

September 15, 1951

Report to USSR Minister of Communications on Western Broadcasts to Poland

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Summary:

The following document describes how arrangements were made to jam Western
broadcasts to Poland from Soviet and Polish territory in 1951.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Report of the Chief of the main Directorate of Radio Communications, State Communications Director Third Rank, A. I. Zharov, to USSR Minister of Communications N. D. Psurtsev, about broadcasts of the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and other Western radio stations to Poland, and the setting up of radio protection on the territory of Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe.

Moscow 15 September 1951
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to USSR minister of CommuniCations
Comrade N. D. Psurtsev

In accordance with USSR Council of Ministers Instruction N^o 14148-rs of 11 August 1951, a group of specialists headed by Comrades Zharov, Savkova, and Pavlovich was sent to Poland and the questions entrusted to it by your directive were cleared up.

Besides all the required documents submitted by Polish organizations the group familiarized itself with the radio stations of the following cities: Warsaw, Szczecin, Gdansk, Gdynia, Krakow, Katowice, and Radom, and also with the Warsaw plants which produce receiving and transmitting equipment. At the same time, special listening was organized on the airwaves used by the stations broadcasting hostile, anti-Polish propaganda, and the strength of their reception was measured.

Anti-Polish radio transmissions are aired on short and medium wave in broadcasts from 15 to 30 minutes as follows:

1. US (Voice of America) broadcasts 13 times a day both directly from New York as well as via stations in the Western zone of Germany, London, and Tangiers. The number of wavelengths simultaneously active on different broadcast schedules is from three to 11.2. London (BBC) has one broadcast on three or four wavelengths.
3. Rome, two broadcasts on three or four wavelengths.
4. Vatican, two broadcasts on three wavelengths.
5. Belgrade, three broadcasts on one or two wavelengths.
6. Paris, two broadcasts on one to four wavelengths.
7. Madrid, one broadcast on one wavelength.
8. Ankara, one broadcast on one wavelength.
9. A radio station calling itself [Radio] Free Europe, has three broadcasts on one or two wavelengths.

The total number of anti-Polish broadcasts per day is 30.

The content of the broadcasts, especially those aired by the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Madrid, is exceptionally hostile in nature and directed against the current political system of the Polish republic.

Anti-Polish broadcasts are heard throughout the entire territory of Poland on almost all these frequencies.

No protection against anti-Polish broadcasts has been organized from Polish territory.

The jamming of anti-Polish broadcasts of the Voice of America instituted by stations of the Soviet Union beginning in July of 1950 only covers and effectively protects a small number of frequencies.

The network of individual Polish receivers, the main source for acquiring radio information, has been expanded across the entire territory of the country with considerable density, 4.5 receivers per 100 people on average (this number is almost four times greater than the average density of distribution of receivers in the Soviet Union).

Of a total number of 986,000 tube receivers, 49.6% are distributed among the 17 capital cities of the provinces and the remaining 50.4% of receivers are distributed in other cities and the countryside.

The presence of a large number of receivers dispersed throughout the country engenders the need to organize protection against anti-Polish broadcasts which is effective everywhere on Polish territory.

The radio broadcasting and communications equipment available in Poland is:

a) 15 radio transmitters with a total power of 526 kilowatts located in nine provinces, including 12 medium-wave transmitters with a total power of 218.5 kilowatts.

All radio broadcast stations are connected to one another and Warsaw by an inter-city cable network;

b) Of the 62 communications transmitters with a total power of 395 kilowatts at four locations, 54 are shortwave transmitters with a total power of 336 kilowatts.

The small size of the territory of the Polish republic (approximately 600 km east to west and about the same north to south) precludes the possibility of protecting the entire territory from anti-Polish broadcasting on shortwave with their own equipment. This is explained by the fact that radio wave propagation occurs via two paths during shortwave operation: along the earth's surface at a distance in the neighborhood of 10 kilometers from the transmitter, and by a wave reflected from the upper layers of the atmosphere which is detected no nearer than several hundred kilometers from the transmitting station. This distance changes depending on the wavelength and time of operation and can be more than a thousand kilometers, so that, in the case of Poland, its own stations would be audible only outside its own territory.

The use of existing shortwave transmitters in the Warsaw, Szczecin, Gdansk, and Katowice regions to protect these cities is impossible in view of their poor location.

