

## **September 6, 1951**

### **CIA-State Department Reservations about Broadcasting to the Soviet Union**

#### **Citation:**

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<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/114364>

#### **Summary:**

Senior CIA and State Department officials review the August 21 OPC memorandum ["Office of Policy Coordination History of American Committee for Liberation"]. The State Department officials question whether disparate Russian émigré groups can cooperate enough to organize broadcasting to the USSR, while CIA director Walter Bedell Smith questions the cost of the project.

#### **Credits:**

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#### **Original Language:**

English

#### **Contents:**

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EO 12958 3.5(c)

6 September 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Development of Russian Political Center

PARTICIPANTS: Messrs. Bohlen, Mathews, Reinhardt and Joyce  
from Department of State

General Smith and Messrs. Dulles, Wisner, [redacted]  
[redacted] from CIA

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1. A conference was held in the office of the Director, CIA, 28 August 1951 at 2:15 p.m. to discuss a memorandum, dated 27 August 1951, prepared by representatives of CIA concerning the Development of a Russian Political Center.

2. Mr. Wisner explained that the development of a Russian political center had been undertaken by CIA at the request of the Department of State and that considerable progress had been achieved toward the establishment of such a center, representatives of five Great Russian groups having recently signed an agreement to collaborate in a political center known as the Council for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia. Mr. Wisner reviewed the recommendations of the subject memorandum concerning the use to which the Political Center should be put and the activities in which it should engage. These include:

- a. Radio programs beamed at the Soviet Union
- b. A newspaper
- c. Political activities of the Center
- d. Research Institute in Germany.

3. The Director inquired

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3. The Director inquired as to the cost of such a program which [redacted] said had been estimated at [redacted] pointed out, however, that he considered this estimate excessive and believed that it could be substantially reduced. He explained that the cost of establishing broadcasting facilities constitutes by far the largest item of cost. The Director asked whether the Russian Political Center broadcasts could be given over the facilities of Radio Free Europe. [redacted] explained that this proposal had been considered, but that from a technical point of view the location of the present transmitters of Radio Free Europe, which are in Germany, is not satisfactory for broadcasts to Soviet Russia. He believed that the cost of expanding RFE facilities to include broadcasts to Russia on any substantial scale would at least approximate the cost of establishing separate facilities expressly for the Russian center. The State Department representative confirmed that from a policy point of view it was not desirable to have broadcasts to Russia under the apparent auspices of NCFE.

4. The Director then questioned the effectiveness of radio propaganda beamed at Russia, stating that in his opinion propaganda would have little practical effect in the Soviet heartland and indicating his opinion that propaganda was chiefly valuable if directed at the periphery and Satallite areas. The Director solicited the views of the State Department representatives on this point. It was the general consensus of opinion on the part of the State Department representatives that the practical impact of radio propaganda on Great Russia was problematical. Mr. Bohlen said that although radio propaganda would not incite the Russian people to active opposition, it might, nevertheless, create doubts in the Kremlin as to the loyalty of its people in time of crisis, and thereby act as a determinant to further Soviet aggression. Mr. Dulles stressed the desirability of concentrating propaganda on Russian occupation personnel in East Germany.

5. There was some doubt on the part of all the State Department representatives as to whether it was reasonable to expect the groups forming the Political Center to continue to work together with any cohesion. Mr. Mathews expressed considerable concern on this score. He suggested that it would be highly desirable to have a trial period during which the Political Center could engage in limited activities to test the ability of the constituent groups to work together. Mr. Reinhardt suggested that the priority of activities to be undertaken by the Political Center be altered to make radio broadcasts the last priority.

6. In view of the cost of the program as originally envisaged, of the doubt concerning the value of radio propaganda directed at

Soviet Russia,

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Soviet Russia, and the uncertainty concerning the ability of the Political Center to remain unified, it was agreed that the following activities on the part of the Political Center should be initially supported:

- ✓ a. Publication and distribution of a newspaper representing the views of the Center.
- ✓ b. Maintenance of the Research Institute now established in Germany.
- ✓ c. Radio broadcasting on an experimental scale using the facilities of Radio Free Europe (to the extent that use of these facilities is feasible and does not interfere unduly with existing commitments of RFE) augmented by such limited additional equipment, including a mobile ten kilowatt transmitter already available, which can be procured at a reasonable cost.

7. In conclusion Mr. Wisner requested guidance from the State Department on the following points:

- a. Appraisal of the value and effect of broadcasts to the Soviet heartland.
- b. The nature and extent of the control of all propaganda issued by the Political Center and how this control should be exercised.
- c. Programs and type of activity to be developed by the Political Center.

8. Mr. Mathews stated that on receipt of a memorandum outlining the proposed program the State Department would undertake to comment on these three points.



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Distribution:

DD/P - 1,2

DDCI - 3

Mr. Frederick Reinhardt - 4

Mr. Robert P. Joyce - 5 + 4 - 3 -

Mr. H. Freeman Mathews - 6

Mr. Charles E. Bohlen - 7 *destroyed*

Copies 6 & 7 were destroyed and copies 4 & 5 were sent to Joyce for distribution to other State officials. Suggestion of DD/P

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