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MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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NATIONAL SECURITY PLANNING GROUP MEETING
Friday, May 17, 1985, 11:10 a.m.-11:55, Situation Room

SUBJECT: Radio Marti ~~(U)~~

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

The Vice President's Office:
Craig L. Fuller

State:
Secretary George P. Shultz
James H. Michel

OSD:
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger
Fred C. Ikle

CIA:
Director William J. Casey
[REDACTED]

E. O. 12958
As Amended
Sec. 1.4(c)

JCS:
General John W. Vessey, Jr.
Vice Admiral Author S. Moreau, Jr.

USIA:
Director Charles Z. Wick
Mark Everson

White House:
Mr. Donald T. Regan
Mr. Robert C. McFarlane
Admiral John M. Poindexter

NSC:
Mr. Walter Raymond, Jr.

OMB:
Alton G. Keel

Minutes

Mr. McFarlane opened the meeting noting that the December NSPG session had recommended a strategy to go on the air with Radio Marti about now and had directed the establishment of a retaliatory capability. DOD had been instructed to seek reprogramming. Firm opposition had arisen to this reprogramming from Congressman Addabbo. Efforts by the Florida Congressional delegation to support the Administration proposal had been unsuccessful in changing Addabbo's position. (TS)

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By LOJ, NARA, Date 12/21/05

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Mr. McFarlane briefed that the Radio Marti broadcasting capability is in hand, but we do not have a retaliatory capability. He noted that there are several present options:

-- Cancel Radio Marti. ~~(TS)~~

-- Go on the air and try, as part of a diplomatic strategy, to engage in dialogue with Cuba so as to deter counter-broadcasting. ~~(TS)~~

-- Develop a retaliatory capability short of our original plan to interfere partially with Cuban television. ~~(TS)~~

Mr. McFarlane added that, if we are to proceed, there are several tactical options:

-- When to start? ~~(TS)~~

-- If we start on May 20, should this be with a symbolic broadcast and delay regular programming until later, or should we start on May 20 and remain on the air? ~~(TS)~~

Director Wick briefed that VOA is ready to begin quality broadcasting of the Radio Marti service for 14½ hours a day, seven days a week on May 20. Director Wick said that for the past two months VOA has been broadcasting (in-house) 14½ hours a day of quality programming. He has worked out all the bugs in the system and can sustain regular broadcasting. He indicated that the program would include balanced and objective news and commentary, and entertainment. There will be no stridency in the programming. ~~(TS)~~

Director Wick dwelled at great length over the negative consequences of a delay. He stated that everyone knows we are ready, and members of the Radio Marti Advisory Board have strongly stated that programming should commence. Director Wick cited specifically comments by Jorge Mas, Chairman of the Radio Marti Advisory Board, and Marti Board Member John Silber. Director Wick added that in his conversations with Congressional figures that he had indicated that we were ready to broadcast but that the Administration was concerned about Castro's capability for retaliatory counterbroadcasting. Director Wick noted that he had advised the NSC on April 4 that the political difficulties of delay were growing. He noted Senator Helms' concern that the Administration might be using Radio Marti as a bargaining chip. Director Wick concluded by saying that a failure to proceed now would be a political defeat, and Castro would have successfully blackmailed us. This could have other repercussions in foreign policy. He thought the only alternative to proceeding would be to go to Congress to rescind the law because of the danger. ~~(TS)~~

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broadcasts on Radio Marti. He asked if we could provide a clear channel for Castro. (TS)

Admiral Poindexter responded that we could free up a channel. We could try to negotiate to give him a Radio Lincoln channel. (TS)

The President stated that we have to go on the air. If Castro severely jams our commercial channels, we might have to close down for awhile with the knowledge that we would go back on the air. We might find that Congress would pick up on this and go after Addabbo. The President then asked what would be our response if Castro starts counterbroadcasting. Could we offer him a wave length? (TS)

Mr. McFarlane returned the question of Cuban-U.S. talks indicating our willingness to talk on matters concerning hijacking, narcotics, safety at sea, and radio interference. He also thought that the idea of radio broadcasting could be broached. Mr. McFarlane reflected that on the possibility that Castro might see value in more bilaterals with the U.S. For example, Castro might believe that he could use this in some manner in the Central American equation. In sum, Mr. McFarlane suggested exploring expanded bilateral dialogue with the Cubans plus the idea of a clear channel for Radio Lincoln. (TS)

Secretary Weinberger briefed on DOD's retaliatory capability. He suggested that DOD could develop a capability to interfere and jam television in the Havana region. This could be done by putting special equipment on planes in the inventory. This could cost between \$6-\$7 million and would take three months, although this timeframe might be shortened. He added that this is probably the most we can do. (TS)

General Vessey added that this capability, which would have operating costs of \$6 million per month, would not require reprogramming. (TS)

The Vice President noted that the U.S. action concerning Radio Marti is legal, and that Castro would be engaged in an illegal action if he were not broadcasting on an agreed channel. (TS)

Director Wick expressed his concern over unilateral retaliation. He reminded the group that Congress has passed legislation which considered the potential problem of Cuban interference and has provided funds for damages experienced by American broadcasters. He added that if we have to retaliate, it might be better to let it come from a Congressional concern urging the President to take an action against Castro. (TS)

Mr. Regan stated that we should proceed expeditiously with Radio Marti. He added that if Castro jams American radio, the

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American public will make an outcry and press the President for counteraction.

The President said he favors beginning May 20. ~~(TS)~~

Attorney General Meese underscored that the worst thing would be to start and back off. He thought a discussion on the Hill concerning retaliation would be difficult, and Addabbo would be a formidable obstacle. If we decide to proceed on May 20, we should urge DOD to develop its more limited capability immediately. We should not back off. ~~(TS)~~

Secretary Shultz. If we start, we have to win. ~~(TS)~~

The President repeated his view that when we start, if Castro attacks and everyone is outraged, we could say temporarily we are discontinuing any further actions. We are on strong ground because Congress legislated Radio Marti. ~~(TS)~~

The Vice President raised Senator Hawkins' idea of a symbolic broadcast on May 20. ~~(TS)~~

Attorney General Meese agreed that we could start with a symbolic broadcast and await full broadcasting until we have developed our retaliatory capability. He noted that this raised two questions:

-- Do we wait for a retaliatory capability?

-- Do we talk to Castro concerning the Radio Lincoln channel?

The President reiterated his belief that we should start. He asked whether we should now communicate with Castro and tell him that we have asked the FCC to provide a free channel for broadcasting to the U.S. ~~(TS)~~

Director Casey questioned whether provision of a channel would have much impact on Castro. ~~(TS)~~

Mr. McFarlane reiterated that having tried to engage this Administration, if talks were underway with Castro it might stay his hand. He was not optimistic about this but thought it was worth trying. Following the commencement of Radio Marti broadcasting, we could indicate a willingness to offer a clear channel and be prepared to talk on other issues. ~~(TS)~~

Mr. Regan disagreed and did not think we should give a clear channel to a Communist government to broadcast to the U.S. ~~(TS)~~

The President and the Attorney General both reacted by indicating that they had no problem with the idea of reciprocal broadcasting if it was done legally. The President concluded

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the meeting by indicating his desire to start Radio Marti
broadcasting now. ~~(TS)~~

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