

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET/SENSITIVE

National Security Planning Group Meeting
December 14, 1984, 11:00-12:00 noon, Situation Room

SUBJECT: Radio Marti

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

Office of the Vice President

Adm Daniel Murphy

State
Acting Secretary Kenneth Dam

Defense
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger

CIA
Mr. William J. Casey

JCS
General John Vessey

USUN
Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick

USIA
Mr. Charles Z. Wick

White House
Mr. Edwin Meese, III
Mr. Robert C. McFarlane
Adm. John Poindexter

NSC
Walter Raymond, Jr.

Minutes

Mr. McFarlane opened the meeting by defining the issue: What steps are necessary to implement the Administration's commitment to establish Radio Marti? We are certain of our ability to broadcast to Cuba. At the same time, the Cubans have assembled a capability to respond in two ways: (a) by jamming our incoming Radio Marti signal to Cuba and (b) by counterbroadcasting to the US sufficient power to interfere with our own commercial broadcasting. We must address the question as to how we can deter the Cubans or how can we deal with the challenge. Mr. McFarlane noted that there were a variety of political, psychological and technical strategies that could be followed. One option is to engage in

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competition to out compete them in terms of jamming their broadcasting facilities. There are risks involved. We also can explore some adjustments in our Radio Marti signal, i.e. should the signal be on both medium and shortwave, should the political content be lower. Mr. McFarlane then requested USIA, CIA, State and Defense to brief on their respective concerns.

Mr. Wick summarized the current state of development of Radio Marti. Congressional legislation of October 1983 authorized mediumwave broadcasts on 1180 from Marathon Key. This broadcast signal will cover half of Cuba during the day; 80% at night. Wick added that the legislation provided for concurrent broadcasting by shortwave. VOA has shortwave transmitters in the US that can be programmed immediately to broadcast to Cuba. Shortwave has the advantage of covering the entire island, both during the day and night. Wick's one concern is that there are a limited number of shortwave receivers in Cuba although they are in the possession of much of the military, political and bureaucratic elite. He raised the possibility of supplemental out of band mediumwave broadcasting on 1610 AM. This, however, bears further examination as it may interfere with certain maritime broadcasting. If tasked, USIA can pursue this with the FCC.

Mr. Wick related that VOA has constructed a major capability and Radio Marti could begin broadcasts now. The overall preparatory efforts were slowed during 1984 because of the absence of key Radio Marti officers--the director came on board in October 1984--and the lengthy time necessary to get security clearances. Wick said his target for starting Radio Marti was 28 January 1985. He added that the Cuban-American community has been restrained concerning the delay but that they are now pressing actively for startup. Wick noted Paula Hawkins' recent public statements and letter calling for a January starting date.

Mr. Casey briefed on Cuban preparations and his judgement of Cuban intent. Casey noted that within two months of the Administration's statement of intent to create a new radio broadcasting ability to Cuba that the Czechs sent new jammers to Cuba. Subsequently the Cubans--with Soviet bloc help--built nine new facilities. They also leaked plans that they intended to broadcast to the US as a retaliation to Radio Marti. The Soviets provided two large 500 KW transmitters for broadcasting. The Cubans have the capability to undertake extensive defensive (jamming) and offensive (counterbroadcasting) measures. Casey's judgment is that the Cubans could create serious interference in the Southeast portion of the US, affecting possibly 160 stations, during the daytime and at night could reach all 48 mainland states. In addition, if they tried, they could reach our high frequency and satellite

transmissions, carrying US intelligence, and cause some disruptions.

Mr. Casey then addressed the question of Cuban intent. He noted the high state of concern by Castro of the vulnerability of his people to radio. Casey speculated that the degree of success of Cuban jamming of Radio Marti plus the content of the Radio Marti programming will have a bearing on Cuban reactions. Castro does not want a military confrontation with the US and has acted cautiously. We can not, however, bank on this and Castro may go beyond jamming as a counter-reaction. Castro has invested heavily in his ability to initiate counterbroadcasting. Casey added that Castro could choose an unrelated retaliatory act such as new pressure on Guantanamo or the US interest section in Havana. Casey noted that we have no firm evidence of planning beyond the buildup of the jamming capabilities and Radio Lincoln counterbroadcasting facilities. While the Soviets have provided Castro physical and propaganda support, Casey believes that the Soviets do not want a Cuban-Soviet radio confrontation to get out of hand.

