

AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD EASTERN BLOC COUNTRIES  
INFLUENCING THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Military History

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
2013-01

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved</i> OMB No. 0704-0188		
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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 14-06-2013		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master's Thesis		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> AUG 2012 – JUN 2013	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b>  American Policy toward Eastern Bloc Countries Influencing the Hungarian Revolution of 1956			<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>		
			<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>		
			<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>		
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>  Kenneth A. Ferguson, Major, USA			<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>		
			<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>		
			<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>		
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301			<b>8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER</b>		
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>			<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>		
			<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>		
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> The Hungarian Revolution exposed the contradictions in United States (U.S.) policy that had existed since the formation of the Psychological Warfare Campaign during the Truman Administration and grown during the Eisenhower Administration. Because of leadership failures and organizational problems within the Eisenhower Administration, this psychological warfare effort encouraged the Hungarian people to rise up in rebellion, even though the Administration was unprepared to support such an uprising and the Department of State had opposed such agitation. Throughout the revolution, Radio Free Europe continued to broadcast messages of support to the fighters on the streets of Budapest. Exploration of the formation and organization of the Psychological Warfare Campaign presents insights into the thoughts of policy makers in the early days of the Cold War. Many of the relationships between governmental agencies provide application for similar interactions exercised when tackling the complex problems of today.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Psychological Warfare, Cold War, Liberation, Revolution.					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b>	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b>	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b>			<b>19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b>
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	112	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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## ABSTRACT

AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD EASTERN BLOC COUNTRIES INFLUENCING THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956, by MAJ Kenneth A. Ferguson, 112 pages.

The Hungarian Revolution exposed the contradictions in United States (U.S.) policy that had existed since the formation of the Psychological Warfare Campaign during the Truman Administration and grown during the Eisenhower Administration. Because of leadership failures and organizational problems within the Eisenhower Administration, this psychological warfare effort encouraged the Hungarian people to rise up in rebellion, even though the Administration was unprepared to support such an uprising and the Department of State had opposed such agitation. Throughout the revolution, Radio Free Europe continued to broadcast messages of support to the fighters on the streets of Budapest. Exploration of the formation and organization of the Psychological Warfare Campaign presents insights into the thoughts of policy makers in the early days of the Cold War. Many of the relationships between governmental agencies provide application for similar interactions exercised when tackling the complex problems of today.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a document addressing the fate of nations, delving into multiple governmental administrations, and spanning diverse cultures requires teamwork. While I was granted the privilege of sorting through rich archives of primary source documents and putting pen to paper I was not alone in my efforts. Many others supported my research and provided me with direction and encouragement along the way. When I told my dear wife Kinga that I intended to engage myself in a massive research project which would result in production of this thesis she became my biggest supporter. From that moment on it was impossible for me to waver in my quest.

My guiding coalition for the project included my board chair, Dr. Jonathan House, and board members Dr. John Curatola and Ms. Elizabeth Bochtler. Dr. House in particular provided me with the confidence to put information together to provide insight into U.S. involvement in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. As a student of history, it was initially intimidating to present my work to such knowledgeable and established history scholars and published authors but I received only assistance, direction, and encouragement. Thank you.

The staff at the Eisenhower Presidential Library was particularly helpful and enabled me to maximize my time in the research room every time I was able to break away from Fort Leavenworth and fly the Cessna out to Abilene.

In Hungary Dr. Lajos Berek of the Zrinyi Miklós Military Academy was a valuable contributor gathering information and accessing the Hungarian archives. Tamás and Emese Takács sent books and eyewitness accounts of events in Budapest and in

eastern Hungary when the Russian armored units advanced on Budapest. They helped to provide a human perspective to balance the national level information.

Special thanks to my editor Karen Wallsmith who helped turn my draft manuscript into a professional document.

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## ACRONYMS

AVH	Hungarian State Protection Authority
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DoS	Department of State
NSC	National Security Council
OCB	Operations Coordination Board
OPC	Office of Policy Coordination
PSB	Psychological Strategy Board
RFE	Radio Free Europe
TCA	Technical Cooperation Administration
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States

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CHAPTER 1  
REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY

Understanding Revolution

In the course of human history, there are times in which many diametrically opposed circumstances act on a society to force change. Because the current situation and its alternatives are at opposite ends of the spectrum, the change occurs in a sudden rush of passion and violence. The sudden rush of action, and the inevitable violence, causes the outcome of such a cataclysmic event to be quite unknown at its inception. Equally owing to the nature of the action, the results, whether favorable or unfavorable, have deep and lasting consequence. Often the weighty issues at the extremes of the spectrum balance each other and, by themselves, do not dissolve into gunfire. Lesser events near the center of the balance can shift ever so slightly and upset the equilibrium. Examples include events such as the tax on tea sitting in packing crates on English ships in Boston harbor or a single shot fired at a protestor.

Revolution is a human version of an earthquake. For years, pressure builds along a concentrated fault line. When inter plate pressure reaches critical effort an adjustment occurs somewhere along the fault line. The release of pressure is sudden and violent, leaving a scar across the earth's surface. Over time, wind and water will diminish the event's physical manifestation but telltale evidence will remain. So it is when societies revolt. The pressure between two ideals builds until it is impossible to release the pressure by ordinary diplomatic means. For a time the fault line is static. Individuals go about their lives normally on the surface but deep below they begin to talk and align loyalty on one side or the other. The early stage is a dangerous period for the rebel

element because if the government in power discovers the deep rooted rumblings of discontent, it might repress opposition before active revolution can begin. If the society desiring change makes appropriate preparations without detection and perceives an adequate base of support it will “pull the trigger” and the revolutionary movement becomes kinetic.

The time and place that the trigger is pulled is often unknown to both sides before the event occurs. The uncertain nature of first contact also follows the earthquake illustration. Consider the significance of Lexington in 1775 and Fort Sumter 1861 in the American experience. Both engagements were small in comparison to the battles that followed and both deeply affected the United States (U.S.). Lexington was the first contact of the successful American Revolution which gave birth to a great nation free from Britain’s tyranny. As a tactical engagement it was perhaps insignificant but because the colonists had laid the groundwork for revolution it was the tremor that released the built up pressure. A desperate war followed that changed the course of world history. Fort Sumter also represented the transformation of potential energy into kinetic energy but the ultimate outcome was very different. The rebellion of southern states failed after four years of deadly protracted warfare. In keeping with the earthquake metaphor, the terrain was scarred and altered. Many years passed before the nation could heal from the damage caused. Today, the Civil War remains central to American history and identity.

### The Hungarian Revolution of 1956

At the end of the World War Two, Hungary fell under Soviet control. The government formed in Hungary under Soviet oversight was communist and exerted varying degrees of control depending on the Hungarian leadership. The government was

loosely organized as a multi-party system but behaved like a two-party system. It was controlled by direct Soviet interaction and one could argue that all parties outside of the Hungarian Communist Party were simply a farce to appease those of a more democratic persuasion.<sup>1</sup> All of the parties followed the socialist (communist) system of government in varying levels of application. The two main parties were the *Magyar Szociáldemokrata Párt*, Hungarian Social-Democratic Party, and the *Magyar Kommunista Párt*, Hungarian Communist Party. In 1948, the Soviets required both parties to merge, forming the *Magyar Dolgozók Pártja*, Hungarian Workers Party. The Soviets installed Mátyás Rákosi as the party's leader in the position of general secretary with the moderate Imre Nagy as the prime minister. In some regards the Hungarians did not experience extreme communism during the first few years but they perceived a tightening of control after 1948 under the leadership of Rákosi. Discontented citizens were careful not to be overtly vocal but the Soviets began to sense unrest. In June 1956, the Soviets removed Rákosi by abolishing the position of general secretary and placed Ernő Gerő in charge of the party as the prime minister. The Soviets removed Rákosi from Hungary and settled him in the Soviet Union to reduce the possibility for confrontation. Although unwilling to voice their opinions to the Soviet government officials, the Hungarian people did not trust Gerő and saw him as unfeeling and abusive.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that, had the Soviets allowed Nagy to remain as prime minister, the revolution could have been prevented. As it was, Gerő's

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Gati, *Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), 79.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Korda, *Journey to a Revolution: A Personal Memoir and History of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 77.

harsh actions on the afternoon of the initial protest, a mere three months later, accelerated deterioration into armed conflict.

The failed Hungarian Revolution in 1956 was short lived and violent and deeply affected the Hungarians for many years. Officially the revolution began on October 23, 1956, and ended in defeat on November 10, 1956, having initially succeeded but surviving only 13 days. The goal was not to oppose the Soviet Union directly by rejecting communism as a governmental system, but to remove direct Soviet influence and control from the Hungarian political system and reform Hungarian communism into a more tolerant form of governance. The revolutionary movement initially grew out of a loosely underground society of intellectuals, journalists, and students, known as the Petőfi Circle, named after the Hungarian poet Sándor Petőfi (1823 to 1849). As a national poet and hero, Petőfi is considered to have inspired the initiation of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 to gain independence from Austria and appealed to the romance of a movement preparing to stand up and demand Hungarian independence once again.

In the summer of 1956 members of the Petőfi Circle were encouraged by the deletion of the general secretary position in the Hungarian Workers Party and removal of Rákosi from leadership, although they were unhappy with the replacement of Nagy by Gerő. The popular opinion that perceived grievances should be formerly addressed with the Hungarian government led to some groups beginning to formulate lists of grievances. An additional encouragement which bolstered their will to act came at the end of June, when Poland successfully initiated action that resulted in the peaceful reduction of Soviet forces in Poland and substantial freedom from Soviet influence. The Hungarian recognition of their situation's similarities with the activity in Poland is clearly

demonstrated in point 15 of the “16 Points” developed by the movement of Hungarian university students.<sup>3</sup> In early October 1956, University students in Szeged (south east Hungary) who were members of the Petőfi Circle, acted against the official *Dolgozó Ifjúság Szövetsége*, Working Youth Union, by re-establishing the *Magyar Egyetemisták és Főiskolai Egyesületek Szövetsége* (MEFESZ), Hungarian University and College Associates Union.<sup>4</sup> The significance of this move was that university and gymnasium students were provided with an unsanctioned forum for discussion and formulation of ideas. University students across Hungary quickly caught wind of the movement in Szeged and began establishing the MEFESZ on other campuses. Students interacting in the MEFESZ formulated lists of reforms that they desired to present to the government. In many cases the students did not reject communism in favor of capitalism but sought to soften the type of communism evolving in Hungary into a system that they could more easily live with. The reforms that the movement hoped to achieve were codified in a list of 16 demands compiled in Budapest on October 22, from the input provided from campuses across Hungary. Within a few days, students and members of the Petőfi Circle in Budapest printed the list of 16 Points and posted it on the sides of buildings and notice boards in the city. The desire was to present the list to the government and request a redress but there was no forum for public interaction with the Hungarian Workers Party so days passed with no acknowledgement of the 16 Points by government officials.

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<sup>3</sup>The 16 Points represented in this document are found in Appendix A. They were recorded in the United Nations, *Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary*, General Assembly, Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 18 (A/3592) (New York: United Nations, 1957), 127.

<sup>4</sup>Richard J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century—and After* (London: Routledge, 2003), 295.

The date of October 27, in point 16, reflects the student's desire to meet in Budapest to demonstrate their solidarity with the Polish freedom movement by organizing a march to the statue of Polish born General Bem. The Hungarian general was a hero of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. The event would serve as a good opportunity to gain recognition from the Hungarian government and might even present an opportunity to enter into dialogue with the government about the demands recorded in the 16 Points.

On October 22, 1956, after compiling their 16 Points, members of the MEFESZ joined Petöfi Circle members on a protest march through Budapest to lay wreaths at General Bem's statue. After the wreaths were presented a group of students standing beside the statue of Bem listened as Péter Veres, President of the Writers' Union, read a manifesto containing the proclamation of the students' 16 Points. After the reading a large crowd crossed the Danube to join demonstrators outside the Parliament Building where 200,000 to 300,000 people were gathered.<sup>5</sup>

As they marched, members of the crowd began to remove emblems of Soviet power from the buildings they passed. Soon people could be seen carrying Hungarian flags with the Soviet symbol cut out of the center. While most of the marchers assembled in the square in front of the Parliament building, a large number went to the prominent statue of Stalin in central Budapest and succeeded, after some effort, in toppling the statue into the street with only the two meter high boots remaining on the stone base. These acts were in response to points 13 and 14 of the 16 Points. Otherwise the crowd

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 19.

was orderly and did not instigate looting or other such anarchy.<sup>6</sup> The crowd in Parliament Square called for Nagy to answer the demands. Repeated calls eventually brought the former premier. Nagy addressed the crowd briefly from a balcony of the Parliament Building. He was careful to avoid direct reference to the 16 Points but attempted to pacify the crowd and influence their dispersal.

While Stalin's statue was being removed and Nagy delivered his address a third group formed in front of the Magyar Nemzeti Rádío, the main broadcasting station in downtown Budapest. They attempted to read the 16 Points on the air and demand government redress to their grievances. The station manager agreed to only a partial broadcast and the students, unwilling to leave out any of the 16 Points, departed for the evening. The following day students again gathered at the Bem statue to discuss the events of the previous day. From the statue a large group again marched to the broadcasting station and demanded that the station air their 16 Point manifesto. Members of the State Protection Authority (AVH) prevented the students from entering the radio station. When a large crowd had gathered, the AVH fired into the crowd in an effort to force dispersal, killing a number of students. The Revolution was suddenly and violently kinetic.

The students and young people used their superior numbers to overwhelm AVH members at the radio station. It was at this point that the first firearms appeared in the hands of the crowd. A number of weapons came from the security personnel in factories surrounding the city, others came from the overpowered AVH, and police and security personnel in Budapest also contributed weapons at the early stages of the revolution.

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<sup>6</sup>Korda, 93.

When the regular Hungarian soldiers in the city heard of the AVH opening fire on the crowd they immediately began passing out weapons to bystanders.<sup>7</sup> Initially the revolution looked very successful in Budapest. The governmental armed resistance terminated quickly, as the Hungarian Army did not oppose the movement (and did not aid it other than passing out weapons). The Soviet (Russian) troops and armor in and around Budapest were more difficult to eradicate and took a higher toll on the lightly armed revolutionaries. The tanks in Budapest were the lighter T-34s, and could be defeated with a well thrown Molotov cocktail. There were also a small number of self propelled artillery pieces and a handful of JS-III heavy tanks (the world's heaviest tanks at that time) outside the city but they were ill suited for street fighting in the urban areas. The revolutionaries were fiercely determined, young, and willing to take risks to achieve success. Against the odds of confronting a professional mechanized force the revolutionaries prevailed. On October 25, the Soviet political officers in Budapest, upon direction from the Kremlin, expelled Ernő Gerő and reinstated Imre Nagy as party leader. A large crowd was standing in the Parliament Square numbering perhaps 30,000 to 50,000. AVH on the roof of the parliament building opened fire into the crowd to force dispersal. Russian troops in T-34s at the periphery of Parliament Square believed that they were under fire and returned fire against the AVH. The densely packed crowd bore the brunt of the engagement with 300 to 500 men, women, and children killed by the deadly crossfire.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 103.

On the morning of October 28, Nagy announced further concessions including disbanding the AVH and replacing the Soviet star on the Hungarian flag with the Kossuth coat of arms. In spite of Soviet political disapproval of the numerous concessions, Russian forces were ordered to withdraw and the armor departed from the Budapest streets, moving to the east and south, outside of the city limits. On October 29, the revolutionaries had apparently won in Budapest. The city lay damaged, but quiet. From here the revolutionaries expected to refine their victory politically, although they did not lower their guard nor did they trust the Russian withdrawal completely. The revolutionaries constructed barricades and defenses in Budapest while the Hungarian government under Nagy began to consolidate and reorganize. Discussions in the Kremlin and Washington centered on the Suez crisis and secondarily considered what action, if any, should be taken in Hungary. On the Soviet side, movement included tanks and soldiers in eastern Hungary, while on the American side movement meant speeches of concern and solidarity.

On October 31, Nagy announced to cheering crowds that he had demanded Hungary's release from the Warsaw Pact; a move that was beyond what the Soviets could tolerate and indicated imminent announcement of Hungarian neutrality. A neutral Hungary would roll the "Iron Curtain" back to the border with Ukraine and expose Russian soil to Western advances, undoing years of hard won security behind the Soviet Bloc buffer states of Eastern Europe. Later in the day the two primary Soviet political officers in Budapest, Anastas Mikoyan and Mikhail Suslov, departed on a flight to Moscow. Two days later they would appear before the Soviet Politburo influencing the

Soviet Central Committee to commit to a plan replacing Nagy with Kádár once again and putting the Hungarian Revolution down with military action.