The creation of a special network of shortwave radio centers to protect Polish territory by ground wave alone is inadvisable since:

1. If the entire territory is to be covered, the total number of radio centers would be high (several hundred); it would cost a lot to build them and require the creation of a complex monitoring and adjustment [kontrolno-korrektirovochnaya] service, and a large number of specially trained personnel.

2. If only large cities are to be protected, a large number of receivers located in other cities and the countryside would remain completely unprotected.

3. The characteristics of the location of the cities in some provinces (Katowice and gdansk), where they are either next to one another or nearby, forming an extensive settled area of great size, also create difficulties in protecting them from a single location.

4. Protection on medium wave could be accomplished from the territory of the republic itself; at the same time, partial protection of the country could be accomplished with the use of existing underused broadcast transmitters, but complete protection requires the manufacture and installation of additional low-power medium-wave transmitters.

In view of the above-mentioned difficulties in ensuring the complete protection of Poland on shortwave with its own equipment, a system of coordinated use of Polish and soviet equipment for mutual protection from anti-Soviet and anti-Polish broadcasting would be the most technically suitable and economically beneficial.

The effectiveness of this system would be considerably increased by including other People's democracies which have the equipment and which also need protection from hostile broadcasts (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria).

According to our information, in November 1950, representatives of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland discussed the issue of mutual aid and identified the need for mutual protection on short waves. However these decisions have not been implemented.

In 1950, the governments of Poland and Romania turned to the Soviet Union for help in the matter of protection against hostile radio propaganda.

Beginning in June of the same year, on your instructions, a Soviet station began to jam Voice of America broadcasts in the languages of countries of the People's Democracies.

However, the effectiveness of this jamming was low because of a scarcity of equipment and a lack of mutual coordination.

Part of the radio equipment available in Poland could be used for the purpose of protection immediately, to conduct simple organizational and technical measures.

The means exist in Poland for a subsequent increase in the amount of equipment for protection.

Polish industry has already managed to produce a small batch of transmitters and, according to this year's Plan, will deliver seven shortwave transmitters to the ministry of Posts and telegraph with a power of 10 kilowatts each.

Transmitter production capacity could be increased if necessary.

The restored radio station building in the city of Radom has sufficient space which might be used to install new transmitters.

On the basis of the ideas indicated above I think it advisable that work to protect the territory of Poland from anti-Polish propaganda via radio be conducted in the following manner:

1. Protection on medium wave is to be accomplished from Polish territory, using the resources of the Polish republic.
2. Protection on shortwave is to be accomplished chiefly from the territory of the Soviet Union, enlisting the equipment of the Polish republic to protect certain regions

of the USSR from anti-Soviet broadcasts.

In a conversation with me, Comrade Bierut confirmed the possibility of using Polish radio equipment for these purposes.

I consider it desirable to study the capability of the countries of the People's Democracies to participate in a common system of mutual protection against hostile radio propaganda as a measure to increase the effectiveness of the struggle against hostile broadcasts.

The development of a mutual protection plan, identifying the amount of resources and the system for organizing the work, is necessary to solve the problems of coordinating equipment to protect the Polish republic and the Soviet Union.^[1]

Chief of the Main Directorate of
Radio Communications, State
Communications Director, 3rd Class .
A. ZHAROV

^[1] On 24 September 1951, N. D. Psurtsev reported draft USSR Council of Ministers decrees [postanovleniya] prepared in the USSR Ministry of Communications to V. M. Molotov. They envisioned the development of a plan to protect the territory of Poland and individual territories of the Soviet Union by 15 October 1951, and the preparation within two months of a plan for joint radio protection of the territory of the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. It was proposed to convene a special meeting of representatives of these countries in Moscow to discuss this latter plan. The Council of Ministers decree on these issues was adopted on 24 October 1951. See GARF. F. 5446. Op. 59. D. 1724. P. 11; AVP RF. F. 0122. Op. 36. P. 297. D. 13. pp. 133-136. [Footnote from Vostochnaya Yevropa v Dokumentakh Rossiyskikh Arkhivov [Eastern Europe in Documents of the Russian Archives], 1944-1953, Tom II, 1949-1953 (Moscow-Novosibirsk: Sibirski khronograf, 1998).]