Mr. Dam described the diplomatic, political and psychological deterrence strategy. This plan is based on communicating to Castro that he faces dangerous escalation if he initiates countermeasures against the US. We need, through various channels, to convince him we are stronger and that direct confrontation should be avoided. At the same time, the strategy will be designed to insure that there is a domestic and international climate to support whatever steps are taken by the US. Dam noted that the FCC judges that it could keep the lid on the US broadcasters, should Castro launch massive counterbroadcasting, for 7 to 10 days. He also thought the \$5 million compensation fund would be inadequate to cover losses by US radio broadcasting licenses. Dam concluded by underscoring that a political/psychological strategy is not a separate option; it will not stand alone unless we are prepared to take retaliatory countermeasures, if directly challenged by Castro, then we might have to back down. He considered backing down to Castro in these circumstances would be a very costly defeat.

The President asked whether the US could offer Castro a mediumwave frequency so that he could broadcast to the US without interfering with US stations. The NSPG principals stated this could be done and was part of our political/diplomatic strategy. Jeane Kirkpatrick noted that Castro does broadcast to the US on shortwave now. Dam did not think that an offer for Radio Lincoln to broadcast on a dedicated mediumwave frequency would necessarily solve the problem. The President reiterated the key point: From an international point we can not suffer the blow of giving up our plan. At the same time, there is no way we can accept having our commercial stations being off the air. Indeed, the people will

react possibly more than the radio station owners. He asked if there were a way to tell Castro that if he engages in massive counterbroadcasting that we will black out Castro's own media.

Mr. Weinberger briefed on the Department of Defense's ability to jam Cuban television. By utilizing four KC-135 planes, with special technical configurations, DOD can jam television in the Havana area. This capability will take 4 to 6 months to be operational, although Weinberger said DOD could try to cut this time to 4 months or less. He noted that the cost in developing this capability would be \$44 million with hourly operating costs of \$32 thousand. He acknowledged that some of the initial costs could be recovered if the planes were sold after the mission were completed. In order to jam the remainder of the island, it would be necessary to jam Cuban microwave relays on the island. This would be by the deployment of two tethered balloons (STARS). It will cost between \$10-12 million to develop this capability. The daily cost of providing appropriate air cover and support for these two operations runs about \$1 million per day. All the above operations would be undertaken outside of the 12 mile limit from Cuban shores. Mr. Weinberger added that jamming Cuban radio was difficult because of the extensive transmitter network on the island. Some interference of the signal is possible, but it would not be very burdensome to the Cubans. (N.B. There was no discussion of expanded US counterbroadcasting to Cuba.)

Mr. Wick indicated that he had discussed compensation costs with Congressman Fascell who thought Congress would be prepared to raise significantly the amount of money available for compensation, if needed. Mr. Wick said he had used the figure \$40 million and Fascell did not rule this sum out. Wick urged the option of keeping Marti on the air and covering the damages to US radio.

Mr. McFarlane directed the conversation to a start-up date. He asked if we could or should start broadcasting before our retaliatory measures were in-place. Casey asked how much face do we lose if we pull back from the 28 January date. The President raised the question of completing our preparations and then commencing broadcasting with Radio Marti political content downplayed. Wick expressed concern about the absence of political content suggesting the Cuban-American community might be upset. He suggested we might want to brief key Cuban-Americans. This idea was not accepted, but it was noted by Ambassador Kirkpatrick that this could be accomplished by briefing key Congressional members, particularly Hawkins and Fascell. Dam reiterated we need countermeasures in hand. If Castro is aware of our countermeasures completely, it will put his back to the wall. Mr. McFarlane summarized this part of the discussion by concluding that if we commence broadcasting

we should have an operational capability ready to jam Cuban TV. Without that capability we should wait.

The President asked about the feasibility of starting Radio Marti on schedule with only shortwave. Mr. Wick said this could be done. It is not explicitly consistent with the legislation but it is possible that the Radio Marti act could be amended. The President also asked whether the US has commercial stations that reach Cuba. Mr. Wick said some broadcasts are heard in Cuba but that VOA has explored leasing time on these stations for Radio Marti and the prospects do not look too encouraging. Lastly the President asked how long it would take to be operational if we only utilized the balloon counterstrategy. Weinberger said two to three months. The President expressed concern about the attitude of the American people if advised of the large costs involved in broadcasting to Cuba.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick added a cautionary note suggesting that we can not assume our countermeasures will be fully reliable, nor can we assume that Castro's counteractions will be reliable. He may not be as effective as is suggested.

Mr. McFarlane closed the conversations with a suggestion that a tight summary be prepared of the actions necessary for us to have a high prospect of prevailing. What steps will we take to cope with counterbroadcasting and jamming. The costs should be identified, with the pros and cons developed. What program content and strategy should be followed. He asked for a Congressional consultative plan. He suggested we might be looking at a May date.

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