In the predawn darkness of November 4, 1956, Russian artillery began shelling the suburbs of Kispest to the southeast. At dawn Russian columns of T-55 tanks with supporting infantry entered Budapest from the east. The fighting was fierce but brief. Throughout the day Nagy tried to send pleas for help to the West. The cable that he sent to the United Nations (UN) in New York went unanswered, as the UN wrestled with what actions to take in the emerging and developing Suez crisis. By the afternoon the international telephone lines were cut and the Hungarian government was effectively isolated from the West. The morning of November 5 broke cold and clear, with the Russian troops firmly in control of Budapest. Nagy fled to the supposed safety of the Yugoslav Embassy. Russian troops in the streets continued mopping up any last pockets of resistance. The majority of the revolutionaries stacked their weapons in the street side telephone booths and attempted to stay out of the way of the troops. They knew that the Soviet *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*: Committee for State Security (KGB) and the Hungarian *Államvédelmi Hatóság*: State Protection Authority (AVH) would begin to investigate, searching out Hungarians who had participated in the uprising. The brief victory had ended in a resounding defeat. No one had come to Hungary's aid and no one in Hungary could influence the Soviet power, now applied to end the uprising. It was over and the consequences would follow.

### Lasting Impressions

The first books and articles written about the Hungarian Revolution were drafted by the eyewitnesses to the event. Some of the writers were journalists from the West who

happened to be in Budapest in October 1956. The few Hungarians who wrote about the revolution were among the refugees who risked everything to leave Hungary after the revolution failed. The Hungarian Communist Party and the USSR did not permit Hungarian history to contain any mention of the revolution and it was a taboo subject in Hungary until the political reins were loosened in 1988. Interest in the Hungarian Revolution resurfaced in the mid-1990s as Hungary entered a new spring of freedom following the Soviet Army withdrawal in May 1991. The early works are often emotional accounts of street fighting and personal encounters. The later works attempt to accurately recreate the timeline of events and take a more encompassing view. Missing from the body of evidence is adequate analysis of the catalysts that tipped the scale from desire and preparation, to action at the time and place of first contact.

Whether written immediately after the revolution or recently, the accounts agree on the details of action and desperate street fighting. Equally compelling is the evidence of communist rule between 1956 and 1989. Failure of the revolution predictably intensified Russian and collaboration government control of the Hungarian populace. In many cases the burden on the working class was considered too arduous to bear and in 1957 alone, over 170,000 Hungarians conducted a risky border crossing to flee their home land and enter the West. Many sources put the total number of refugees departing Hungary as a direct result of the 1956 revolution at 200,000, of which 180,000 sought refuge in Austria and 20,000 crossed into Yugoslavia.<sup>9</sup> Initially, the refugees crossed Hungary's western border into Austria but between the winter and spring of 1957 Soviet

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<sup>9</sup>Katarina Kovačević, *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Soviet Bloc Countries: Reactions and Repercussions: The Refugee Problem in Yugoslavia* (Budapest, Hungary: Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, 2007), 111.

and Hungarian forces closed the border to gain control of the exiting population. With the closure of the western border the number of refugees crossing into Yugoslavia increased dramatically, going from 388 Hungarians crossing the southern border per week in January 1957, to 4956 Hungarians crossing the southern border per week in February 1957.<sup>10</sup>

During my first trip to Hungary in 1996, I received a very warm welcome from the Hungarian people. Besides the fact that Hungarians are naturally hospitable, they welcomed me as an American because I came from the land of President Ronald Reagan. I was told many times how grateful the Hungarians were for Reagan's practical dogmatic engagement with the USSR to bring about the end of the Cold War. It was evident that the Hungarians were joyful and excited about the withdrawal of the Soviet Army just five years prior. In fact, not only had the Soviet Army departed but the Hungarian Communist Party had been replaced with the first truly democratic party that Hungary had seen and the nation was full of hope.

On the other side of the coin the old people were marked by communism. They knew the suffering of the lean years following the failed revolution and were quick to point out the pockmarks from 1956 remaining in Budapest's stately buildings. To them America may have helped hasten the end of the Cold War but had failed Hungary completely in 1956. I was told that the Americans had promised that, if Hungarian citizens indicated a sincere desire to gain freedom from the USSR and eradicate communism as a form of government within Hungary, America would work both directly and within the UN to ensure Hungarian success. In the Hungarians' minds, they had

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 114.

carried through on their part and the West made no move to sustain the effort. Of course I had no prior knowledge with which I could answer these claims. The truth is that, in the U.S., the Hungarian Revolution is a minor footnote overshadowed by the entirety of the Cold War and taking second fiddle to the Suez Crisis, which occurred at exactly the same time. I decided then that the Hungarian Revolution required some research and analysis from the American perspective.

As I mentioned earlier, the materials available in the 1990s did not contain the detail required to make decisive conclusion regarding U.S. involvement. I desired to give the Hungarians a fair hearing. After all, it was their nation that was devastated. The difficulty was that the history was primarily passed down orally from the time of the event until 1988. The Hungarians are a passionate and in some cases romantic people and, being an analytical thinker, I wanted a degree of proof to the claims. I eventually discovered that I would need to conduct my own research to determine what impact the U.S. had.

### Framing the Problem

Books and articles written about the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 often go into great detail about internal and Soviet political maneuvering in Hungary in the months leading up to October 1956. The written works tend to present the dates and facts of events in Budapest and a few other prominent cities, along with decisions made in the Kremlin. Where the written works do not provide adequate detail is in Hungarian relations with the West and Western policy, attitude, and communication. When Western interaction is mentioned it is usually in passing and generally accusatory of empty promises that influenced action but did not provide support.

The early works are often emotional accounts of street fighting and personal encounters. The later works attempt to accurately recreate the timeline of events and take a more encompassing view. Missing from the body of evidence is adequate analysis of the catalysts that tipped the scale from desire and preparation to action at the time and place of first contact. The problem is properly identifying the events in the center of the spectrum and analyzing their interactions. It is important to understand how the center issues affect the entire balance and can make the difference between initiating the fight and averting the fight. Understanding the center of the spectrum can offer insight for the formation of national strategy. This understanding is applicable when considering national interests coming into contact with states that have governments and policies that are incompatible with those interests. The intent of this thesis is to discover the extent to which U.S. involvement influenced the initiation of action in Budapest on October 23, 1956.

In figure 1, the factors surrounding the 1956 Revolution are arrayed and grouped for consideration. All of the factors had some influence on the revolution in either a positive or negative manner. For instance, the grouping in the 2:00 o'clock position contains, Horthy Loyalists, Capitalists, and Youth. We know that these three demographics made up the core populations of the MEFESZ and the Petőfi Circle. So they are grouped together as the primary action takers. What motivated the action takers, and what caused them to believe that it was the right time to act and that they had a reasonable chance of success? These questions are where exploration of the subject becomes complex. We know that they were shaped by the recent involvement in World War Two, memories of pre-war freedom (and standard of living), and the romantic

understanding of nearly 1,000 years of Hungarian history. This is evidenced in their naming their organization the Petőfi Circle. Not only was Petőfi an acclaimed national poet but his poem *Nemzeti Dal* is considered to have inspired the initiation of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. Record shows that *Nemzeti Dal* was read both on the October 22nd and 23rd at the General Bem statue when the crowds first gathered. The elements in this grouping surely provided emotional inspiration and fervor to act. But as romantic as Hungarian youth may be, it took more than inspiration and fervor to act in the face of the Soviet Union and the Hungarian Communist government.

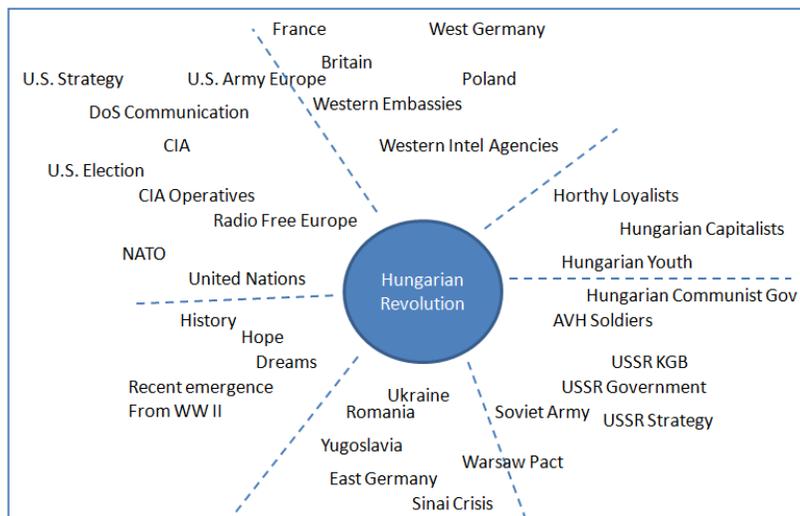


Figure 1. Circumstances Surrounding the Hungarian Revolution

Source: Created by author.

Figure 1 contains four other groupings on opposing sides of the center. On the top and left are the influences of the Western powers. These powers, influenced by national strategy and in opposition to the Soviet agenda of spreading communism, were actively

communicating with the Hungarians. The Western powers transmitted a message of hope and demonstrated solidarity with the oppressed people of Hungary. The message was one of support and may have provided the confidence to initiate action and the reasonable expectation of success that allowed the action takers to accept great risk in the effort to obtain freedom. These groupings are directly opposed to the groupings containing the Hungarian communist government, the Soviet government and army, the Warsaw Pact binding the two nations in one union, and the other Eastern Bloc countries similarly bound. These groupings surely caused fear and concern in their power and ability to inflict pain and suffering. It is possible that the Soviet (communist) concerns caused resentment and anger that, acting against their revolution inhibiting purposes, ultimately inspired rebellion and revolution.

It is in these final four groupings that the unknowns resided and that is the central problem. Could the West be relied upon to provide support? What type of support could be expected and how fast would the support be provided? How would the Hungarian communist government react and would the Hungarian Army attempt to suppress or support the revolutionaries? Would the Soviet troops withdraw as they had in Austria and Poland or would they attack? Essentially, the Hungarians were caught between two great powers and would have to rely on one to break free of the other. Did the Hungarians understand this tenuous position and choose to rely on Western support when they initiated action? Was the Western message the final piece of solid ground that the Hungarians needed to stand against tyrannical injustice?

### Primary Research Question

Did the U.S. influence the Hungarians to revolt against the Soviet government or mislead the Hungarian people by indicating support for liberation that did not, in reality, exist?

### Secondary Research Questions

If the U.S. did influence the Hungarians to revolt or mislead them by offering support, secondary questions include how the U.S. influenced the Hungarians, and how the U.S. elements of power could provide such influence or misinformation? Answering the questions outlined above will help frame the problem and may highlight leadership considerations or improvements to the national strategy (national power) interface that needed to be made.

### Expanded Thesis

A disagreement between the U.S. Department of State (DoS) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1951 over what policy to adopt toward Eastern European states resulted in a long lasting rift between the two agencies of national power. The rift contributed to a communication campaign directed by the CIA urging aggressive rejection of communist control in Eastern Bloc countries and offering U.S. support to anti Russian action. The communication campaign was disconnected from actual U.S. policy which, although poorly stated, was in fact opposed to physical U.S. support for violent action. The CIA message seemed to serve as a catalyst for riots in Eastern Berlin in June 1953, the Austrian declaration of neutrality in 1955, and the successful action to remove the Russian Army from Poland in the summer of 1956.

In each of these actions the CIA, through Radio Free Europe (RFE), balloon borne messages, and other means, communicated to the oppressed elements that the U.S. was there to support them and would provide a back stop if needed. The fact that these were empty promises did not surface because in each case the actions were completed before extensive assistance could be requested. The CIA was able to arrange food support in East Berlin and Poland but little else. The success in Austria and Poland caused complacency and reliance on the power of the message, without concern for the fact that it was empty and devoid of any real military or diplomatic support. The agency began to believe that a country by country removal of Soviet influence and liberation from communist governance would be successfully supported by nothing more than an information campaign.

The U.S. supported Hungarian dissention from Soviet control and communist governance by increasing the intensity of the broadcasts over RFE, increasing the frequency of balloon messaging, and other means of communication. The message was supposedly representative of U.S. national policy toward Eastern Europe and promised support urging the Hungarians to take action against the Russian occupiers and the Hungarian collaborators. The American message did contribute to the initiation of armed revolution in October 1956, but was not a deciding factor. In the days that followed, Hungarian revolutionaries did overthrow the collaboration government, cause a Russian withdrawal, and begin to establish new leadership. When the Hungarians culminated their action they were in desperate need of assistance in the face of a Russian counter attack, suddenly it became apparent that the U.S. was in no position to assist with physical support and was not inclined to accept risk of action against Russia. The CIA message

had no backing and was worthless when the Russian armored column reached the outskirts of Budapest on November 4. The aftermath of the failed revolution was devastating to generations of Hungarians, who either escaped to the West in front of the advancing Russian Army or suffered a harsh form of Russian communism that did not lift until 1989.

How could the U.S., after working so hard to instigate dissention and gain the trust of Eastern European populations, prove to be unreliable and untrustworthy in the moment of need, as a country risked all in the face of Russian power and took a stand against communism? The answer lies not in incompetence or malice but rather in poor leadership and lack of teamwork born in the Truman Administration and continued under the leadership of President Dwight Eisenhower. A disagreement between elements of national power during the Truman Administration was allowed to grow into a rift under the leadership of the Eisenhower Administration. The rift caused the message and the reality of national policy to become disconnected and even opposed to one another. As long as no adverse results occurred the administration made no effort to correct the rift but in the end, allowing disconnection between message and policy had devastating effects. The results were counterproductive, damaging lives and infrastructure, undermining credibility and diplomacy, and arguably delaying the final resolution of the Cold War.

CHAPTER 2  
UNITED STATES' INVOLVEMENT  
IN THE SOVIET BLOC

Policy Rooted in the Truman Administration

When the dust settled around the world following the unconditional surrender of Japan in September 1945, the leaders of the Western world recognized a new paradigm. The collapse of fascism and imperialism resulting from the Axis defeat set the conditions for the rapid expansion of Soviet communism. Soviet military action against the German war machine provided a legitimate claim for Soviet influence in the creation of a post fascist Europe. The endgame, Soviet declaration of war against Japan, similarly provided the expanding Soviet Union with a claim for influence in the Pacific. Suddenly Western ideology and communism were face to face with one another. For reasons of national security as well as because the ideologies were fundamentally opposed, the Soviet Union desired a zone of complete influence in Europe where communist leaders could exercise unilateral influence. While France, Britain, and the U.S. exercised joint leadership in the Western European sphere of influence, Soviet Russia exercised unilateral control in Eastern Europe. It was clear from the onset that post World War Two Europe would be managed very differently between the east and west. The stark differences in ideologies caused clashes between east and west almost immediately.

In December 1948, a mere three years after Japan's surrender, the U.S., under the Truman Administration, drafted a top secret document titled National Security Council (NSC) 20/4. The document established a baseline understanding of the true character and intent of the Soviet Politburo. In addition to understanding the problem, the Truman

Administration intended to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter the Soviet threat. NSC 20/4 established the strategic direction to, “place the maximum strain on the Soviet structure of power and particularly on the relationship between Moscow and the satellite countries.” NSC 20/4 characterized the Soviet situation:

#### The Problem

1. To assess and appraise existing and foreseeable threats to our national security currently posed by the USSR; and to formulate our objectives and aims as a guide in determining measures required to counter such threats.

#### Analysis of the Nature of the Threats

2. The will and ability of the leaders of the USSR to pursue policies which threaten the security of the U.S. constitute the greatest single danger to the U.S. within the foreseeable future.

3. Communist ideology and Soviet behavior clearly demonstrate that the ultimate objective of the leaders of the USSR is the domination of the world. Soviet leaders hold that the Soviet Communist Party is the militant vanguard of the world proletariat in its rise to political power, and that the USSR, base of the world communist movement, will not be safe until the non-communist nations have been so reduced in strength and numbers that communist influence is dominant throughout the world. The immediate goal, of top priority, since the recent war has been the political conquest of Western Europe. The resistance of the U.S. is recognized by the USSR as a major obstacle to the attainment of these goals.

4. The Soviet leaders appear to be pursuing these aims by:

- a. Endeavoring to insert Soviet controlled groups into positions of power and influence everywhere, seizing every opportunity presented by weakness and instability in other states and exploiting to the utmost the techniques of infiltration and propaganda, as well as the coercive power of preponderant Soviet military strength.
- b. Waging political, economic and psychological warfare against all elements resistant to communist purposes, and in particular attempting to prevent or retard the recovery of, and cooperation among western European countries.
- c. Building up as rapidly as possible the war potential of the Soviet orbit in anticipation of war, which in communist thinking is inevitable.

Both the immediate purposes and the ultimate objectives of the Soviet leaders are inimical to the security of the U.S. and will continue to be so indefinitely.<sup>11</sup>

Beyond codifying the Soviet situation and stressing the immediate threat, NSC 20/4 set the framework for U.S. national strategy toward the Soviet Union. The strategy followed the current Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (also known as DIME) method for employing the elements of national power.

Diplomatic:

The U.S. should encourage and promote the gradual reduction of undue Russian power through diplomatic presence and programs.

The U.S. should create diplomatic situations compelling the Soviet government to act contrary to Soviet doctrine and common conduct.

Information:

Use information campaign to develop attitudes among the Russian people to help modify Soviet behavior and policy making.

Demonstrate to the world the true nature of Soviet communism.

Military:

Increase U.S. military readiness for long term deterrence of Soviet aggression.

Ensure U.S. security from conventional and unconventional (internal) threat.

Economy:

Realize full free market economic capacity and increase the number of trading partners.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security, Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol. 1* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, Department of State, 1948), 663-664.

