

July 25, 1941

Memorandum

To: Robert Sherwood

From: Nelson Foynter

MAJOR PREMISES

1. World public opinion is influenced most by spot news. The battle is for best short and medium wave radio program, and page one of the newspapers of the world.
2. Dynamic action and tough utterances backed by deeds are the most potent foreign propaganda today. All other propaganda effort in the radio and press should be secondary to the battle for "page one."
3. A government agency operating 24-hours a day, seven days a week is needed to coordinate intelligence and to stimulate the making of news at the source, chiefly the numerous government departments. If this can be achieved we can avoid a ministry of propaganda. It is undesirable to have a ministry of propaganda because:
 - a. Congressional resentment.
 - b. Domestic repercussions.
 - c. Central clearance will impede rather than speed up official statements and action.
 - d. Central clearances will be resented by government officials who would feel subordinated to the ministry of propaganda.
 - e. It is desirable at times for high government officials to make statements without responsibility to the White House. A ministry of propaganda is bound to have White House responsibility attached to it in the public mind, regardless of technical fact.
4. The U. S. government must make every effort to avoid taking over short and medium wave radio stations.
5. The U. S. government, as a government, must keep its hands off the broadcasting of spot news, because:
 - a. Peoples of the world have greater confidence in news reports from U. S. than from any other country for the very reason that they are considered independent of the government.

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- b. If government news men start handling news it may ultimately be distorted and we will lose audience as a result of lost confidence in the news. News men of high integrity, sympathetic to, but not of the government, are the men to handle the spot news reports.
 - c. The press of this country, and what's left of the free press of the world do not like government tinkering with the news. Most of the editors of the totalitarian press even respect the ability of this government to keep its hands off the news. This is something to build on.
6. A central news room and central broadcasting studio is desirable for all or most all of the short-wave transmitters, because:
- a. It is almost impossible to find enough good news and linguistic talent to staff seven different short wave news rooms.
 - b. It is impossible to relay all necessary information from Washington to seven scattered short-wave news rooms.
 - c. Difficulties of monitoring, of checking sabotage, of innuendo and of language in seven scattered operations. Master switches in central control room can avert many of these difficulties.

IMMEDIATE STEPS RECOMMENDED TO IMPROVE OUR PRESENT POSITION IN WORLD RADIO AND HEADLINE BATTLE.

1. A crack, central news studio with mikes to all short-wave transmitters
2. Division of world areas among the seven transmitters according to need of government rather than latent commercial desires of broadcasters.
3. Flexibility which would enable all transmitters to broadcast same program simultaneously or on seven different beams in seven different languages simultaneously.
4. Pool news and newscasting talent of short-wave stations, augmenting if necessary.
5. Set up master schedule embracing all stations according to best interests of government.

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6. Donovan office to set up New York liaison office consisting of a few crack newsmen to feed hunches, and suggest direction and emphasis, based on intelligence from Washington. This office also to provide checks against sabotage of news report in addition to checks which broadcasters themselves would set up.
7. New York Donovan news operation would be tied into Washington Donovan spot news operation. Crack men at both ends must have unimpeachable integrity, as well as a certain amount of sales ability to feed statements, wise-cracks and even suggest actions that will curl into headlines on radio and newspapers of the world. Such a staff can accelerate clearances and actions within our government without the necessity of building up a ministry of propaganda. We will have something better, faster and more flexible than Nazis. With ingenuity such an operation can make headlines from other government departments than White House and State department that presently carry most of the headline burden with resulting delays and bottlenecks. Instead of having active resistance of other departments, Donovan office can have their active support and gratitude because it can show them how they, too, can participate on the propaganda front.

IMMEDIATE STAFF NEEDED

Assume that all news processors, translators, initial checkers and newscasters will be paid for by broadcasters. Private payroll will avoid numerous government complications and enable employment of staff members who cannot afford to work for government salary.

Thus N. Y. Donovan news office immediately requires only:

Three key news men to divide tricks around clock, one to be boss of N. Y. office.

Three assistants when right three key men have been found.

Six full-time linguists for double checking, basic languages.

Part-time linguists to double check non-basic languages.

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Washington Donovan spot news operation will need initially:

Spot News Director -- including N. Y. Spot News operation.

Three key news men dividing up the clock.

Add, as good men found, six assistants to maintain liaison and help activate news from other government agencies.

ASSUMPTION RE: WASHINGTON STAFF --- FCC Listening Post will have a spot operation to skim off highlights of opposition's propaganda trends in various parts of the world, and therefore Donovan office will receive its initial short wave listening intelligence in fairly refined form. If FCC does not provide such facilities, add three key men, and twelve crack, multi-lingual listeners who can be trained to give news operation what is desired.

DILEMMAS TO BE RESOLVED:

1. Short-wave broadcasters reluctant to divide up world areas according to needs of government rather than their commercial ambitions.
2. Short-wave broadcasters lose money. Government proposing an even more expansive news operation for them.

Who shall pay line charges?

Who shall pay for better talent for news and newscasters?

Who shall pay for additional electricity, engineering time, and maintenance for broadcasting more hours per day,

We very roughly estimate such additional costs will run to \$500,000 a year. (I have not had opportunity to check the electricity, engineering maintenance. This estimate may be low.)

The government has the money. Question is whether broadcasters want to accept it, and whether is sound policy for government to get into broadcasting virtually as paying sponsor.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

1. Broadcasters, A.T.&T., power companies to share this increased expense.

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2. Government to buy some official time for official communique, but not news time, and thus cover additional expense, or at least part of it. This would not be entirely devious. There are times when more outright official news should be pumped out, than it is desirable to feed through normal news channels without losing audience, without making the news smack too much of official propaganda.

Almost every week some government official is making a speech which it is desirable to broadcast by short-wave, or rebroadcast at a more favorable time. Thus the government can legitimately use the permanent lines which would be available for newscasting on a non-government basis.

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