

October 19, 1962

Letter, Howland H. Sargeant to Stan [Ward]

Citation:

"Letter, Howland H. Sargeant to Stan [Ward]", October 19, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Released by the Central Intelligence Agency on October 16, 2019, in response to Mandatory Declassification Review request EOM-2018-00930. Contributed by A. Ross Johnson. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/290958>

Summary:

AMCOMLIB President Sargeant provides the CIA liaison officer with an explanation of his memorandum on the Spanish Government's request to share use of the RL transmitters.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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19 OCT 1962

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Natal

I wrote this assessment of the position of the American Committee in Spain because I felt that the recent changes were so important that it was wise to try and see in perspective exactly how we stood. I would recommend that Cord take a look at this memorandum because there are several points in it that I think would be of particular interest and concern to him. I refer particularly to the listing of nine risks and problems for the future and I think of special interest to him will be point number 1 and point number 7. You will see that on point number 7 I am returning to something that I stressed most seriously last year after my return from Spain. It is not realistic in my opinion to think that we can hold off forever in sharing the facilities we have located on Spanish soil with the Spanish National Radio. There may be some opportunity of making this kind of broadcasting more useful but I am not in a good position to make an accurate judgment. There may be people in Madrid who can give you and Cord a much clearer view of what we could realistically expect. My own hunch is that when bureaucracy has become entrenched in any ministry or in any government, the ability of a new top man and a new top team to make the kind of changes which will produce major impact in any short term is not great. Nevertheless, I think this is something worth exploring and I recall to your mind that you have available to you in Washington in Jamie a man who for a while saw this rather closely and I believe had the most accurate view of what the organization was like. He might have some ideas worth exploring about what steps could be taken, if any, to be helpful in seeing that whatever broadcasts were prepared by the National Spanish Radio, at a minimum they would not actually be harmful when directed behind the Iron Curtain.

Point number 9 will of course also be of concern to you and Cord. I have a feeling that we are on the right road now and that after the visit of the two people from the Ministry of Information to Munich in late October, we will know even more accurately whether the rather optimistic judgment I make will in fact be confirmed.

In looking back over the period of more than seven years since we signed the basic agreement with the Spanish Government, in June 1955, I hope you will agree with me that we have done far better than we might have anticipated during those early and difficult months of spasmodic progress and of hesitant negotiation. The most important thing we have done, in my opinion, has been to pick extremely capable representatives, both American and Spanish, and they have made lasting and important friends for us. These friendships have carried us through some difficult and rough times in the past and at the moment they seem to me to put us in a strong position.

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