The strategic framework provided the opportunity to develop structure for covert action to implement the “Information” element. The Truman Administration created the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) for:

[A]ny covert activities related to: propaganda, economic warfare; preventative direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition, and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups, and support of indigenous anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the Free World.<sup>13</sup>

The mission set for the OPC later became an often repeated mission set for other organizations operating in Eastern Europe and the CIA. The OPC was augmented by a complex network of groups (many of them private) supported by George Kennan’s Policy Planning Staff and funded by the CIA. One of the more prominent of these private organizations was the National Committee for a Free Europe which was the lead organization for Radio Free Europe (RFE). The Diplomatic and Information elements of national power were the responsibility of the Department of State (DoS), even though the Information element had strong ties to the CIA which served as a paramilitary organization.

The expansion of the Korean War to include engagement with Chinese Communist Forces and Soviet air power demonstrated the shortcomings of reliance on nuclear deterrence as the primary mechanism for avoiding a high intensity conflict. President Truman was alarmed at the severity of the Chinese attack into North Korea and had a conflict of opinion with General MacArthur about what policy the U.S. should

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 665.

<sup>13</sup>Sidney W. Souers Memorandum, 15 June 1949, United States Declassified Document Reference System (Washington, DC, 1978), accessed through the Eisenhower Library Research Room.

adopt for bringing a final conclusion to the war, without escalating into full scale global conflict with the Soviet Union. It was apparent that nuclear capability still served as a vital asset for national defense, but should be augmented by a significant conventional military component to exercise decisive action towards a regional threat. NSC 68 was drafted in April 1950, published in August 1950, and provided a top secret analysis of Soviet and U.S. military capability looking at the possibility of an all out nuclear fight. In many ways Truman's primary concern was preventing World War Three. He wanted to adopt a more measured approach than the "all in slug it out" approach that MacArthur had urged him to adopt. The grim analysis provided in NSC 68 inspired the administration to increase efforts aimed at the non-military resolution to the Soviet threat, as well as increasing actual military capability if the non-military resolution failed. In April 1951, the non-military threat resolution effort was organized as an aggressive informational and propaganda program, under the newly established Psychological Strategy Board (PSB). The PSB would use a detailed, multifaceted, analysis of the Soviet Union to determine weakness in policies, dissatisfaction within populations, and general vulnerabilities. Once the weaknesses were identified it would be a matter of applying a message through one or more of the existing means to exploit the weakness and create anti-Soviet sentiment, outright resistance, or demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the Soviet system in general. The PSB was intended to be the mechanism that would decisively win the Cold War without the U.S. and Soviet Union actually facing off in armed conflict.

Late in 1950, the head of the Crusade for a Free Europe, Allen Dulles, dissatisfied with the PSB's progress toward executing a meaningful information campaign, requested assistance from deputy CIA director W. H. Jackson to determine ways to make the

program effective. Dulles issued specific guidance to, “re-examine” the position of the National Crusade for a Free Europe and in particular the guidance received from the Office of Policy Coordination. What W. H. Jackson recommended was the need for a single approval authority needed for State Department contribution and the need for a direct conduit allowing CIA contribution to be synchronized and added to the campaign.<sup>14</sup>

In January 1951, before making any of the proposed changes, Allen Dulles tendered his resignation from the Crusade to become the CIA’s Deputy Director for Plans. His replacement at the Crusade was Charles D. Jackson, a talented publisher of “Fortune” magazine and member of the “Time Life” committee.<sup>15</sup> C. D. Jackson was familiar with the civilian side of the Crusade but relatively unaware of the political and intelligence interaction. C. D. Jackson had a good personal relationship with Allen Dulles and believed in the Crusade. He had a vision for expanding the campaign’s influence, an ability to work with and influence people, and the energy to carry actions through the multitude of political reviews required for approval.

By the end of the Truman Administration the PSB was organized but had made little contribution to the reduction of Soviet influence or the threat that the Soviet Union posed to the U.S. and the Free World in general. The major obstacle to the PSB acting as an organizing headquarters, capable of refining the anti-Soviet effort, was the relationship

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<sup>14</sup>Richard H. Cummings, *Radio Free Europe’s Crusade for Freedom: Rallying Americans Behind the Cold War 1950-1960* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 48.

<sup>15</sup>“Charles D. Jackson Appointed as Special Advisor to the President,” October 1953, DDE Official File, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

it shared with the U.S. DoS and the CIA. The DoS was cautious about the objective of liberation and also the means available to affect that liberation. The DoS was fundamentally opposed to the employment of propaganda and resented the CIA involvement with the PSB, finding it an affront to their representation on American policy abroad. The discord between the DoS and the CIA caused the DoS, as the responsible agent, to marginalize the PSB and as a result the PSB produced little beyond rhetoric and plans. The final Truman Administration NSC global review, NSC 135, reiterated the general objective of, “the exploitation of rifts between the USSR and other communist states and between satellite regimes and the peoples they are oppressing.”<sup>16</sup> The Truman Administration had accomplished much to characterize the Soviet desired end state and define the threat posed to the Free World and the U.S. in particular. The organizations and mechanisms that the administration enacted made little impact to Cold War resolution though, due to political and bureaucratic disagreement.

### The Early Eisenhower Administration

Dwight Eisenhower’s presidential campaign in 1952 focused on the support for European nations under Soviet control. Eisenhower had served as the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe from 1949 to 1952 and he knew first-hand the stark contrasts between the east and west. Eisenhower indicated in his public statements and debate that he recognized ambiguity in the application of U.S. national strategy saying, “Carefully then this new administration, unfettered by past decisions and inherited mistakes, can

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<sup>16</sup>James S. Lay Memorandum, 19 January 1953, United States Declassified Document Reference System (Washington, DC, 1977), accessed through the Eisenhower Library Research Room.

review every factor—military, political, and psychological—to be mobilized in speeding a just peace. . . . We can shape our psychological warfare program into a weapon capable of cracking up the communist front.”<sup>17</sup> Eisenhower recognized the failure of the PSB in portraying a powerful united national voice saying in the same speech:

A foreign policy is the face and voice of a whole people. It is all that the world sees and hears and understands about a single nation. It expresses the character and the faith and the will of that nation. In this, a nation is like any individual of our personal acquaintance; the simplest gesture can betray hesitation or weakness, the merest inflection of voice can reveal doubt or fear. It is in this deep sense that our foreign policy has faltered and failed.<sup>18</sup>

Eisenhower intended to bring U.S. national power to bear in Europe to effectively break up the Soviet Bloc and return the Eastern European nations to independent governance. In a speech he made in August 1952 Eisenhower said, “The American conscience can never know peace until these peoples [referring to the Soviet Bloc] are restored again to being masters of their own fate.”<sup>19</sup>

Eisenhower’s nominee for the position of Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, was equally outspoken about aggressively pursuing Eastern European liberation. As Dulles began to formulate his own concept of Soviet Bloc liberation strategy, he determined that the best way to avoid a head on confrontation with the Soviet Union was to apply psychological means to cause a peaceful break-up of the Soviet Bloc from

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<sup>17</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, speech at Detroit, Michigan, October 24, 1952; Ann Whitman File, Speech Series, Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Papers as President, Box 2, Folder October 23, 1952 to November 3, 1952 and December 1952 (1), Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS, 5.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Herbert S. Parmet, *Eisenhower and the American Crusade* (London: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1972), 123.

within. He believed that peasant actions, middle class demonstrations, and political overtures for independence could convince the Soviet Politburo in Moscow that it would be in its best interest to withdraw troops and allow the Eastern European nations to act as independent partners.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the campaign Eisenhower and Dulles were unable to move beyond the conceptual level to develop a specific plan for achieving their desired end state. In spite of his recent experience in the European theater, Eisenhower had not yet been faced with the massive coordination and cooperation required to run a presidential administration. On December 31, 1952, the president-elect said:

I hope there will be ways and means to forward my New Year's greetings to all those young people behind the Iron Curtain whose good wishes for 1953 are extremely touching. I want to assure them that they are not forgotten. . . . So long as the support of freedom lives in the youth, the future is one of promise.<sup>21</sup>

Eisenhower differed significantly from Truman in his understanding of the Cold War construct. He believed that full scale war with the Soviet Union was unlikely unless Russia was significantly provoked. He intended to continue containing the propagation of communism into new countries, but believed that ultimately the growing socioeconomic differential between the Soviet Union and the Western World would cause a peaceful decline of communist ideology. To Eisenhower the goal was to improve the economy and standard of living in the Free World and then demonstrate to Soviet occupied populations that communism inhibited their ability to achieve the same standards of living. The trouble was that the military required a significant budget and detracted from full economic potential. The Soviet Union would have to be destabilized without a large

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 124-125.

<sup>21</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower to Foster Dulles, 31 December 1952, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 2, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

standing army providing the catalyst. In the first year of Eisenhower's presidency, he and Dulles worked diligently to codify and clarify the campaign to destabilize the Soviet Union. In a 14 page document drafted by the president titled, *Winning the Cold Peace*, for the February NSC conference, Eisenhower defined requirements for successful Psychological Warfare:

[T]he psychological effort of the Free World must, therefore, be endowed with the following essential features:

1. Foolproof SCIENTIFIC knowledge of Russian history, past and present.
2. Thorough understanding of the psychological climate at the present prevailing in the U.S.S.R. and this in the light of objective reports, and not pursuant to "wishful thinking" along the lines of "Collier's" World War Three issue.
3. Thorough knowledge of the various types of individuals it is designed to influence, their specific problems, needs, and strivings.
4. Considerable flexibility, resulting from a day-to-day and meticulous analysis of the ever changing psychological climate, so that the accent may be switched from one issue to the other, according to the nature of Soviet official reaction.
5. The maximum possible coordination in the domestic and outside fields, so as to avoid double-talk and mutual contradiction.

It is evident that every error of the West will be immediately pinpointed, inflated, and exploited as a boomerang and it cannot be too often stressed, that there will be NO SECOND CHANCE in which to make right such errors.<sup>22</sup>

The newly elected president believed that the proper application of analytical thought and scientific reason would produce the right message to inject into the appropriate demographic by the appropriate means, to peacefully bring the Soviet Union to its knees. He wanted highly intelligent members of his administration to understand all of the variables and produce exactly the right message at the right time. Above all, Eisenhower wanted his subordinates to understand that there was no room for guessing or attempting, or figuring; the message had to be clear, appropriate, and represent a united

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<sup>22</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Winning the Cold Peace*, 11 February 1953, DDE Official File, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

front. The coordination and cooperation required would be of utmost importance and of a level not seen by the previous administration.

In order to achieve unity and precision Eisenhower named the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA) as the agency responsible to couple the Psychological War with tangible actions of the DoS. The message was intended to be backed by diplomatic action and synchronized with the official diplomatic strategy. The administration would leverage a coordinating staff with the latest tools of technology to ensure that the multitude of variables were accounted for and coordinated. As with the PSB under the Truman Administration, the TCA was operating within the DoS. The TCA was formed in 1950 as a conduit for information sharing with emerging nations. The TCA was primarily a way to share modern Western technologies with less developed countries. Now the TCA was also responsible for coordinating the main effort of the American Psychological Warfare campaign.

In February 1953, Eisenhower made another important decision and appointed former general Charles Douglas Jackson as the presidential advisor for Psychological Warfare. C. D. Jackson would influence the direction of the U.S.' information campaign for the entirety of Eisenhower's presidency. Initially, C. D. Jackson headed the PSB and oversaw the TCA. He had direct access to the president as well as Secretary of State, Foster Dulles. Within the first two months C. D. Jackson recognized that in spite of the Truman Administration's efforts to initiate an effective Psychological Warfare campaign, the entire effort was incapacitated by complexity, confusion, and lack of coordinated effort.

The ineffectiveness of the Psychological Warfare Campaign and the lack of decisive strategy were never more apparent than in the U.S. response to Joseph Stalin's death on March 5, 1953. Although Stalin's demise was sudden and unexpected the PSB had prepared for the event and codified their response in a top secret document titled Operation Cancellation. The details of Operation Cancellation are still classified but we know from some of C. D. Jackson's correspondence that it was intended to be a speedy and overwhelming response, to exploit the power void that would surely exist in Soviet leadership following the premier's death. The apparent purpose of Operation Cancellation was to exploit:

[E]verything possible to overload the enemy at the precise moment when he is the least capable of bearing even his normal load. . . . It is not inconceivable that out of such a program might come further opportunities which, skillfully exploited, might advance the real disintegration of the Soviet empire.<sup>23</sup>

However eagerly C. D. Jackson desired to execute Operation Cancellation and however much President Eisenhower agreed, arguing the day prior at the 135th meeting of the NSC that, "the moment was propitious for introducing the right word directly into the Soviet Union," the National Security Council did not agree to take any aggressive action.<sup>24</sup> As a result, on March 5, after hearing the news of Stalin's death, Eisenhower offered some remarks about bringing America success together with the Free World if

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<sup>23</sup>Charles D. Jackson to General Robert Cutler, 7 March 1953, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 24, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>24</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Minutes from NSC 135, 4 March 1953, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 3, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

everyone would, “keep their heart right into the job” and a prayer requesting God to bring, “peace and comradeship” in a White House press conference.<sup>25</sup>

C. D. Jackson believed that the reason that the National Security Council was paralyzed at such a critical moment was the overwhelming caution exercised by the State Department. During NSC 135 on March 4, that arm of national power submitted its immediate guidance:

In regard to Soviet popular masses, our actions must not appear offensive to their sensibilities or exceeding the bounds of good taste, thereby confirming Soviet propaganda image of Americans as crude barbarians and tending to unite popular opposition to the U.S. Specifically we must take into account the fact that for generations Stalin has been the only leader people have known; he has been carefully sheltered from popular resentment against bureaucratic, doctrinal regime; moreover, he has been systematically built up as a symbol of power and prestige acquired by Soviet state in war and peace.<sup>26</sup>

The State Department was concerned that the Soviet control of their population was so successful that Russian citizens would react to outside influence by rallying around the Soviet government and take an aggressive stance against the U.S. As the President’s Special Assistant for Psychological Warfare, C. D. Jackson was frustrated by the lack of response that the administration was able to take, in light of the State Department’s hesitation to engage any of the Russian population or increase pressure on the Soviet Bloc, viewing it as a failure of the Free World to demonstrate strength and capability, gaining credibility among the Soviet populations. The entire episode following Stalin’s death increased tensions between the State Department and the CIA and established C. D. Jackson and the State Department as adversaries. The memorandum below is

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<sup>25</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, 5 March 1953, Ann Whitman File, Papers as President of the United States Series, Box 6, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>26</sup>Eisenhower, Minutes from NSC 135.

representative of C. D. Jackson's frustration with the Psychological Warfare program in early 1953.

April 8, 1953

Memorandum for Abbott Washburn

From: C. D. Jackson

All of these European efforts to set up committees and establish liaison and use American money, etc. are academic nonsense until basic decisions are made in this country as to exactly how this operation shall work. I am really getting tired of the constant "explorations" which cannot be brought to fruition.

C. D. J.

Figure 2. Memorandum by C. D. Jackson

*Source:* Charles D. Jackson to Abbott Washburn, 11 February 1953, DDE Official File, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS. Abbott Washburn was deputy director of the USIA from 1953 to 1961, acting as liaison between the broadcast agency and the White House and National Security Council during a peak period of the Cold War.

In confirmation of C. D. Jackson's impressions of State Department shortcomings with the information campaign, Herbert Cerwin, a former DoS information program

head, wrote to Jackson, on May 15, 1953, of his observations within the department saying:

The chief problem as I see it is that the Information Program to be effective has to be taken out of the State Department. As long as it remains in the hands of career diplomats and under their control it will never get very far. When I was head of the information program in Mexico during the war, I ran into the same problems that I found in Brazil and in Europe. In those days the career boys tried to stop the program but Rockefeller wouldn't let them get away with it. In recent years there has been no Rockefeller to run interference. For example, our ambassador to Brazil had absolutely no use for the program and was only mildly tolerant to it. His Minister-Counselor was bitterly opposed to it and did everything to throttle it. He did not believe public opinion was worth anything. . . . In eleven countries I visited in Europe from December to February, I found similar patterns to what I had observed in Brazil. There was no real interest in the program and none of the diplomats that I talked to had much use for it. It is satisfying to know that people like yourself and Bob Johnson are taking an active interest in it.<sup>27</sup>

On June 13, 1953, in a session of the President's Committee on International Information Activities, the committee presented Eisenhower with a strong recommendation to move the oversight of information activities from the State Department to an independent body. The recommendation stated that:

The president should create, within the structure of the National Security Council, an Operations Coordinating Board. The chief function of the board would be to coordinate the development by departments and agencies of detailed operations plans to carry out information operations supporting national security policies. . . . It is the Committee's recommendation that the new board consist of the Under-Secretary of State, as chairman; the Deputy Secretary of Defense; the Deputy Director for Mutual Security; the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; and a special Assistant to the President.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Herbert Cerwin, Letter to Charles D. Jackson, 11 February 1953, DDE Official File, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>28</sup>James C. Hagerty (Press Secretary to the President), Release from the 13 June 1953 Minutes of the Presidential Committee on International Information Activities, 8 July 1953, DDE Official File, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

The committee then detailed the shortcomings of the Psychological Operations Board within the State Department and outlined the way in which new organization could overcome the current obstacles. Ultimately Eisenhower concurred with the recommendations and in July of 1953 information activities were effectively removed from State Department control. The major difference to the proposed Operations Coordination Board (OCB) was that C. D. Jackson and the Director of the CIA had, in fact, a much more prominent role than originally envisioned. Once the information operation effort was removed from State Department control, the information campaign quickly gathered momentum.

