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THE WHITE HOUSE
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October 17, 1990

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NATIONAL SECURITY DIRECTIVE 51

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
DIRECTOR, UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY
CHAIRMAN, BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL
BROADCASTING

SUBJECT: United States Government International
Broadcasting (U)

This directive establishes national policy, guidelines, and implementing actions for United States Government international broadcasting. It is based on National Security Review 24, which I directed on March 28, 1990, to be done in light of dramatic political, economic and social changes in the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe. NSDD-77 is superseded. Pertinent parts of NSDD-45 shall remain active. (C)

In a period of historic change, a global U.S. Government broadcasting capability remains necessary. At the same time, we must increase efficiency in the light of U.S. budget constraints and reexamine priorities to ensure that our limited broadcasting resources are used to best effect. (U)

U.S. Government broadcasting will continue to have four missions:

- To present and explain to foreign audiences U.S. Government policies and actions.
- To describe and explain American society, thought, and institutions.

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- To provide objective and reliable news, commentary and information about U.S. and international events.
- To provide surrogate programming where local governments curtail the free flow of information to their people and where surrogate programming is in the U.S. interest. (U)

U.S. Government international broadcasting activities should be carried out in accordance with the following guidance:

- Broadcasting should serve and advance U.S. foreign policy objectives through radio and television programming to foreign audiences. Broadcasting should be directly connected to the U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy apparatus and should remain under the authority of the Executive branch. (S)
- The U.S. Government should maintain a global radio and television capability, broadcasting to both elites and general populations in all geographic areas. Where possible, the U.S. should broadcast in the languages of the receiving countries, as well as in English. (U)
- The limited resources for broadcasting activities should be directed as necessary to reflect overall U.S. foreign policy priorities in the areas covered, the types of programming offered, and the languages used. (S)
- A chief priority for U.S. Government international broadcasting should be to further the process of democracy-building by describing democratic institutions and practices. (U)
- Broadcast capability to currently underserved regions, including the Islamic world and Africa, should be increased, and VOA should increase its surrogate function or targeted broadcasts. (S)
- U.S. Government international broadcasting should actively and directly support non-traditional U.S. foreign policy priorities, such as the war on drugs, the fight against terrorism, and efforts to improve the global environment. (U)
- To operate within constrained budget levels, U.S. Government broadcasting agencies should begin to consolidate broadcasting operations, eliminate redundancy and increase flexibility and coordination in managing assets, keeping in

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mind the different mandates of VOA and USIA/TV on the one hand, and RFE/RL on the other. (U)

- To be more effective and better utilize limited resources, the U.S. Government should, at some future point, have only one broadcast entity. (U)
- U.S. Government budgetary support for Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty should eventually be phased out as their mission is completed. The RFE/RL research service should be maintained; its role should be reviewed periodically. Innovative ways should be considered for continuing RFE in Eastern European countries without U.S. Government funding, possibly through commercialization or transferring the name and some assets to local broadcasters. (U)
- The currently approved streamlined modernization plan for VOA and RFE/RL, central to meeting these missions on a global basis, is reaffirmed (with adjustments to the Israel shortwave relay station to reflect changes in Eastern Europe). (U)
- With the emergence of a unified Europe, VOA Europe should increase the political and economic content of its service and seek to expand its audience. (U)
- To compete in an increasingly sophisticated global media environment, the U.S. Government must frequently reevaluate its broadcasting technology and programming on the basis of audience survey research to ensure the most effective technical means of delivery and mix of programming for reaching the greatest number of priority audiences. Greater emphasis should be placed on developing the potential of USIA/TV in consonance with opportunities to reach larger priority audiences. (U)
- U.S. Government broadcasting should not conflict with the growth of U.S. private sector telecommunications and broadcasting enterprises. Where possible, U.S. Government broadcasting activities should help private sector enterprises to become established in foreign markets. (U)

In order to coordinate U.S. Government international broadcasting activities more effectively, a Policy Coordinating Committee for International Broadcasting should be established, chaired by the Department of State and composed of relevant agencies. Its functions are outlined in NSR-24. The PCC will complete an initial strategic review of broadcasting priorities within five months. (C)

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The opening up of Eastern Europe, though incomplete, offers opportunities to begin consolidating some RFE and VOA technical resources now. The first task of consolidation should be to prepare to phase out USG-funded RFE programming to Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland as conditions in those countries permit. The first step is to eliminate RFE repeat programming in these countries. (C)

The Policy Coordinating Committee for Europe should advise the PCC on International Broadcasting in assessing the appropriate time for phasing out and ending U.S. Government support for individual RFE surrogate broadcasting services, using as guidelines the criteria in NSR-24. (C)

U.S. Government international broadcasting will, in steps and over time, consolidate activities under a single U.S. Government entity. To determine the best organization for that entity, I will appoint an independent bipartisan task force to study the future of U.S. Government international broadcasting assets and activities (VOA with Radio and TV Marti, USIA/TV, RFE/RL, and Radio in the American Sector [RIAS] of Berlin). On the basis of policy established in this directive, the task force is to make recommendations to me within six months of its establishment on the following issues in the overall context of U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy:

- The most appropriate organization and structure under which all USG international broadcasting eventually would be combined into a single U.S. Government broadcasting entity; when and how such consolidation should take place. (U)
- New technologies in light of the need for U.S. Government broadcasting to remain effective and competitive. This should include strategies for the best use of new technologies. (U)
- The relationship between U.S. Government broadcasting activities and U.S. private sector broadcasting enterprises in the international arena. (U)



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