policy guidance.

6. Satire and irony

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-15-

6. Satire and irony, since these are easily misunderstood, should be employed only with the greatest caution and, whenever possible, following appropriate consultation.

7. Argumentation should always be reasoned and persuasive rather than moralistic and querulous, and should be prepared with full regard to the character of the audience.

Cautions:

1. It is especially important that VOA output to the USSR should not seem hostile or overly critical. (The Soviet Government, at this time, is eager to seize upon any opportunity to allege U. S. interference in Soviet internal affairs or to gain support for its allegations of U. S. hostility.) Therefore, any criticism in VOA commentaries and features should be confined to Soviet foreign policy and international Communism, insofar as possible, and always should be thoughtful and constructive.

2. It is believed that Soviet listeners to VOA consider commentaries and features broadcast over VOA to reflect the attitudes and reactions of the U. S. Government, unless specifically attributed to other sources. It is therefore particularly essential that such material should in fact reflect the official U. S. position.

3. On fast-breaking Soviet internal developments or international developments, where guidance has not been received, services broadcasting to the USSR initially should confine output to reporting the news and important relevant and authoritative opinions (i.e. editorials, official statements, etc.).

FURTHER GUIDANCE:

Output to the USSR, as all other VOA programs, will continue to be guided with respect to news developments by information policies framed appropriately to promote U. S. interests in the particular circumstances at hand.

Situations requiring modifications or adjustments in this guidance may well arise (it is possible that some time in the future we may be compelled to return to a "cold war" approach), while emergencies might necessitate radical changes. However, departure from this guidance should not be undertaken without appropriate consultation with established policy offices.

CONFIDENTIAL