The tension between the elements of national power centered on action or inaction and whether the U.S. should be initiating action as the lead power or reacting to Soviet action. The State Department favored limited action only offering humanitarian type aid to ease extreme suffering and in a way that did not, in any way, provoke potential Soviet repercussion. The CIA was more in favor of communicating a message of freedom to the oppressed citizens of the Soviet empire and then exploiting any cracks in Soviet control that might appear by supporting local uprisings. C. D. Jackson attempted to tailor the propaganda message to support the more aggressive CIA strategy for liberation of the Soviet Bloc in Europe and Asia. In June of 1953, free from the limiting strategy of the State Department, the OCB began increasing broadcasts into Eastern Europe. The OCB tailored the message to demonstrate the true nature of communist oppression and highlight the disparity in living standards between East and West. RFE played an expanding role in the information campaign and received increased CIA attention.

That same month, tensions in East Germany over the weak economy, unequal distribution of wealth, and worker's wages erupted into the East German riots. The riots were sparked by workers' dissatisfaction with government policy but were strongly endorsed and encouraged by the efforts of the OCB through RFE. Frank Wisner, director of covert operations in East Germany, attempted to capitalize on the riots which were much more intense than U.S. analysis's anticipated. Wisner also noted that RFE had, "a demonstrable and substantial impact within the Soviet Zone, with an especially credible performance during the East German uprising."<sup>29</sup> Surprised by the intensity of the East German riots, the National Security Council was again divided and unsure how to react. C. D. Jackson encouraged by such a quick success with the information campaign, pushed for immediate action to physically support and aid the protestors. The CIA office in Berlin also desired to get involved by distributing pistols and Sten guns to the protestors and offer advice and assistance to further the movement. Foster Dulles, head of the CIA and present at the NSC, felt that the U.S. should take some action but was hesitant to qualify what form the action should take until he had more information. Eisenhower did not commit to any action at all beyond requesting to be kept up to date about the situation in East Germany over the next 60 days.<sup>30</sup> The State Department did authorize increased aid to West Berlin and staged food and medical supplies in case the events in East Germany began producing significant casualties.

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<sup>29</sup>Frank Wisner to C. D. Jackson, 20 July 1953, Jackson Papers, Radio Free Europe Series, Box 5, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>30</sup>Minutes from NSC 150, 18 June 1953, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 4, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

The East German riots served to further enlarge the gap between the State Department and the Psychological Operations Board and CIA. Eisenhower was openly talking to both mechanisms of national power but he did not make a concerted effort to reconcile the differences between them. The results from the East German riots were that C. D. Jackson and the CIA in Europe believed that the Psychological Warfare Campaign had a direct impact in East Germany and if it had not caused the riots, it had at least tipped the balance of power to influence the population to rise up in its own self interest. Fueled by the sense of success the OCB drafted a report to present at NSC 158. The report stated that the U.S. should, “nourish resistance to communist oppression throughout satellite Europe, short of mass rebellion to exploit satellite unrest as demonstrable proof that the Soviet Empire is beginning to crumble.”<sup>31</sup> This time the National Security Council agreed to further expand the propaganda campaign.<sup>32</sup> The OCB understood that they were finally given free rein to aggressively broadcast the message of freedom and liberation to inspire unrest throughout the Soviet Bloc. The late summer of 1953 saw increased fund raising and partnership drives for the support of RFE. The CIA maintained that RFE was a civilian effort to communicate U.S. solidarity to those peoples trapped behind the Iron Curtain demonstrating separation from the organization, while in reality strongly influencing the content and nature of the programming.

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<sup>31</sup>Minutes from NSC 158, 29 June 1953, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 4, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

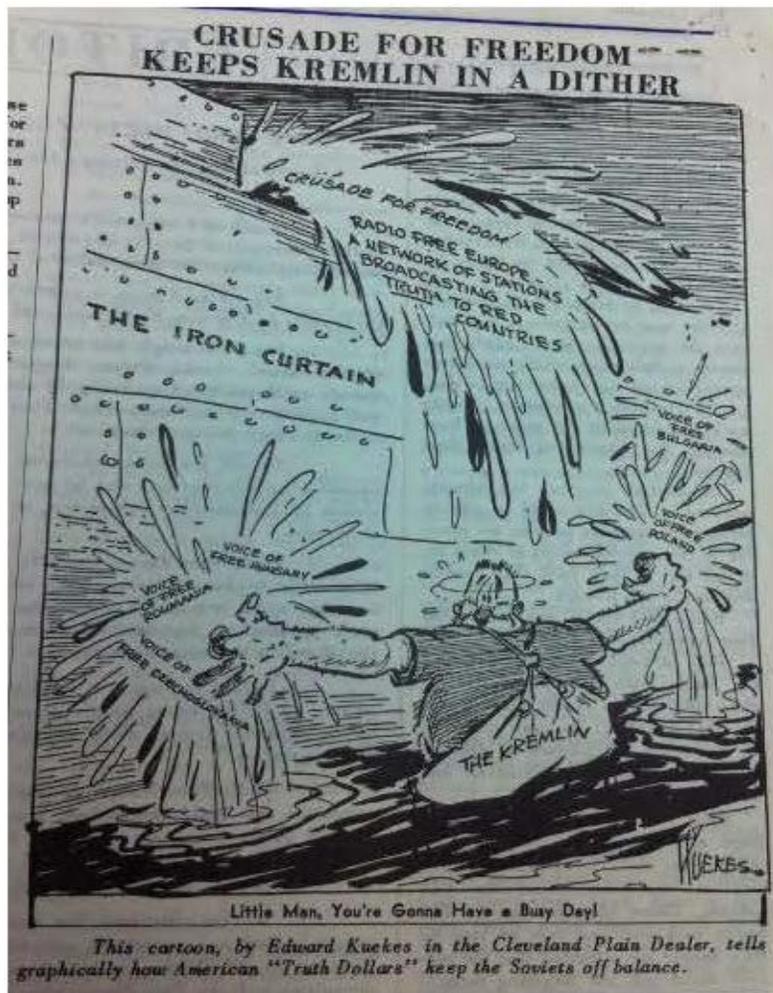


Figure 3. Crusade for Freedom Brochure

Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower Official Files, Psychological Warfare, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS. Political Cartoon which ran in the Cleveland Plain Dealer in conjunction with a one page information layout for the Crusade for Freedom, 1954.

In July, the National Security Council's division in opinion manifest in the development of two distinctly different and opposing plans for future strategy. One side favored overt reduction of pressure on the Soviet Union with no contact retained with the Russian people and greatly reduced non-subversive contact with the Soviet Bloc populations. By openly reducing pressure on the Soviet population the supporters of this

course of action hoped to gain Soviet good will and cooperation. The goal was to sit at the same table, find common ground, and work on agreements at peaceful resolutions to relieve totalitarian control of Soviet occupied populations. The other side favored maintaining pressure and increasing it in critically identified areas, in ways that would not result in open war, to inspire the Soviet occupied population to rise up and secure their own liberation.<sup>33</sup> The general idea was to encourage willing populations to conduct worker's strikes, demonstrations, and lobby for an increased voice in government and greater freedom without dissolving into armed conflict but in some cases the distinction between the types of resistance was poorly defined.

The National Security Council met a total of three times in October 1953 to resolve the differences of opinion. The main difficulty was that, while Eisenhower's "New Look" was clear and emphatic about a small standing army and an active nuclear program as the military means to deter Soviet aggression, it was far less clear on the nonmilitary means of deterrence. Throughout October Foster Dulles reminded the National Security Council that while he believed in an active psychological campaign, great care should be taken to prevent private organizations from supporting the, "aspirations of people everywhere for freedom and independence."<sup>34</sup> Foster Dulles indicated that select individuals within the purview of the U.S. government should control the message and scientifically apply it where appropriate. He also cautioned against the overt support of Soviet Bloc countries attempting to gain independence from

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<sup>33</sup>Minutes from NSC 165, 7 October 1953, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 4, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>34</sup>Minutes from NSC 167, 29 October 1953, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 4, Eisenhower Library, Abilene KS.

Russia and cited the detachment of Albania as an example.<sup>35</sup> In all of these National Security Council discussions Eisenhower preferred to assume a passive role allowing his appointees the latitude to openly discuss and control the direction of the resulting policy.

With no clear direction from the President or the National Security Council, C. D. Jackson and the CIA conducted operations as they saw the need. Jackson wanted to sustain the resistance efforts in East Germany and broadcast messages of support, while working with the CIA to bolster the efforts through distribution of food aid and medical supplies. Second to East Germany, the OCB focused attention on Czechoslovakia, indicating through broadcasts that the Czech provision of arguments for liberation ensured that they were the first in order for support.<sup>36</sup> The broadcasts did not specify what form that support might take and the conclusion was left to the imagination of the listener. The clear conclusion is that the Psychological Warfare Campaign was not being administered in its application, or driven, by the New Look but it was heavily influenced by operations and reactions from the field and the charismatic input by C. D. Jackson, the man appointed to keep the president informed on its progress. Additionally, the campaign was gaining momentum and credibility in the field while the highest levels of government were still unsure exactly how to employ it.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Samuel S. Walker Jr. to C. D. Jackson, 22 July 1953, Jackson Papers, Radio Free Europe Series, Box 5, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

## CHAPTER 3

### UNITED STATES' PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE CAMPAIGN

#### SETTING CONDITIONS FOR REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY

##### Radio Free Europe

The inception of the Psychological Warfare Campaign during the Truman Administration led to a need for a media outlet to reach the population behind the Iron Curtain. Initial inroads into a radio conduit over which to broadcast the psychological warfare message were made under the civilian organization "Crusade for Freedom." The Crusade was intended to be a private organization, funded by private citizens, for the purpose of offering encouragement and solidarity to the people in the Russian occupied Soviet Bloc. Crusade for Freedom formed under the National Committee for a Free Europe. After a year of funding and creating policy, General Eisenhower officially launched the Crusade in September 1950 out of an office in the Empire State Building in New York. At the Crusade's launch, the structure allowed for the desired national messages to be fed into the broadcasting scheduling through the National Committee for a Free Europe. The CIA and DoS could both influence the message by providing input to the OPC in Washington, which would pass the message to the National Committee for a Free Europe in New York. The office of Crusade for Freedom compiled the broadcast with input from private citizens, providing arts, news, and music, and the East Europeans from the intended countries providing cultural programs. Once the final broadcast was approved by the National Committee for a Free Europe, the Crusade for Freedom team, assisted by the staff of RFE, would complete the translation and record the programming. The tapes were then flown to Athens, Greece, by RFE and taken aboard a ship in the

Aegean Sea where personnel from RFE broadcast the program over designated frequencies to the intended audiences. The connection between Crusade for Freedom and the OPC was carefully hidden from the staff at RFE and the American public.<sup>37</sup>

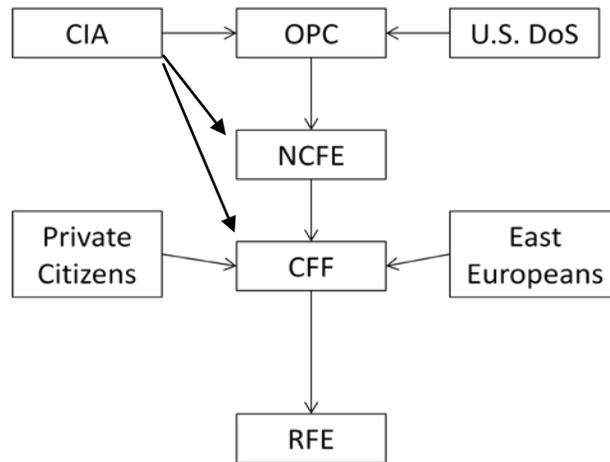


Figure 4. Organizational Chart of Contributing Agencies for the Psychological Warfare Campaign

Source: Created by author.

On the public face, Crusade for Freedom was not viewed as a conduit for national policy or a tool for containment of Soviet expansion, but as a project of good will and outpouring of American generosity and solidarity with the oppressed peoples in the Soviet Bloc. Many prominent citizens and businessmen made significant contributions to the Crusade both financially and by assisting with program content. The remainder of the private funding was raised from charitable donations from ordinary U.S. citizens. The

<sup>37</sup>Gyula Borbándi, *Magyarok az Angol Kertben: A Szabad Európa Rádió Története* [Hungarians in the English Garden: The History of Radio Free Europe] (Budapest Hungary: Mundus Magyar Egyetemi Kiadó, 2003), 16.

Crusade published informational pamphlets to be distributed by well known civic organizations and clubs. The American Legion played a prominent role by distributing fliers and holding fundraising drives and conventions. Although private sector support was touted as the sole mechanism for funding, in reality it provided only a small fraction of the money that was actually required to operate the Crusade and RFE. The additional funds required were provided by the federal government through the CIA. Later the CIA would use RFE as a conduit to channel funds into the hands of partisans and potential defectors and former German Nazis who would aid the U.S. in the Cold War effort.<sup>38</sup> The page reproduced (figure 5) is a copy of frequently asked questions concerning the Crusade for Freedom that was distributed as part of the fundraising campaign.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 283.

<p><b>Q. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RADIO FREE EUROPE AND THE VOICE OF AMERICA?</b></p>	<p><b>Q. IS IT BEING EFFECIANTLY RUN?</b></p>
<p>A. The Voice of America is run and paid for by the government. Radio Free Europe is operated as an independent American enterprise by a committee of private citizens. It is <i>people</i> talking to <i>people</i>-Poles telling the truth to Poles, Czechs telling the truth to Czechs, etc. It is not bound by diplomatic limitations.</p> <p>The Voice of America broadcasts to a number of countries and can only devote a limited amount of time each day to any one country. Radio Free Europe's "Voice of Free Czechoslovakia," on the other hand, broadcasts about 20 hours each day to Czechoslovakia alone.</p>	<p>A. Representatives of American business and labor have investigated it on the ground. One typical report stated, "Its approach is direct, and practical... There is no overstaffing at the head... Each individual has a well-defined task to fulfill... Support of this organization is one of the very best investments American citizens can make in their efforts to win the Cold War.</p>
<p><b>Q. EXACTLY WHAT COUNTRIES DOES RADIO FREE EUROPE REACH?</b></p>	<p><b>Q. WHO OPERATES RADIO FREE EURPOE?</b></p>
<p>A. Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Albania with a total of 70,000,000 population.</p>	<p>A. Millions of American citizens like yourself, through voluntary contributions of millions of dollars! More than 1,000 carefully screened people man the stations. The management is American, but the staff is largely composed of editors, reporters, teachers, clergymen and entertainers, who have come from behind the Iron Curtain.</p>
<p><b>Q. HOW DO WE KNOW THEY'RE LISTENING?</b></p>	<p><b>Q. WHAT SORT OF PROGRAMS DOES IT BROADCAST?</b></p>
<p>A. Letters by the hundreds are spirited out, testifying to the big audience which listens. Quotes: "Everybody listens. Those who have no radio ask, 'what was on today'?" "RFE is simply like daily bread... I do not know what we would do without it." "RFE is considered the bridge between Poland and the free world... on which lie our hopes for the future."</p>	<p>A. Good shows-shows that outpull in popularity the Communists' own programs. World-wide and local news, advice, music, religion-better and more complete than they get from Radio Prague or Radio Warsaw. And HOT TRUTH through it all. And <i>hope</i>.</p>
<p><b>Q. HOW MANY TRANSMITTERS DO THE RADIO FREE EUROPE STATIONS USE NOW?</b></p>	<p><b>Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY, "HOT TRUTH"?</b></p>
<p>A. 21. They're located in Western Germany and in Portugal. And they are <i>powerful</i>. By putting them all on different wave lengths they can be used—and have been!—to <i>crash through</i> Communist "jamming."</p>	<p>A. The true version of news events aired so fast it scalds Communist lies almost while they're being spoken. Frequent news "scoops," where TRUTH beats the Soviet lies to the punch. For example, RFE scooped Communist radio by many hours on both Stalin's illness and Beria's arrest.</p>
<p><b>Q. WHY ARE TRANSMITTERS NEEDED?</b></p>	<p><b>Q. HOW DOES IT GET ITS NEWS?</b></p>
<p>A. More transmitters, and still more transmitters are needed now to let the truth speak louder than ever to these captive people. Transmitters in new locations are needed too—as added insurance that this "Voice of Freedom" will never be stilled. Each new transmitter insures a new listening position on a captive radio dial.</p>	<p>A. Radio Free Europe monitors all communist broadcasts. Every program is analyzed by nationals of the captive countries who <i>know the truth</i>. Voluminous information from many sources is compiled and evaluated constantly by exiled experts. New exiles bring out new truth daily—and they bring it to RFE.</p>

Figure 5. Frequently Asked Questions Bulletin for Distribution for Civic Fundraising

Source: Fundraising Pamphlet, 3 March 1951, DDE Official File, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

The pamphlet's content highlights the government's desire to lead the American public to believe that Crusade for Freedom and RFE had no connection to or influence from government sources. The pamphlet boldly states that the programming is not subjected to, "diplomatic limitations." At the time it was, as the OPC remained under

State Department control until mid-1953. The pamphlet stated that RFE was an “independent American enterprise by a committee of private citizens” not mentioning that every broadcast was adjusted and approved by a government organization prior to release for broadcast. The pamphlet also overtly stated that, “every [donated] dollar works like ten” without mentioning that the U.S. government was pumping almost five dollars into the program for every dollar donated by a private citizen. Reasons for the U.S. government to deny influencing the Crusade and RFE are not readily available but are likely: to increase the belief that Americans as a people are concerned for the populations in the Soviet Bloc, to add credibility to broadcasts intended for an audience jaded by governmental propaganda campaigns, and potentially to provide deniability should the broadcasts create adverse results.

