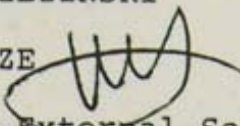


MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

October 4, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
FROM: PAUL B. HENZE 
SUBJECT: Cuts in BBC External Service

At the Radio Working Group Meeting I held last Friday, VOA raised the problem of cuts in BBC's external services which Mrs. Thatcher's economy campaign is calling for. There was unanimous agreement that these would have an effect, no matter which options for cuts might be selected, out of all proportion to the money saved and would be damaging to the entire Free World information effort. Ambassador Brewster has already weighed in with the British on this issue. BBC has asked for VOA help and Brewster has recommended additional U.S. government representation beyond those he has already made to the FCO.

VOA/ICA suggest a Presidential appeal to Mrs. Thatcher. State endorses this idea, though George Vest has recommended a concurrent appeal by Vance to the Foreign Secretary as well--or an appeal at this level in any event if the President does not see fit to communicate with Mrs. Thatcher on this matter. Bill Griffith has also reviewed this question, about which he feels strongly, and drafted the proposed message from the President to the Prime Minister. An alternative would be the oral talking points proposed by Charlie Bray.

Attached are USICA's memorandum to you (Tab B) with talking points attached and a brief memorandum from you to the President transmitting the written message (Tab I).

The problem of the proposed BBC cuts has been attracting a good deal of attention in the press (NYT editorial, 3 October). Just for your background I also attach a memo I received yesterday from Steve Simmons of the Domestic Staff who heard a good deal about it at a recent conference in London and a letter to David Aaron from Professor Henry Breitrose of Stanford. (Tab C)

Attachments

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTONACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

SUBJECT: Threatened Cuts in BBC External Services

During a recent interagency review of foreign broadcasting issues, the damage that could be done by a drastic cut in the BBC's prestigious external services was raised. Ambassador Brewster has taken a strong stand against the cut with the FCO. State and USICA have recommended that you send a short message to Mrs. Thatcher on the problem. Giving the enormous impact of BBC in most parts of the world and the fact that it broadcasts to many areas where we do not, curtailing its overseas services would have a negative effect on Free World information efforts out of all proportion to the money saved. It would be a loss which VOA and broadcasting services of our other European allies could not easily make up.

RECOMMENDATION

That you authorize cabling of this message to Ambassador Brewster for delivery to the Prime Minister.

APPROVE _____

DISAPPROVE _____

PROPOSED MESSAGE TO MRS. THATCHER

42B

Although I certainly do not want to interfere in your economizing and budget-cutting measures, for I'm sure that you feel as strongly in principle about their necessity as I do, I would like, as a long-time friend and ally of Great Britain, to express to you privately and informally my personal concern about the foreign policy implications, for us both and for the Alliance, of the prospect of severe cuts in the BBC's foreign language service.

We have long regarded the BBC's foreign-language broadcasts as the oldest and one of the most essential instruments to get all the truth to those who need it and cannot get it so well elsewhere. I feel the same about Voice of America, and I have always regarded VOA and the BBC as an allied effort in common struggle.

It is because we have learned so much from it, and from Great Britain, about how to carry on such broadcasts objectively, professionally, and therefore with maximum effect, that I would like to stress how much we view these BBC broadcasts as one of the essential instruments of the Alliance. At a time when we are all trying to strengthen our efforts in the face of rising challenges, I would like to express my hope that you will be able to see your way clear to keep this instrument as effective as it so long has been.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O.12958, Sec.3.6

PER 3/15/99 XSL/HV RE XLC-48-146
BY J NARS. DATE 3/23/99



**International
Communication
Agency**

United States of America
Washington, D.C. 20547

Office of the Director

42C

October 4, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
Zbigniew Brzezinski
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The White House

FROM: Charles W. Bray III *CB*
Acting Director

SUBJECT: BBC Cuts

The BBC faces a 25% cut in its foreign broadcasting as part of Mrs. Thatcher's determination to reduce British Government public expenditures across the board except for defense and police. While it has not yet been finally determined precisely where the cuts in the BBC External Services (which are financed by a Foreign Office grant-in-aid) will be made, any one of the three options being considered would constitute a major and significant diminution in the Free World international broadcasting effort, directed in part to offset and counter the tremendous radio propaganda campaign of the Soviet Union and its allies. (The three options are outlined in Tab A.)

VOA and BBC have recently discussed the implication of the BBC cuts. BBC has approached our Embassy in London for USG support against the cuts, and Ambassador Brewster agrees we should help -- beyond the informal approach to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) he has already made -- emphasizing to HMG how detrimentally these BBC cuts would, in our view, affect Western public diplomacy efforts, especially in those parts of the world where the BBC has been particularly effective. (See the commendable editorial on this subject in The New York Times, October 3, Tab B.)