When the RFE office was opened in New York on July 4, 1950, General Eisenhower delivered a short speech indicating that the program was being presented as a gift from the American people to the oppressed populations in Soviet occupied Eastern Europe.<sup>39</sup> When the RFE headquarters was moved into the newly constructed complex in Munich, Germany in May 1951, Jackson presented the ceremonial keys for the complex to the Eastern European staff and said that the complex belonged to, “you and the nations that you represent whom we stand behind as partners.”<sup>40</sup> In spite of these public demonstrations of good will and sincerity, the Hungarian staff and likely other Eastern European staffs understood the connection to a larger American governmental campaign. The Hungarians quickly learned that, in spite of the partnership speeches, the U.S.

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<sup>39</sup>Borbándi, 17.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 19.

government closely monitored and controlled the broadcast content. The Hungarian personnel at RFE saw themselves as employees rather than partners, relegated to translating and recording programs that were created by other American agencies and passed to them for broadcast. Those who dedicated their efforts did so because they were satisfied to know that a powerful nation was willing to take action on their behalf and they were hopeful that the campaign would do some good for the Soviet occupied populations.<sup>41</sup>

In his history of RFE a senior Hungarian partner at RFE in Munich, Gyula Borbándi, points to a watershed moment in June of 1953 when the message shifted and the intensity of the broadcasts increased. He states that from its early beginnings in 1949 until mid-1953 the broadcasts focused on accurate and timely world news, statements of the free world's solidarity with the oppressed peoples behind the Iron Curtain, and keeping the Eastern European's national cultures alive. Borbándi believed that the purpose of the broadcasts was to maintain peace and stability, while demonstrating that Communism as a political system was inferior to the free market and would eventually fail. After June 1953 and continuing until November 1956, the content of the broadcasts focused on taking active measures to rebel against the Soviet regime and spoke of liberation for the Eastern European populations. The message changed from one saying, "come out [defect] and we will help you" to one saying, "stay and resist and we will assist you."<sup>42</sup> The message never stated what form the help would take leaving those details to the imagination of the listener.

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 20, 37.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 21.

Borbándi's observations directly mirror the governmental initiatives that were driving the Psychological Warfare Campaign from Washington. The Truman Administration exercised a policy of containment and demonstrated caution to avoid causing World War Three. The Psychological Warfare Campaign was managed by the U.S. DoS and saw little action beyond planning and codifying the campaign academically. The direction and operations undertaken during the Truman Administration limited governmental inject and provided opportunities for civilian influence. Further evidence comes from the broadcast statistics which indicate that during the Truman Administration there were two, one-half hour news programs per day provided by government input.<sup>43</sup> Later under the early Eisenhower Administration there would be about five hours of government broadcast per day, of which three-quarters was news and one-quarter was political commentary or broadcasts demonstrating how to rebel against Soviet oppression.<sup>44</sup> The time that Borbándi indicated the shift occurred directly coincides with Eisenhower's decision, on C. D. Jackson's urging, to remove the Psychological Warfare Campaign from the State Department's purview and establish it under the newly formed OCB.<sup>45</sup> Once removed from the direct supervision of the State Department the campaign became far more assertive in the effort to instigate change in the Soviet Bloc.

Creation of the radio programs depended on a coordinated effort from a number of departments and organizations. The first step was to collect news from behind the Iron

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>45</sup>Hagerty, Release from the June 13, 1953 Minutes.

Curtain. A U.S. listening department in Switzerland scanned the airwaves daily for Soviet broadcasts coming from both the USSR and the Soviet Bloc. Additional listeners in the Eastern European countries listened to official broadcasts and provided the U.S. with a synopsis of information. Laszlo Béry worked for RFE in Budapest providing information received from Soviet broadcasts in Hungary.<sup>46</sup> The information was fed up to the OPC and analyzed to ascertain what the U.S. message should contain. When items were identified that required a counter message, the themes were passed to writers (both Americans and Europeans working in tandem) to draft scripts for political influence and commentary for the news reports. The scripts were first written in English and after approval at the OPC, were returned to the Crusade and RFE offices for translation. Some of the political commentary responding to Soviet political speeches came from the State Department, CIA, or U.S. politicians through the OCB. Feedback to the programming came from exit interviews of defecting refugees, letters from behind the Iron Curtain, and operatives working in the Soviet Bloc. The CIA also analyzed the effectiveness of the program based on perceived influence on national events such as demonstrations and resistance movements.<sup>47</sup>

The task organization of agencies involved with the Crusade for Freedom and RFE and the need for secrecy concerning governmental involvement created an isolating effect between the Eastern European staff in the broadcasting offices and the agencies that approved the final broadcast transcript. Because of the isolation any illusion of a true

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<sup>46</sup>Borbándi, 17.

<sup>47</sup>Sarell Everett Gleason, Memorandum for NSC 158, 29 June 1953, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 4, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

partnership was fleeting at best. The McCarthy-era fear of communism creeping into U.S. politics hampered mutual trust of the Eastern European refugees and prevented their inclusion in government agencies and processes. The result was a de facto boss-employee relationship rather than the touted partnership. This distinction suppressed bottom up input of concepts and content and limited the full potential of the radio campaign.

Because programming for RFE was reviewed, and in many cases initiated, by U.S. government agencies without ethnic Eastern Europeans serving in them, the broadcasts had a distinct American format and content that did not always resonate with the audience residing in the Soviet Bloc. America in the 1950s was a growing consumer economy dedicated to extending the “American dream” to the largest segment of society. Advertising agencies on Madison Avenue exponentially advanced marketing techniques. Some of the marketing practices employed in the civilian business sector found their way into the Psychological Warfare Campaign and were incorporated into RFE broadcasts. Under invitation from W. H. Jackson in 1950, the American Advertising Council supported the Crusade for Freedom.<sup>48</sup>

The Advertising Council provided funding to the campaign and published flyers, brochures, and advertisements urging Americans to support the campaign. The habitual relationship served as a conduit to provide broadcast input and soon short sound bites promoting the RFE broadcasts were inserted between programs. To the Hungarian members of the RFE broadcasting board the approach was new. The brief advertisements did not represent products but rather urged listeners to tune in for special programs or

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<sup>48</sup>Richard H. Cummings, *Radio Free Europe's Crusade for Freedom: Rallying Americans Behind the Cold War 1950-1960* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 46.

listen at specific times. Between two programs the broadcaster read a few lines filled with “political catchwords” and emphatically urged listeners to tune in for special programs.<sup>49</sup> The advertisements stated things like, “Listen to RFE each day at 2:00 o’clock to receive our accurate explanation of the political situation in Hungary” or, “We always tell you the exact truth and not what we want our listeners to believe”. An additional method was to call out a well known Hungarian by name saying, “Radio Free Europe calls Mr. X to listen to our evening program because we are talking directly to him.”<sup>50</sup> From an American perspective using the newest marketing practices ensured that the campaign represented the forward thinking, cutting edge capabilities that could be achieved in a capitalist society. In Eastern Europe these advertising techniques did not resonate with the listening audience.<sup>51</sup> The Hungarians believed that if the program insisted that the broadcast was the absolute truth it should be received cautiously. The number of listeners decreased as the advertisements increased. The Hungarian RFE staff did not officially fight the advertisements but simply omitted them from the broadcast. The number of listeners increased again and Hungarian confidence improved.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, repetitive and overly optimistic radio segments seemed detached from reality and suspect to a people who had not experienced life in the American suburbs. Instead of inspiring hope, these segments actually caused doubt that the radio broadcasts represented reality in America.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Borbándi, 44.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 41.

Some of the Hungarian partners in Munich tried to explain the disconnect to their American counterparts but the true relationship between the radio station and the government prevented meaningful collaboration.<sup>54</sup>

Isolation of the Hungarian staff from the government oversight agencies also limited the Hungarian contribution by cutting programs that lacked U.S. governmental verification. For a short time in 1954 a broadcast called the *Fekete Hang* (Black Voice) recorded stories of oppression and suffering told by refugees and defectors recently exiting from Hungary. In many cases the stories seemed too fantastical and extreme to the U.S. counterparts and without governmental verification would not be broadcast.<sup>55</sup> The same censure occurred when a survivor from Recsk, a Soviet run concentration camp located in Hungary and shrouded in secrecy, emerged from Hungary. Michnay Gyula escaped from Recsk, in May 1951, after he memorized the names of 600 of the camp's inmates.<sup>56</sup> In Vienna, Austria, during his exit interview he told his story to a Hungarian member of the Crusade for Freedom. When the Hungarian contingent heard about the story they wanted to put it quickly on air to expose the secret camp and reassure the families of inmates whose loved ones were in a missing or unknown status. The CIA was responsible for investigating the story and determining its validity. Whether or not the CIA leveraged the information in any way remains a secret but we do know that officially

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>56</sup>Gyula Michnay, *Szökés a Recski Haláltáborból, Új Látóhatár, Recski, Escape the Death Camps; A New Horizon* (Munich Germany: Soli Deo Gloria Németországi Magyar Diákszövetség, 1983), 32.

they said the story was a fantasy and must not be aired or printed.<sup>57</sup> The Hungarians disagreed with the finding but complied with the order. Years later some of the names were leaked over the airwaves but the desired impact was not realized.<sup>58</sup>

### The Radio Campaign Leading up to Revolution

The rift between U.S. national policy and the message broadcast into Eastern Europe grew through late 1953. The NSC 174 Planning Board report stated that, “The U.S. should not encourage premature action on the Soviet Bloc which will bring upon the peoples of those nations reprisals involving further terror and repression.”<sup>59</sup> Members of the National Security Council understood the dangers of instigating armed resistance or rebellion that the West and the U.S. in particular, could not openly support. President Eisenhower officially exercised caution and warned against “encouraging oppressed peoples to rise up against the Soviet.”<sup>60</sup> President Eisenhower did little to tighten control over the Psychological Warfare Campaign. It is hard to reconcile his communications and attitudes toward C. D. Jackson and the CIA in their joint efforts to bring about self-liberation in the Soviet Bloc. In September 1953 C. D. Jackson wrote in a note to Eisenhower, “The internal stresses among the satellites and within Russia itself are

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<sup>57</sup>Borbándi, 47.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>59</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Minutes from NSC 174, 11 December 1953, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 4, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

working for us and will continue to work for us so long as we move forward.”<sup>61</sup> Eisenhower’s reply was a nonspecific short note offering Jackson a, “well done” and, “keep up the pressure.”<sup>62</sup> It was just the sort of vague and nonspecific feedback that C. D. Jackson thrived on and once again he redoubled his efforts under the reassurance of presidential endorsement. Jackson met with the CIA and coordinated a major increase of Psychological Warfare injects.

The first order of business was aimed at sustaining the East German uprising. The two coconspirators used food and medical supplies,<sup>63</sup> messages of solidarity from the U.S. business sector, and support for East German defections to the American Sector<sup>64</sup> (mainly targeting East German security police). The time had passed for successful capitalization of the East German riots and although achieving some localized success there was little more the CIA could affect. The second effort was expanding propaganda efforts in Czechoslovakia with balloon and radio programs. The message to Czechoslovakia was that the people of that nation were the first to address the need for liberation from the Soviet Bloc and made a strong case for liberation. As such the people of America stood by their brothers and sisters in Czechoslovakia and were prepared to

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<sup>61</sup>Charles D. Jackson to President Eisenhower, 21 September 1953, C. D. Jackson Papers 1931-1967, Jackson Correspondence Series, Box 41, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>62</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower to C. D. Jackson, September 1953, C. D. Jackson Papers 1931-1967, Jackson Correspondence Series, Box 41, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>63</sup>Charles D. Jackson to Walter B. Smith, August 1953, C. D. Jackson Papers 1931-1967, Jackson Correspondence Series, Box 3, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>64</sup>Bonn office to the U.S. Information Agency, August 1953, C. D. Jackson Papers 1931-1967, Jackson Correspondence Series, Box 3, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

offer support to their efforts.<sup>65</sup> As in the past, the nature of the support mentioned was left to the listener's imagination. The third project tackled by Jackson and the CIA through the late autumn of 1953 was a joint effort with the British foreign department and MI6 to overthrow the government of Albania.<sup>66</sup> The Albanian government project went directly against the concerns that John Foster Dulles held toward physical attempts to achieve the liberation of Soviet occupied countries. On the Asian front, a major campaign in China targeted routine winter shortages and the famine and economic hardship that the Chinese suffered on a yearly basis.<sup>67</sup>

In spite of the Psychological Warfare Campaign's removal from DoS oversight there was a certain amount of unease from that governmental element. A number of the European mission chiefs and ambassadors drafted white papers voicing concern for the campaign's aggressive new direction. In particular, the fact that the campaign was taking credit for instigating the East German riots concerned State Department officials who were working within the larger context of security cooperation in Europe. The riots were not viewed favorably by Britain or France whose governments were attempting to maintain a stable status quo in Europe. C. D. Jackson drafted an immediate reply and vehemently defended the campaign's new direction arguing for conducting a unilateral

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<sup>65</sup>Radio Free Europe Transcript, Peroutka's Special Commentary, August 1953, C. D. Jackson Papers 1931-1967, Jackson Correspondence Series, Box 5, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>66</sup>Charles D. Jackson, Daily Log Journal, November 1953, C. D. Jackson Papers 1931-1967, Jackson Correspondence Series, Box 56, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>67</sup>Charles D. Jackson to Assistant of the Policy Coordination Board, December 1953, C. D. Jackson Papers 1931-1967, Jackson Correspondence Series, Box 1, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

American solution in Europe that would deliver peace and containment on the continent through the supported self-liberation of the Soviet Bloc:

I would like to strike a note of warning right now on something that may not develop for ten or twenty years. If and when the possibility of liberation does loom for Eastern Europe, we will find that our interests and the British interests in that area, and possibly the German interests, will be diametrically opposed. We must be prepared to have an American position and to follow it through with great firmness. If some variation of the federation concept seems to be the only way to (a) readjust frontiers; (b) create a viable economic industrial and agricultural unit; (c) present a unified manpower group of such size to act as a deterrent to some new aggressor, we can be almost sure that Great Britain will be against it because of their old balance of power tradition. If we want peace in Europe, we'd better it our way for a change. None of the other ways seem to have worked to well.<sup>68</sup>

In answer to the accusations of overly aggressive support for the East German riots, Mr. Jackson said, "just what did the Ambassadors expect American psychological warfare to do? Tell the rioters to go home and be nice to the Commies?"<sup>69</sup>

Eisenhower's position on the Psychological Warfare effort continued to be difficult to define. On December 8, 1953, the president delivered his famous *Atoms for Peace* speech. In his speech Eisenhower tied policy direction to a specific proposal to create a mechanism for developed nations to donate uranium to an international stock, for peaceful purposes such as power generation in developing nations. The speech worked to reassure the western Allies of the U.S. government's peaceful intentions and improved relations with some of the neutral nations being courted by Soviet outreach, such as India.<sup>70</sup> Eisenhower believed in the Psychological Warfare Campaign as a method of

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<sup>68</sup>Charles D. Jackson to L. A. Minnich Jr., October 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Official Files, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Minutes from NSC 174, 11 December 1953, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 5, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

sending the elements of his plans for extending peace around the world. The difficulty was that his stance on liberation of the Soviet Bloc was unclear. The president frequently provided his vision and intent to the DoS but left C. D. Jackson to administer the Psychological Warfare Campaign as he saw fit with very little presidential guidance. Mr. Jackson frequently sent communications to Eisenhower and passed him progress reports but received little more than “at-a-boy notes” in return. C. D. Jackson interpreted the lack of guidance as the president’s endorsement and approval for the program. The relationship provided a powerful opportunity to expand the campaign’s message and scope. We don’t know why Eisenhower has so little to say about the program. He may have found the abstract nature of the psychological campaign to be better left to the oversight of the experts or outside of his comfort zone for decision making, without personally researching all of the variables. On the other hand Eisenhower may have intended the message of liberation to wither on the vine without presidential emphasis and guidance.

Whatever the reason may have been the campaign administrators believed that they had presidential endorsement to create conditions for self-liberation of the peoples of Eastern Europe. In February 1954, reporting to the president on the efforts to increase pressure in the Soviet Bloc and China, Jackson urged the president to, “Revive the Great Offensive”<sup>71</sup> saying:

If, during 1954, we have the guts and the skill to maintain constant pressure at all points of the Soviet orbit, we will get dividends from such a policy. At some time or other during 1954, the combination of external discontent and the fruits of

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<sup>71</sup>Charles D. Jackson to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 22 February 1954, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 1, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

internal unfulfilled appeasement will start working in our favor in a great big way.<sup>72</sup>

Eisenhower considered the State Department's counterpoint that there was no concrete physical evidence suggesting that Soviet control over the Soviet Bloc had in any way been weakened but asked for Jackson's overview of Soviet vulnerabilities.<sup>73</sup> Jackson understood from the exchange that the president was encouraging him to increase the scope of his efforts. He began working with Frank Wisner, the CIA's director of operations, to encourage passive resistance of the Soviet Bloc populations, by stepping up radio and leaflet offensive campaigns in Eastern Europe. He also redoubled efforts to detach Albania from the Soviet Bloc.<sup>74</sup>

In April 1954 Jackson returned to his former job at *Time Life* but he continued to assist the Psychological Warfare effort, remaining very much in touch with the president and the leading members of the campaign. After a gap of two months, Eisenhower appointed Nelson Rockefeller as his Special Assistant for Psychological Warfare. Rockefeller was an obvious choice after his involvement in creating a portion of the intellectual material that informed the early days of the campaign, as well as his efforts in raising funds for the Crusade for Freedom and RFE. Mr. Jackson's relationship with Rockefeller allowed Mr. Jackson to remain influential in the project. The remainder of

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Memorandum to C. D. Jackson, 6 March 1954, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 1, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>74</sup>Charles D. Jackson to Frank G. Wisner, 24 March 1954, Dwight D. Eisenhower Official Files, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

1954 was a status quo continuation of the initiatives enacted in late 1953, with the exception of the effort to cause Albania to break free of the Soviet Union.

In January 1955, the National Security Council convened to conduct the annual review of the New Look programs and policies. NSC 231 again stated the ultimate goal as, “fostering changes in the character and policies of the Soviet Communist Bloc regimes.” The method indicated for such an undertaking was to exploit the differences between the central Soviet power and the occupied satellite states, as well as the vulnerabilities that existed in their sometimes tenuous political relationships. The NSC notes closed with the disclaimer, “No attempts to encourage the participants could justifiably be made which would result in needless loss of life.”<sup>75</sup>

The same month in NSC 355, soft “exploitation of Soviet and European Satellite Vulnerabilities” was expressed with the goal of detaching a major European satellite. A study by the OCB indicated that no single Soviet Bloc nation was in a position for detachment from the Soviet Union by peaceful means without a significant fight. The OCB working group that compiled the report believed that if a candidate had to be recommended, East Germany was the most likely choice but it would require a significant undertaking from all elements of national power (to include the military) to affect separation.<sup>76</sup> In March 1955 the legation in Budapest submitted a study indicating that Hungary was demonstrating some significant friction with the Soviet collective policy. The white paper indicated that between December 1954 and March 1955 the

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<sup>75</sup>Minutes from NSC 231, 6 January 1955, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 6, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>76</sup>Minutes from NSC 235, January 1955, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 6, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

Hungarian Communist Party, with Mátyás Rákosi as leader, was working to further consolidate and collectivize Hungarian heavy industry and agriculture and enact more repressive measures against the population. All of this was to increase overall production efficiency and create closer ties between the Rákosi government and the Soviet Politburo. The trouble was that the Hungarian population had been fairly effective at resisting collectivization up to that point, and was likely to resist the new measures in some fashion. The legation indicated that there was likely to be some type of minor upheaval before the summer of 1956.<sup>77</sup>

News of the coming changes in Hungary reenergized the OCB. The news followed the fall of Soviet leader Georgi Malenkov in February and caused C. D. Jackson to enthusiastically advise Allen Dulles, “We have discovered how to talk about more than hope—how to get action and yet avoid bloodshed.”<sup>78</sup> His opinion was shared by the other members of the OCB who credited events weakening the Soviet grip on Bloc nations to the efforts of the Psychological Warfare Campaign and Crusade for Freedom and RFE broadcasts. At the end of March 1955 a report, titled *Current Situation and Probable Developments in Hungary*, compiled jointly by the CIA, Department of State, and military intelligence branches further defined the situation in Hungary.

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<sup>77</sup>Telegram From the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, 17 March 1955, Department of State Central Files, 764.00/3-1755, <http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs2/1955-57v25/reference/frus.frus195557v25.i0010.pdf> (accessed 26 December 2012).

<sup>78</sup>Charles D. Jackson, Memorandum to Allen Dulles, 24 March 1955, C. D. Jackson Papers 1931-1967, Jackson Correspondence Series, Box 40, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

### The Problem

To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Hungarian Communist regime, to evaluate the regime's policies and probable courses of action, and to estimate the ability of the Communists to continue in control through mid-1956.

### Conclusions

Hungary has in recent years shown consistent evidence of political disharmony and economic dislocation, accompanied by popular unrest, and will probably continue to be the most troublesome of the East European Satellites. Much of the popular dissention arises from the Hungarians' deep-seated hostility toward Communism and toward the Slavs who have imposed Communism upon them. They do not have the antagonism toward the Germans displayed by the Czechs and Poles. However, the security forces [AVH] at the disposal of the government, plus the presence of Soviet forces, are sufficient to cope with any active resistance. In any event, we believe that the Kremlin will take all measures necessary to keep Hungary in the Bloc.<sup>79</sup>

These developments inspired C. D. Jackson to further advocate employment of the Top Secret operation launched in February 1955 titled "Operation Kremlin Kracks." The operation was intended to be a further attempt to break up the Soviet Bloc by destabilizing the relations between the Bloc nations and the Soviet Politburo. The operation was in essence a set of influence and support mechanisms that could be employed if a catalyst appeared that was deemed worthy of exploit. As with previous operations under the Psychological Warfare initiative, Operation Kremlin Kracks had a well developed concept but left the specific triggers, transitions, and tasks very vaguely outlined. Mr. Jackson and others on the OCB saw the events and opportunities in Hungary as the appropriate catalyst to initiate execution of Operation Kremlin Kracks but other members of the National Security Council did not. The Council decided to wait and

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<sup>79</sup>Study presented by the Department of State to the National Security Council, 17 March 1955, Department of State INR-NIE Files, Paragraph 7-15, <http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs2/1955-57v25/reference/frus.frus195557v25.i0010.pdf> (accessed 27 December 2012).

see how events would begin to unfold before committing to the risky course of action. They did increase the number of transmitters for “the Voice of America and other US—supported international broadcast facilities.”<sup>80</sup>

Later in the spring of 1955 some of the key leaders did begin to see diplomatic and information victories leading to the possibility for new situations in Eastern Europe. The Austrian Peace Treaty was signed in Vienna on May 15, 1955. The official title was the, Treaty for the Re-Establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria. The treaty assured Austria independence and freedom from occupation as a neutral state in Europe. The treaty specified that all occupiers would withdraw their forces. It represented the first time that Soviet troops would peacefully withdraw from a region of occupation. Foster Dulles said in a televised speech on May 17 that:

This is the first time a segment of the Red [sic Soviet] Army will have turned around and started to go back. This act is going to create desire—a mounting desire—on the part of those people [Eastern Europeans] to get the same freedom from that type of occupation that the Austrians have got. And furthermore, this joy at their freedom which was so manifest by the Austrian people, that is going to be contagious and it is going to spread, surely, through the neighboring countries. . . . Although the Eastern European peoples continue to feel that liberation is remote, they remain responsive to our interest in their independence, provided it is expressed persistently and in terms which make it clear that this is our basic objective.<sup>81</sup>

Operation Kremlin Kracks was readied as a draft plan for action should the opportunity present itself to begin peacefully assisting Bloc nations in separating from the

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<sup>80</sup>Minutes from NSC 246, 28 April 1955, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 6, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>81</sup>Foster Dulles televised speech, 17 May 1955, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 6, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

Soviet Union. The remainder of 1955 saw little change to the political situation in Hungary and little forward progress with the Psychological Warfare Campaign.

The opportunity to exploit Soviet weakness in a full out Psychological Warfare operation came less than a year later. In February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev, Georgi Malenkov's successor, made a secret speech to a relatively small number of his trusted members of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The speech was intended to draw together supporters for his political position to oppose elements in the Soviet government still dedicated to Stalin. Although the contents of the speech were held confidential, it was soon leaked to outsiders. While he was careful to protect the spirit of Lenin, Khrushchev attacked the crimes committed by Stalin and his closest associates. The speech presented the Psychological Warfare Campaign with opportunity to discredit the entire Soviet regime's legitimacy. Allen Dulles presented a plan to the National Security Council at the 282nd NSC that he intended to launch a radio campaign to exploit inconsistencies within Soviet leadership and prove that the Soviet right to occupy the Bloc countries was illegitimate.<sup>82</sup> In June 1956 RFE dedicated ten transmitters to the secret speech, broadcasting the original speech in full length and offering political commentary outlining the implications.<sup>83</sup>

On October 19, 1956, a more liberal government in Poland faced the Soviet occupation collaborators and succeeded in orchestrating a withdrawal of Soviet troops

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<sup>82</sup>Minutes from NSC 282, 26 April 1956, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 6, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>83</sup>Radio Free Europe Special Guidance, 6 April 1956, Dwight D. Eisenhower Official File, Records as President, White House Central Files, Radio Free Europe Series, Box 923, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

and reduction of Soviet influence. Poland was not completely free of Soviet influence and even, to some extent, control, but made great strides toward increasingly liberal leadership. As a result of past history Hungarians identified more closely with Poland than the populations of their neighboring Eastern European countries. Seeing Poland reduce Soviet influence was a great encouragement to Hungarians longing for increased freedom. RFE turned the broadcast focus to the events unfolding in Poland to exploit the situation for greater gains in loosening the Soviet control over the Eastern European Bloc. The RFE message specifically highlighted the successful effect that the radio campaign had in giving the Poles confidence to act and encouraged other Eastern European countries to attempt to gain similar freedom, to move toward liberalization.<sup>84</sup> Further guidance to RFE from the Crusade for Freedom (probably originating at the OCB) concerning Hungary stated, “Similarly to Poland, Hungarian people will bring changes, the first of which must be the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary.”<sup>85</sup> Some of the Hungarian partners at the Munich Headquarters for RFE got caught up in the spirit of the campaign and proposed messages encouraging the Hungarians to force the Russians out of Hungary and disrupt the Soviet regime’s mobility and communication capability within Hungary. The messages were ultimately approved and aired.<sup>86</sup> A few days later the AVH fired upon the protestors in Budapest and the revolution commenced.

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<sup>84</sup>Radio Free Europe Special Guidance, 20 October 1956, Dwight D. Eisenhower Official File, Records as President, White House Central Files, Radio Free Europe Series, Box 923, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>85</sup>Radio Free Europe and the Hungarian Uprisings, Jackson, October 1956, C. D. Papers 1931-1967, Free Europe Committee Through 1956 Correspondence Series, Box 44, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>86</sup>Borbándi, 93.

CHAPTER 4  
UNITED STATES REACTIONS TO THE  
HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

Policy Shortcomings Revealed

The Hungarian Revolution exposed the contradictions in U.S. policy that had existed since the formation of the Psychological Warfare Campaign during the Truman Administration and had grown during the Eisenhower Administration. When crowds gathered in front of the American Consulate in Budapest requesting support for the revolution, the diplomats had nothing to offer physically or verbally. The staff moved operations to inner rooms to reduce the risk of being struck by a stray round and attempted to keep the U.S. government apprised of the situation.<sup>87</sup> In Washington the National Security Council directed the Planning Board to conduct a thorough review of the American approach concluding that the U.S. should, “strive to aid and encourage forces in the satellites in moving toward U.S. objectives without provoking counter-action which would result in the suppression of ‘liberalizing’ influences.” The NSC also called for “Whatever capabilities we may possess to influence the new Hungarian leaders to adhere to and fulfill the commitments they have made to the Hungarian people which will advance the U.S. objective.”<sup>88</sup> Throughout the revolution, RFE continued to broadcast messages of support to the fighters on the streets of Budapest. The message

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<sup>87</sup>U.S. State Department Cables from Budapest, October 1956, Dwight D. Eisenhower Official File, Papers as President, Anne Whitman Files, Administration Series, Box 34, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>88</sup>Minutes from NSC 302, 1 November 1956, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, Box 8, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

continued to be that, support is on the way and the Free World applauds your brave efforts.<sup>89</sup> Even after the Russian armored columns entered Budapest RFE urged the Hungarian revolutionaries to continue resistance until the U.S. presidential election was complete saying that, “a practical manifestation of Western sympathy is expected at any hour.”<sup>90</sup> In typical fashion RFE left unspecified the form the “practical manifestation” might take.

It is difficult to determine how the Hungarians involved in the revolution interpreted the radio message. The only indications are their actions and the exit interviews that were conducted among the Hungarian refugees in Austria, who fled from Hungary in the year following the revolution’s failure. The report compiled from the first 1,000 exit interviews indicated that the primary motivation for the revolution was the success of the Polish uprising and the thorough reporting of events in Poland by RFE and the Voice of America broadcasts. According to the report, 73 percent of the refugees expected U.S. military aid and half of the refugees said that the broadcasts led them to believe that the U.S. was willing to enter the fight if necessary to liberate Hungary if the Hungarians indicated a sincere desire.<sup>91</sup> The primary concern with the information obtained from refugees is that they represent only one sector of the complete society. Additionally, in the disappointment following defeat it is likely that some of the refugees were looking for something to blame for the failure. But to some extent we can trust that

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<sup>89</sup>Gati, 87.

<sup>90</sup>Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA* (New York, Harper and Row, 1980), 130.

<sup>91</sup>Notes on Hungarian Refugees, March 1957, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 10, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

the message was taken at face value and certainly there were those that hoped the message meant U.S. military operations on the behalf of the revolutionaries.

### President Eisenhower's Reaction

Eisenhower's reaction to the Hungarian Revolution further illustrates the extent that the Psychological Warfare Campaign diverged from U.S. national policy. Eisenhower's initial response was to voice concern that the radio campaign had caused the revolution to his inner circle. In a phone conversation, on October 27, with C. D. Jackson the president said, "I'm concerned that we are not doing enough in Hungary. The argument could be made that we caused this crisis by raising their hopes for all these years only to turn our backs in their time of need."<sup>92</sup> The president repeated his sentiment to Foster Dulles on November 9, saying, "We have excited the Hungarians for all these years, and [are] now turning our backs on them when they are in a jam." Dulles replied, "We have always been against violent rebellion." Eisenhower answered, "I have told Lodge<sup>93</sup> so, but amazingly he was in ignorance of this fact."<sup>94</sup> Both of the conversation transcripts were classified as "Secret" until 2004. In public Eisenhower answered accusations of U.S. instigation by saying that American policy had always specified peaceful means as the only recourse for achieving freedom. In a phone conversation later

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<sup>92</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Phone Conversation with C. D. Jackson, 27 October 1956 (Declassified 2004), Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 28, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>93</sup>Henry Cabot Lodge was the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

<sup>94</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Phone Conversation with Foster Dulles, 9 November 1956 (Declassified 2004), Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 28, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

on the same day with Herbert Hoover,<sup>95</sup> Eisenhower wanted to dissuade public perception that the U.S. had set conditions for the Hungarian Revolution by showing a film that would lay to rest the, “two erroneous feelings in the UN. The feelings were that: (a) we more or less egged the Hungarians on into this mess, and then turned our backs on them; (b) that we get very indignant about our friends in Egypt, and don’t show any concern for others.”<sup>96</sup> This conversation was recorded as an open source record and indicated the president’s desire to publicly deny the possibility of a U.S. agency of national power setting conditions conducive of revolution in Hungary. On the same day Hoover passed the same message on to Congress during a White House meeting and added that the, “basic U.S. policy [was] that the satellites should be liberated not by force but by the unceasing pressure of man to be free.”<sup>97</sup> Hoover’s statement perfectly illustrates the ill defined concept responsible for the contradictions in national policy between the Psychological Warfare Campaign and the U.S. DoS.

Eisenhower demonstrated a distinct lack of leadership throughout the Hungarian Psychological Warfare Campaign and the Hungarian Revolution. The President allowed the elements of national power to diverge and contribute to armed conflict in Eastern Europe with no foundation for action should the influenced parties require physical

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<sup>95</sup>Herbert C. Hoover Jr. was the son of President Herbert Hoover and held the office of Under Secretary of State from 1954 to 1957.

<sup>96</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Phone Conversation with Herbert Hoover, 9 November 1956, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers as President, International Series, Box 28, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>97</sup>White House Meeting with Congressional Leaders, 9 November 1956 (Declassified 2004), Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 28, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

support. He did not provide clear understandable verbal or written guidance to the National Security Council, the Department of State, the CIA, or the Policy Coordination Board. His guidance was vague and conceptual and very much open to individual interpretation. Each U.S. entity involved believed that they were energetically executing the president's guidance but they were all going in diverging directions. Once the revolution began, in spite of feeling at least partially responsible for causing the event, Eisenhower took little action. He authorized monetary support for Poland and Hungary (if they succeeded in gaining freedom from the Soviet Union), communicated with the UN, and offered statements of solidarity but did not become directly involved with any of the U.S. operations being conducted in response to the revolution.<sup>98</sup> Instead, the president's vague guidance was seized by the lower level executing officials in each organization who surged ahead with the work as they understood it.

The tragic failure of the Hungarian Revolution ended the autonomy of the Psychological Warfare Campaign in pursuing the goal of Soviet Bloc liberation. The working level officials in each organization realized that the Cold War had a long term nature and quick painless victories were not a likely outcome. Broadcasting became far more conservative, focusing on news, music, and cultural programs and decreasing the amount of propaganda and political commentary.<sup>99</sup> The event seemed to prove the State Department's position of caution (viewed by the proponents of Psychological Warfare as disinterest or inaction) to be the appropriate method of maintaining contact for the long

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<sup>98</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Honorable Albert Morano, 30 October 1956, Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box 687, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>99</sup>Borbándi, 149.

term. Unfortunately these lessons came at great cost to the Hungarians who were subjected to years of severe communism following the Russian intervention in November 1956.

### Actions of the United Nations

Newly instated Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy appealed to the UN for assistance as soon as he received reports of massive Russian troop movements beginning in eastern Hungary. The UN was heavily engaged brokering a ceasefire in the Suez Canal zone in Egypt and placed the Hungarian Revolution at a lower priority. The first tier UN staffers focused on peace in Egypt and had trouble even finding time to discuss developments in Budapest, let alone develop a course of action aimed at peaceful resolution between the opposing parties. Nagy received no reply to his request. On November 4, as Russian tanks began their assault into Budapest, the UN got a chance to address the situation in Hungary. The UN had convened to discuss operations in Egypt but the Soviet delegation had opted to veto the council which provided the gathered parties with the opportunity to discuss events in Hungary.<sup>100</sup> In effect it was too late. The Russian troops with overwhelming combat power would quickly crush the remaining pockets of resistance giving little time to enter diplomatic discussion of the situation. The UN General Assembly did pass a resolution precisely addressing Nagy's requests:

1. Convinced that recent events in Hungary manifest clearly the desire of the Hungarian people to exercise and enjoy fully their fundamental rights, freedom, and independence.

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<sup>100</sup>Béla K. Király, *Ten Truths of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956* (Budapest Hungary: Hungarian Ministry of Defense, 2002), 159.

2. Condemning the use of Soviet force to suppress the efforts of the Hungarian people to reassert their rights.
3. Noting moreover the declaration on October 30, 1956 by the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of its avowed policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states.
4. Noting the communication of November 1, 1956 (A/3251) from the Government of Hungary to the Secretary-General regarding the demands made by the Government to the Government of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces.
5. Noting further the communication of November 2, 1956 (S/3726) from the Government of Hungary to the Secretary-General asking the Security Council to instruct the Government of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Government of Hungary to start the negotiations immediately on withdrawal of Soviet forces.
6. Noting that the intervention of the Soviet forces in Hungary has resulted in grave loss of life and widespread bloodshed among the Hungarian people.

Taking note of the radio appeal of Prime Minister Nagy of November 4, 1956, the General Assembly resolved that:

1. The Soviet Union should desist from further attacks and intervention in Hungary's domestic affairs.
2. The Soviet Union should not send more troops but rather start immediate withdrawal of all her troops from Hungary.

That the General Assembly:

1. Affirmed Hungary's right to be free and independent.
2. Requested the Secretary-General to investigate the situation directly or by his representatives urgently and report to the General Assembly and suggest how to end the intervention in Hungary in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the UN.
3. Called upon by the Hungarian and Soviet Governments to allow observers to enter and freely observe the situation and to report on the results of their observations to the Secretary-General.
4. Called upon by the members of the UN to help the Secretary-General to fulfill these duties.

5. Requested the Secretary-General to arrange humanitarian aid for the Hungarian people.
6. Requested the member of the UN and the international organizations to help the effort of giving humanitarian aid to the Hungarians.<sup>101</sup>

The resolution addressed the immediate need to end the Soviet assault on Budapest and recognize the legitimacy of the Hungarian's request for independence. The Soviet Union completely disregarded the UN resolution continuing its military operations against the revolutionaries as if the resolution did not exist. The UN General Assembly addressed the Hungarian situation again on November 9 and declared, "the foreign intervention in Hungary is an intolerable attempt to deny the Hungarian people the exercise and enjoyment of their rightful freedom and independence, and in particular to deny the Hungarian people the right to a government freely elected and representing their national aspirations."<sup>102</sup> The statement additionally said that the Soviet action was in direct violation of the UN Charter and the Peace Treaty between Hungary and the Allied and Associated Powers drafted in 1945, at the conclusion of World War Two. The UN insisted that all Soviet forces withdraw from Hungary.<sup>103</sup> The UN Committee called for the Soviet Union to remove its forces without delay, to hold general elections in Hungary

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<sup>101</sup>United Nations, *UN Resolution on Hungary*, General Assembly, 564th Plenary Meeting (New York: United Nations, 4 November 1956).

<sup>102</sup>United Nations, *UN Special Committee Report*, 571st Plenary Meeting, General Assembly (New York: United Nations, 9 November 1956).

<sup>103</sup>Király, 159.

as soon as law and order were restored, and urged the Secretary-General to continue his investigations.<sup>104</sup>

When the Soviet Union again completely disregarded the UN resolution, the UN General Assembly established the Five Nation Special Committee on Hungary in January 1957.<sup>105</sup> The Committee (later known as the Committee of Five) was populated by officials from Australia, Ceylon, Denmark, Tunisia, and Uruguay.<sup>106</sup> The Committee conducted interviews, in New York City, with 111 Hungarian refugees who had been active participants in the Hungarian Revolution and made a full report to the General Assembly in June 1957.<sup>107</sup> The problem was that the Soviets were ready to act and indeed already were acting to resolve the Hungarian Revolution in a way that would be in the Soviet Union's best interest. The Soviets were in position to act quickly, the West was not. By disregarding the UN resolution the Soviets regained their position of strength, applying military combat power to brutally crush the freedom fighters in Hungary and make a vivid demonstration to the entire Soviet Bloc what could be expected if an Eastern Bloc nation attempted to gain freedom through revolution. The UN conducted a thorough investigation and wrote a very comprehensive report but was unable to influence the outcome of events inside the Hungarian borders.

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<sup>104</sup>United Nations, *UN Special Committee Report*.

<sup>105</sup>United Nations, *UN Special Committee Report*, General Assembly, Eleventh Session Supplement (New York: United Nations, 1957), 4.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>107</sup>United Nations, *Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary*, General Assembly, Eleventh Session (New York: United Nations, June 1957).

## Refugees

In the last weeks of October 1956 the first few refugees crossed the border from Hungary into Austria. These frontrunners were members of the hated AVH Hungarian communist secret police who were fleeing for their lives from the freedom fighters. Interestingly, these former AVH members preferred to seek asylum in the West rather than cast themselves upon the security of Russia. Their numbers were few and would pale in comparison to the outflow of refugees following the Russian armored assault into Budapest on November 4. On October 26, Austria announced that every Hungarian refugee would be granted political asylum.<sup>108</sup> Until November 4, few Hungarians crossed the border. There was an expectation in the early days of the revolution that the freedom fighters would prevail and Hungary would gain independence from Russia. Following the return of the Russian Army and the brutal attack into Budapest the refugee exodus began in earnest. Because of occupied Austria's own recent break from the Soviet regime, Hungarian troops were not allowed within five kilometers of the Austrian border until 1957. During the window between November 4, 1956, and January 1, 1957, the newly reinstated Kádár regime was unable to close the border against fleeing Hungarians and tens of thousands made their way into Austria.<sup>109</sup> The situation in Austria quickly became almost unmanageable as the refugees flooded in.

Seven Western nations joined the effort to alleviate refugee suffering and grant asylum. Of those nations we can be sure that some leaders felt in some part responsible

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<sup>108</sup>Paul Memes, "The Welcome Refugees: Why the West Opened its Arms to Fleeing Hungarians in 1956," *Central Europe Review* (October 1999), [www.ce-review.org/99/nemes19.html](http://www.ce-review.org/99/nemes19.html) (accessed 18 November 2012).

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

for the fighting that broke out in Budapest. There were sentiments of having raised the hopes of the Hungarian people too high and feelings of helplessness to do anything to aid the desperate struggle for freedom occurring within the Hungarian borders.<sup>110</sup> If the U.S. communicated inappropriately and responded to the revolution weakly, it excelled at aiding Hungarian refugees.

The U.S. became the lead nation outside Austria to establish, fund, and man a refugee processing and transportation system receiving, transporting, and settling 80,000 Hungarians by January 1958.<sup>111</sup> For the U.S. it was a whole of government approach. The State Department provided funding channels and processing stations for receiving and tracking refugees in Austria. The CIA conducted exit interviews and built packets on the Hungarians prior to transport and followed up where necessary once they were settled in the U.S.<sup>112</sup> The U.S. Air Force provided airlift from Austria to America and the State Department worked with Immigration Services to expedite legal status and settlement. The Red Cross and other governmental and non-governmental agencies pitched in, as well as the support of private American citizens.<sup>113</sup> While many Western nations opened their doors to the Hungarians most of the refugees desired to enter the U.S.

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<sup>110</sup>Eisenhower, Phone Conversation with C. D. Jackson.

<sup>111</sup>Memes, 2.

<sup>112</sup>Guy E. Coriden, *Report on Hungarian Refugees*, CIA Historical Review Program, approved for release 2 July 1996, <https://www.cia.gov/library> (accessed 18 November 2012), 2.

<sup>113</sup>U.S. Department of State, *System for Processing and Care of Hungarian Refugees*, January 1957, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers as President, International Series, Box 28, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

There were a number of factors driving this distinction. The Hungarians indicated resentment toward Britain for its lead role in the Suez crisis that drew precious attention away from events unfolding in Budapest. Hungarians still held hard feelings toward France for playing a lead role in the drafting of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920.<sup>114</sup> While Hungarians did settle in Britain (22,000) and France (13,000) they preferred to cross the Atlantic and settle in the U.S. (80,000) and Canada (34,000).<sup>115</sup> In the end nearly 200,000 Hungarians left in the first year following the revolution, with 180,000 exiting through Austria and 20,000 through Yugoslavia (mainly after the Kádár regime closed the border between Austria and Hungary).<sup>116</sup> The number of refugees is significant when you consider that the total Hungarian population in 1956 was 10 million where 200,000 represented 2 percent of the total population. Perhaps if the revolution participants who opted to remain behind knew what was coming from the Kádár regime in terms of arrests and executions, there would have been many more who would have left when they had the opportunity. As it stood, many remained behind tied to the land and hoping that the large number of revolution participants would enable them to receive governmental pardon.<sup>117</sup> They couldn't have been further from the truth.

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<sup>114</sup>A sub treaty to the Paris Peace Conference, the Treaty of Trianon was designed to punish the Hungarians for the part they played in the First World War and limit their ability to field an army or be a contending European power in the future. The treaty was drafted by France and ratified by all victors except for the United States which refused to sign. The treaty ceded two thirds of Hungarian lands to Hungary's neighbors (Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Croatia), isolating large portions of the Hungarian population.

<sup>115</sup>Memes, 2.

<sup>116</sup>Kovačević, 111.

<sup>117</sup>Memes, 2.

### Effects on the Hungarian Population

In the days following the Soviet armored attack into Budapest the government of Imre Nagy fled from the parliament building. Nagy and some of his close conspirators sought asylum in the Yugoslavian embassy in Budapest. On December 4, 1956, Nagy and his partners were offered safe passage to Yugoslavia. The bus they were riding in was stopped by Russian tanks a few blocks from the embassy and the group was kidnapped and transported into Romania.<sup>118</sup> On June 16, 1958, after being tried by the Soviets for treason Imre Nagy was executed.<sup>119</sup>

The Kádár regime quickly regained control of Budapest and Hungary, becoming the most brutal government that Hungary experienced in the 20th Century, and incidentally the longest lasting with János Kádár remaining in power until 1988.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Király, 166.

<sup>119</sup>Gati, 206.

<sup>120</sup>Király, 166.

CHAPTER 5  
WHAT THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION  
MEANS FOR US

Deductive Conclusion

The transition into the Cold War at the conclusion of World War Two coupled with the advent of the nuclear age cast the world's most powerful nations into a new, complex and ambiguous environment. In the West, governments and populations began to grapple with the notion of enduring global influence and the need to find balance to preclude relapse into global conflict. The Soviets used this period of consolidation and experimentation to expand, assert their power and influence, and gain credibility through strong-arm tactics. The West tended to balance the Soviet strong-arm approach to diplomacy by engaging in communication campaigns and backing up their policy by positioning troops on the frontiers of communism in Europe and Asia. The U.S. political outlook was strongly positioned against direct armed conflict with the Soviets to prevent re-emergence of total war under nuclear conditions. The fear of combat with the Soviet Union caused the U.S. State Department to focus on diplomacy and soft power to influence peace and stability along the border zone between the Soviet Union and the Free World in the European and Asian Soviet Bloc.

The CIA by its very organization was designed to act rather than talk. In spite of the U.S. National Security Council's desire to rely on the DoS to communicate the U.S. position clearly, accurately, and peacefully, the CIA desired to employ a more aggressive campaign to facilitate an earlier end to Soviet influence. The CIA, working through the Psychological Warfare Campaign, believed that influencing local populations to act

against their Soviet oppressors would set conditions for covert and paramilitary operations to liberate nations from the Soviet Bloc. Key leaders from both camps presented their cases to President Eisenhower through private communications and meetings. Rather than calling proponents from both camps into one conference and forcing them to agree on one single national strategy, Eisenhower encouraged both sides to pursue their desired course of action. The president did this by encouraging their individual efforts and offering vague guidance which was open to interpretation.

When considering the expertise with which Eisenhower led the diverse Allied Coalition to victory in World War Two it is hard to imagine him taking such a hands-off approach to leading his administration only a few years later. It may be that as a military leader and being very comfortable with the Army planning processes, Eisenhower believed that the State Department and the CIA employed similar planning processes. Such a belief would explain his confidence in the organizations to discover weaknesses in the plan as well as working with each other to complete and strengthen the plan. But the State Department, the CIA, and the other boards that were developed to administer the Psychological Warfare Campaign were not staffed, trained, or even directed to conduct such detailed planning. Perhaps Eisenhower believed that engaging enough intelligent and educated persons would enable all of the contingencies to be explored and accounted for. The fact that he capitalized the words, “SCIENTIFIC” and, “NO SECOND CHANCE” in his initial definition of Psychological Warfare supports this possibility.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Winning the Cold Peace*, 11 February 1953, DDE Official File, Psychological Warfare Series, Box 570, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

Eisenhower may have had many reasons for his apparent lack of decisive leadership directed toward the manifestation of national strategy in the Soviet Bloc. Do not forget that as a successful coalition commander during World War Two, General Eisenhower frequently relied on commanders with differing opinions to achieve the common goal of defeating the Axis. His leadership was, by necessity, very collaborative and he was skilled at including all coalition members and providing buy-in and purpose to divergent elements. President Eisenhower relied on the expertise of his subordinates to achieve a common goal in spite of differences in strategic opinion. He did not fully understand the dangers of communicating a message that was fully divorced from foundational national policy. Whatever the reason may be, the fact remains that Eisenhower did not reconcile differences between two key elements of national power or clearly communicate his guidance on national strategy toward the Soviet Bloc. As a result the U.S. broadcast a false message to millions of people in multiple nations.

The Hungarian population received the message; the younger elements of society, acting with hope, dreams, romanticism, and even trust, boldly demonstrated against their Soviet oppressors and demanded increased freedom and human rights. When shots tore into the crowd gathered in front of the National Radio building in Budapest on October 23, 1956, the young people did not waver or retreat but armed themselves and continued to demand freedom. Those young people believed their cause to be just and worthy of risk and sacrifice. They also believed that the West and the U.S. in particular would come to their aid and physically support their cause for freedom. It was not a stretch to believe that the U.S. would send some type of military peacekeeping force, in light of the RFE broadcasts which had recently been more open in talking of liberation, solidarity, and

support. But no help came. In spite of young freedom fighters gathering before the U.S. consulate and holding vigil crying out for assistance, the U.S. DoS did nothing more than keep their U.S. chain of command apprised of the situation and offered no assistance or advice in keeping with their policy. The Hungarians listening to the radio broadcasts could not possibly know that the messages they received daily were not a true representation of U.S. position and national policy, but rather a psychological propaganda campaign little more than empty words designed to inspire hope and little else.

The Hungarian Revolution caused several responses from the involved parties. The Soviets demonstrated that they were unwilling to lose influence in the Soviet Bloc and could not afford to allow Bloc countries to secure freedom through rebellion. The effect was a clear definition of Soviet power and the unwillingness of Western countries to directly confront the Soviets. This was especially clear as the newly instated Hungarian communist regime under János Kádár violated Western recognized human rights and employed terror arrests and executions against the Hungarian revolutionaries. In some instances young teens were sentenced with the death penalty to be executed on their 18th birthdays.<sup>122</sup> The UN revealed numerous violations of human rights and even genocide in its investigation but remained unwilling to disturb the “Russian Bear” and took no meaningful action to stop Soviet communist reprisal.

The Hungarian Revolution served as a wake-up call for those in the U.S. government who believed in liberation through communication. The Psychological Warfare Campaign made a few urges for continued action in Hungary in early December 1956. But by the beginning of 1957 altered the content to reflect world news and cultural

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 166.

programs and reduce political commentary and propaganda.<sup>123</sup> The U.S. DoS worked overtime to accommodate the assimilation of refugees, demonstrating that U.S. foreign affairs were capable and ready to execute operations within the purview of national policy.

The Hungarian Revolution served as a warning to other Soviet Bloc countries desiring freedom from the Soviet Union. Any belief that if a population demonstrated resistance against Soviet control and desire for liberation they would receive support from the West evaporated. No other Soviet Bloc countries made bids for freedom until the Soviet Union's decline in 1988 to 1991.

The Psychological Warfare Campaign could be considered a reckless endeavor that was likely to result in hopes and expectations elevated above what could be reasonably accomplished. Overly permissive leadership and nebulous guidance by Eisenhower allowed the campaign to drift further from the realities of Soviet-U.S. relations and promoted irresponsible actions by Soviet controlled populations. The radio campaign did not instigate or cause the revolution in Hungary but it did fill the young people demonstrating against the Soviet regime with the bold belief that the West was physically behind them and would respond with decisive action on their behalf should the need arise. In this capacity the Psychological Warfare Campaign was likely a causing factor that helped tip the balance toward armed resistance to the superior Soviet regime. Eisenhower was correct in his private assessment of partial U.S. responsibility for the revolution by raising hopes and expectations above supportable levels.<sup>124</sup> The Hungarians

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<sup>123</sup>Borbándi, 214.

<sup>124</sup>Eisenhower, Phone Conversation with C. D. Jackson. (9 November 1956).

who voiced their complaint that the U.S. was not there when the revolutionaries needed assistance improperly assigned blame to the U.S. DoS for failure to execute U.S. foreign policy and failing to confront the Soviets by lending armed support to secure Hungary's freedom.

The U.S. DoS did execute U.S. foreign policy, which called for diplomacy, investigation, and cooperation within the framework of the UN and not unilateral armed response to the disturbance in the Soviet Bloc (covert or conventional). The blame should have been assigned to the radio programs that boosted hopes and dreams to the level that crowds of protestors took up arms against the Soviet regime. It was the Psychological Warfare Campaign and not the diplomatic reactions to the revolution that was out of line with U.S. national policy and strategy for the containment of the Soviet Union. The radio broadcasts resonated with the Soviet Bloc populations to the point that even after the failed revolution Hungarians tended to believe that the message had been correct while the actual response was at fault, when the opposite was in fact true.

### Lessons in Leadership

Aside from the subject of U.S. involvement in the Hungarian Revolution being interesting there may be some application for understanding in today's environment. There are dangers when attempting to draw lessons from history but in a general sense some deduction will enable us to apply critical thinking when faced with specific problem sets in today's international environment. The key here is to recognize that, whatever foreign policy or national strategy will be employed in a given situation, all elements of national power clearly understand the intent as well as the ends, ways, and means intended to accomplish it. Two elements of national power understanding the

intended end state but opposed to one another over the ways and means can cause an unintended condition, whereby the U.S. national end state is impossible to achieve and may even strengthen the opposing nation's position.

In a democratically governed nation the risk of opposition between elements of national power is much higher than in a one party totalitarian type government. Eisenhower was likely attempting to employ permissive coalition building leadership that was so successful for him as the Supreme Allied Commander during World War Two. The difficulty was that the Cold War was far more complex than World War Two and presented many ambiguities to the planners and executors of national policy and strategy. Eisenhower's permissive leadership style added to the ambiguity and created opportunities for the different elements of national power to surge ahead with their individual projects, completely divergent from a unified national strategy but all believing that they had the president's full endorsement. As the cards began to fall in Eastern Europe (East Germany, Austria, Poland, Albania, and Hungary) it was easy to allow bias to skew the events and present them as a progression of successes which, when carried out into the future, would lead to total liberation of the Soviet Bloc, reduction of Soviet influence, and an end to the Cold War. Through the lens of history such an optimistic view of the Psychological Warfare Campaign seems ludicrous but at the time, none of the officials who could "retard the throttle" and provide listeners with more realistic expectations, foresaw the dangers of the direction they were heading.

But the failure was not optimism; the failure was lack of continuity at the national level. If the National Security Council had served as a venue where differences were reconciled and the national level leaders were forced to communicate, cooperate, and

collaborate to accomplish a common course of action, the disaster in Hungary would have been averted. If those leaders received clear and concise guidance from the president, reducing rather than contributing to the ambiguity and had been forced to come together in the same room to put aside their differences of opinion for the benefit of the nation, the disaster in Hungary would have been averted.

The lesson is this; Leaders must provide adequate guidance, assert themselves to create team cohesion, and guide coalitions to achieve common goals along courses of action that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable. To do this leaders must be educated enough on the subject to achieve understanding. It is vital for leaders to discern when a team is diverging or presenting a course of action that is not feasible, unacceptable, or unsuitable. If a leader relies on intelligent, capable, appointed subordinates to provide him with input to help frame the problem and gain understanding, he must recognize when those appointed subordinates are in disagreement or on diverging paths. The leader is responsible for the project's outcome and allowing subordinates to continue in divergent directions unchecked will quickly put the outcome in jeopardy. Leaders not wanting to offend their capable subordinates, not feeling sure of their understanding of the problem, focused elsewhere, or under any number of other stressors are still responsible for the outcome of the project and must demonstrate clear leadership.

In this case, the State Department listened to Eisenhower's guidance and rooted its policy in deliberate action in support of U.S. allies and in the interest of human rights, but not in direct opposition to Soviet governance in countries officially under Soviet control. The State Department's leaders believed that limiting the risk of military action and reducing instances of Soviet provocation were Eisenhower's guidance.

The CIA and the Psychological Warfare Campaign executed a campaign of greater risk attempting to break Soviet control within the Soviet Bloc. The campaign relied on words (considered by many to be relatively harmless) but at its root urged Soviet Bloc populations to resist their Soviet leadership in many diverse ways. The program did seek to establish low intensity conflict in direct opposition to Soviet governance and risked open conflict that would lead to military action. The national leaders of these agencies also believed that they were executing Eisenhower's guidance.

Put side by side in their historical context it seems clear that one of the courses of action was in opposition to the president's guidance. But was it? Because many of the conversations took place in private conference with the president it was very difficult to clearly see the dichotomy. But the fact remained the Psychological Warfare Campaign succeeded in creating direct conflict within Hungary and the situation became highly asymmetric as the Hungarian people faced the might of Soviet Armor divisions in the streets of Budapest. It was only at this point that the danger of words was so truly felt and the West's unwillingness to insert military forces into the Soviet Bloc became so painfully obvious. Leaders must consider the direction of their subordinate organizations and the possible outcomes that could occur, educate themselves on the facts, gain situational understanding, and ensure that subordinates clearly receive their guidance to facilitate to the best of their ability a successful outcome to a complex problem.

## APPENDIX A

### THE SIXTEEN POINTS

1. We demand the immediate evacuation of all Soviet troops, in conformity with the provisions of the Peace Treaty.

2. We demand the election by secret ballot of all Party members from top to bottom, and of new officers for the lower, middle, and upper echelons of the Hungarian Workers Party. These officers shall convene a Party Congress as early as possible in order to elect a Central Committee.

3. A new Government must be constituted under the direction of Imre Nagy; all criminal leaders of the Stalin-Rákosi era must be immediately dismissed.

4. We demand public enquiry into the criminal activities of Mihály Farkas and his accomplices. Mátyás Rákosi, who is the person most responsible for crimes of the recent past as well as for our country's ruin, must be returned to Hungary for trial before a people's tribunal.

5. We demand that general elections, by universal secret ballot, are held throughout the country to elect a new National Assembly, with all political parties participating. We demand that the right of workers to strike be recognized.

6. We demand revision and readjustment of Hungarian-Soviet and Hungarian-Yugoslav relations in the fields of politics, economics and cultural affairs, on a basis of complete political and economic equality, and of noninterference in the internal affairs of one by the other.

7. We demand the complete reorganization of Hungary's economic life under the direction of specialists. The entire economic system, based on a system of planning, must

be re-examined in the light of conditions in Hungary and in the vital interest of the Hungarian people.

8. Our foreign trade agreements and the exact total of reparations that can never be paid must be made public. We demand to be precisely informed of the uranium deposits in our country, on their exploitation and on the concessions to the Russians in this area. We demand that Hungary have the right to sell her uranium freely at world market prices to obtain hard currency.

9. We demand complete revision of the norms operating in industry and an immediate and radical adjustment of salaries in accordance with the just requirements of workers and intellectuals. We demand a minimum living wage for workers.

10. We demand that the system of distribution be organized on a new basis and that agricultural products be utilized in rational manner. We demand equality of treatment for individual farms commensurate with the collectives.

11. We demand reviews by independent tribunals of all political and economic trials as well as the release and rehabilitation of the innocent. We demand the immediate repatriation of prisoners of war (World War Two) and of civilian deportees to the Soviet Union, including prisoners sentenced outside Hungary.

12. We demand complete recognition of freedom of opinion and of expression, of freedom of the press and of radio, as well as the creation of a daily newspaper for the MEFESZ Organization.

13. We demand that the statue of Stalin, symbol of Stalinist tyranny and political oppression, be removed as quickly as possible and be replaced by a monument in memory of the martyred freedom fighters of 1848 and 1849.

14. We demand the replacement of emblems foreign to the Hungarian people by the old Hungarian arms of Kossuth. We demand new uniforms for the Army which conform to our national traditions. We demand that March 15th be declared a national holiday and that the October 6th be a day of national mourning on which schools will be closed.

15. The students of the Technological University of Budapest declare unambiguously their solidarity with the workers and students of Warsaw and Poland in their movement towards national independence.

16. The students of the Technological University of Budapest will organize as rapidly as possible local branches of MEFESZ, and they have decided to convene at Budapest, on Saturday, October 27, a Youth Parliament at which all the nation's youth shall be represented by their delegates.

## APPENDIX B

### CHRONOLOGY OF RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

#### **May 1949**

The National Committee for a Free Europe, Inc., later renamed the Free Europe Committee, Inc. (FEC), is incorporated in the State of New York. Ambassador Joseph Grew is the first Chairman and DeWitt Poole is the first President.

#### **June 1949**

The FEC establishes a Committee on Press and Broadcasting, chaired by FEC Director Fred Altschul and including Edward R. Murrow and other prominent journalists. Robert Lang is appointed the first Director of Radio Free Europe (RFE).

#### **December 1949**

Lang visits European countries, where he is impressed by the home-service approach of the Radio in the American Sector, Berlin (RIAS) but fails to obtain time for RFE on existing short wave transmission networks.

#### **July 1950**

The Institute for the Study of the USSR is established in Munich.

#### **July 4, 1950**

RFE conducts its first experimental broadcast in Czech. One year later, RFE is broadcasting in five languages to Eastern European countries behind the Iron Curtain.

#### **October 1950**

The Crusade for Freedom, Inc., is incorporated in the State of New York as an outreach and fund-raising arm of the FEC.

#### **January 1951**

The American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of the USSR, later renamed the American Committee for Liberation (AMCOMLIB) is incorporated in the State of New York. Eugene Lyons is the first president.

#### **May 1951**

RFE begins broadcasting from Munich

RARET, Inc. is established as a Portuguese corporation to own and operate RFE transmitters.

#### **December 1951**

RFE begins short wave transmissions from Portugal.

**March 1953**

Radio Liberation (later renamed Radio Liberty) begins broadcasting in Russian (and in ten other languages by the end of 1954).

**May 1955**

RL begins transmitting from Taiwan to the eastern USSR.

**March 1959**

RL begins short wave transmissions from Spain.

**September 1959**

RFE establishes a West European Advisory Committee to provide European perspectives and facilitate ties with West European governments.

**February 1961**

RFE's headquarters are transferred from New York to Munich.

**January 1971**

Senator Case officially recognizes CIA sponsorship of RFE and RL and proposes their continuation by open Congressional appropriation.

**July 1971**

A majority of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led by Chairman William J. Fulbright, oppose the Nixon Administration's proposal to overtly fund and oversee RFE and RL through a public-private corporation. Overt public funding is provided on an interim basis.

**March 1972**

Congressional Research Service issues reports generally laudatory of RFE and RL.

**March 1973**

The Milton Eisenhower Commission, appointed by the President, recommends continuation of RFE and RL, with oversight by a new federal body, the Board for International Broadcasting.

**October 1973**

Congress enacts the Board for International Broadcasting Act of 1973.

**April 1974**

The Board for International Broadcasting begins operations.

**October 1976**

The RFE and RL corporations are merged into RFE/RL, Inc.

**February 1981**

A bomb causes significant damage to the RFE/RL building in Munich. Communist secret police archives opened after 1989 indicated that the bombing was ordered by Romanian leader Ceausescu and organized by the terrorist Carlos the Jackal.

**1982**

Legislation advocated since 1977 by Senator Pell and the BIB is enacted that abolishes the private Board of Directors of RFE/RL, Inc., and conveys management as well as oversight responsibilities to the BIB.

**June 1989**

Following the election of a non-Communist government in Poland, RFE/RL and BIB officials visit Solidarity leader Walesa in Gdansk.

**September 1989**

RFE/RL opens its first East European Bureau in Budapest. Bureaus are soon established in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania.

**1992**

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russian Federation President Yeltsin invites RFE/RL to establish a bureau in Moscow. Bureaus are soon established in most succession states of the USSR.

**1993**

RFE/RL ends broadcasts to Hungary.

**1993**

The Clinton Administration proposes merging RFE/RL into VOA. Opposition to this plan from Senator Joseph Biden and other Members of Congress results in continuation of a downsized RFE/RL without a research capability and with transmitter stations federalized under VOA.

**1993**

Facing massive staff reductions, RFE/RL explores the offer of Czech President Havel and Prime Minister Klaus to relocate to Prague.

**1994**

RFE/RL begins broadcasting to countries of the former Yugoslavia.

**July 1995**

RFE/RL moves its headquarters from Munich to the former Czechoslovak Parliament building in Prague.

**1997**

RFE/RL ends broadcasts to Poland.

**1998**

RFE/RL begins broadcasting to Iran and Iraq, as mandated by the Congress, which passes legislation confirming RFE/RL's continuing mission.

**2002**

RFE/RL resumes broadcasting to Afghanistan, terminated as mandated by the Congress ten years earlier after the Soviet withdrawal.

**2002**

RFE/RL begins broadcasting to the North Caucasus.

**2003**

Iraqi Dictator Saddam Hussein orders his agents to attack RFE/RL headquarters, as revealed by the Czech Intelligence Service in 2009. A stockpile of smuggled weapons was in the Iraqi Embassy after the fall of Hussein's regime.

**2004**

RFE/RL ends broadcasts to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Croatia, and Bulgaria.

**2008**

RFE/RL ends broadcasts to Romania.

**February 2009**

RFE/RL relocates to a modern broadcasting center in Prague.

**October 2009**

RFE/RL begins broadcasting a Russian language program to South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

**January 2010**

RFE/RL launches Radio Mashaal and begins broadcasting in Pashto to the Pashtun border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Chronology of RFE/RL taken from the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty historical web archive, <http://www.rferl.org/info/history/133.html>.

## APPENDIX C

### EXCERPT FROM SPEECH BY BORIS YELTSIN TO THE HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT NOVEMBER 11, 1992

I feel it a privilege to speak to the Hungarian Parliament in this hall of exceptional beauty. . . . This is the first time in the history of our countries that a president of a free and democratic Russia can address the parliament of a free and democratic Hungary. Let me convey the best wishes of the Russian people and express their sincere effort to live in perfect harmony and friendship with the Hungarian people. The people in Russia have always been sincerely and deeply interested in the life and culture of your country. There were active political and economic relations between Russia and Hungary even in the earliest period of their statehood. The most outstanding event in the history of Russian-Hungarian relations was the treaty of friendship concluded by the Tsar Peter the Great and Ferenc Rákóczi II in 1707. Unfortunately, as often happens in history, glorious periods were followed by gloomier ones. We are aware that the people of Hungary cherish with respect the memory of the revolution of 1848-1849, and remember the sad role of Tsarist Russia in changing its fate. Hardly more than one hundred years later something similar happened. I am speaking of the tragedy of 1956, which will remain an indelible shame of the Soviet regime for good. The trace of the caterpillar-belts of the tanks in the streets of Budapest, in this beautiful city I have now had the opportunity to see, will always be there in the souls of those who cherish the ideals of freedom and democracy. I am convinced that these people form the majority today in both Hungary and Russia.

It is painful to acknowledge that Russian soldiers were involved in the tragic events on the orders of the then leaders in the Kremlin. All this happened ten years after they had liberated Hungary from the brown plague of Nazism, at the price of great sacrifices. One type of ideology and violence was replaced with another. I find it symbolic that the Hungarian people were the first to rise against oppression. The national uprising was not a futile attempt. It revealed that not only individuals but whole nations realized that without getting rid of communist dictatorship they had no hope for a future.

I proclaim with full responsibility before this responsible body that communism in Russia is over once and for all, and that there is no returning to it.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Béla K. Király, *Ten Truths of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956* (Budapest Hungary: Hungarian Ministry of Defense, 2002), 163.

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