

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Chapter 1 EARLY BEGINNINGS

A superficial examination might suggest that the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) of 1967 is a radically different organization from the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS) of 1941, or even from the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service that emerged from World War II. Today's FBIS is considerably larger, much more efficient, and it handles tasks such as the analysis of foreign documents that were not even considered in the earlier years. Yet in its fundamental organization and responsibilities, its basic operations and methods, the change is not great. FBIS took form during those six years before its adoption by the Central Intelligence Agency, and came to CIA almost mature, trained and disciplined, and ready to plunge immediately into the tasks outlined for it.

The basic operation of monitoring foreign broadcasts was learned and almost perfected prior to 1947. Monitoring is performed today very much as it was then, despite the vast improvements in technical equipment during the past 20 years. Methods of distributing FBIS products, and the extent of distribution, are very much the same today as.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

they were in 1947. FBIS emerged then as the only recognized service organization trained and equipped to monitor and process foreign broadcasts for the benefit of all government agencies needing the service. It had thoroughly demonstrated by 1947 that the task of listening to foreign broadcasts and reporting to other government units was an essential task that could not be abandoned, and that the best way to meet the need was to assign the responsibility to one central organization. Worldwide coverage of the foreign radio to the extent it exists today was of course only a dream in 1947, but the goals already were established, and important first steps toward international cooperation to make possible the most efficient organization for worldwide coverage had been taken. The principle that large central monitoring units could do the work more efficiently, but needed to be supplemented by small monitoring posts for maximum coverage, had been tested and adopted. These practices still are followed by FBIS, though of course the number of primary and secondary stations has increased considerably. There should be little doubt, therefore, that the years 1941-47 were of basic importance in the history of FBIS. The organization took form then, and achieved actual, though somewhat uncertain, permanency. Effort during the

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

intervening years has been concentrated largely on expansion and refinement.

Recognition of Need for Monitoring

Shortwave radio developed rapidly in the decade leading to the outbreak of World War II, and with the rise of competing ideologies in Europe and Asia, their sponsors seized upon this new and simple vehicle for breaching international boundaries to propagandize and subvert. European democracies quickly became aware of this new threat to their freedom, while in the United States the rapid spawning of shortwave propaganda broadcasts was watched with apprehension. France began a systematic monitoring of German broadcasts in 1935. The French Government also tried jamming the Berlin radio to keep Nazi messages from reaching the French people. Soon it became apparent that the French Government needed to know what Berlin was saying, so the programs were jammed in France--and monitored from Switzerland.

The British, like the Americans later, anticipated the vital need for monitoring and launched listening operations just ahead of the war machine. Sir Beresford Clark, Director of the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), is given credit for starting the service, while Malcolm Frost, head of the BBC Overseas Intelligence Department at the time, supplied the imagination and organizing

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ability that welded the infant activity into an effective organization. With the original aim of serving the News Department of BBC and the newly set up Ministry of Information (MOI) in the Foreign Office, Richard D'A. Marriott loaded about 60 linguists and technicians into a large British bus in the early summer of 1939, took them to Wood Norton Hall, Evesham, and quickly whipped them into a monitoring team that inundated the BBC offices in London with thousands of words of teletype copy that seemed of no value to anyone. Malcolm Frost took it from there and brought order out of chaos. By the time the war started, in September, the BBC was on top of German and other European broadcasts, and by the end of 1940 the BBC Monitoring Service was a going concern with a News Bureau and Editorial Department--corresponding roughly to the FBIS Wire Service and Daily Report Branch.*

In the United States it was the privately owned news media that first attempted to make use of shortwave broadcasts from abroad. In the summer of 1939 at least three New York dailies--the TIMES, HERALD-TRIBUNE, and NEWS--set up listening centers, while both National and Columbia

* In the BULLETIN of the Association of Broadcasting Staff, No. 106 for August 1960, Marriott and other early officials of the Service wrote of the early days of BBC monitoring. A large part of the publication was given over to the Monitoring Service, marking its 21st year of operation.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Broadcasting Companies began to monitor the shortwave radio a week before the European war started. The primary purpose of these efforts was to supplement the news -- to get information on current developments in Europe faster than they could be supplied by correspondents. The monitoring units were small, and depended largely on shortwave broadcasts in English, which, it eventually was realized, carried the very propaganda that the Nazis and fascists wanted Americans to hear. At the time more than 200 broadcasting stations in the United States carried programs in at least 20 foreign languages for the benefit of immigrant listeners. Of course it was possible for these broadcasters also to listen to foreign propaganda and relay its message to their American constituents.

What apparently was the first U.S. effort to study these foreign broadcasts -- to examine what they were saying and their intent in saying it -- was made by Princeton University. A project of the School of Public and International Affairs, the Princeton Listening Center was launched on 27 November 1939.*

Stanford University very soon inaugurated a similar project. It apparently did not do such extensive

* Harold D. Graves, Jr., in a memorandum for a writer from Broadcasting Magazine on 24 February 1943, explained the Princeton aims as follows: "Unlike other American posts, the Listening Center interested itself in long-range political and psychological aspects of international broadcasts rather than their immediate news content." FBIS Records, National Archives.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

monitoring as did Princeton, perhaps because its location made it logical for Stanford to concentrate on Asian rather than European broadcasts, which were not so numerous nor so easily intercepted.

As the Nazi threat became more ominous, responsible figures both in and out of government began to worry about the propaganda broadcasts emanating hourly from Berlin and Rome and wonder if they might be poisoning the thought of the ordinary American citizen. Obviously, to find out, it was necessary first to get an accurate record of exactly what the broadcasts were saying. This was possible only through a systematic and continuous listening program, an extension of what already was being done at Princeton and Stanford. The State Department and the Department of Justice were especially concerned, and in these offices the feeling grew that the U.S. Government must not depend upon private interests to inform it of the content of foreign broadcasts.

Toward the end of 1940 the Secretary of State, in an informal discussion with President Roosevelt, suggested that a government unit should be established to monitor and analyze propaganda beamed to the United States. The President was receptive to the idea, and decided that the matter should come under the jurisdiction of the Defense Communications Board. Consequently, on 3 January 1941,

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Breckenridge Long, State Department representative on the Board, introduced a resolution calling upon the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to establish a monitoring service to listen to broadcasts from Europe. Board members representing the Navy Department and FCC took the resolution under study, expanded it to make clear that monitored broadcasts would not be limited to those from Europe, and in its next meeting, on 13 January 1941, the Defense Communications Board approved the resolution. On 21 January the Board approved a formal request to the President that money be transferred from his emergency fund, accompanied by a justification of the request. President Roosevelt acted favorably, and on 25 February 1941 allotted \$150,000 from his emergency fund to FCC for the purpose of monitoring foreign broadcasts. The money was transferred from the Treasury the following day, so the birth date of the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS) was 26 February 1941.*

* The clearest and most succinct account of these developments is contained in the testimony of FBIS Director Robert D. Leigh before the Special Congressional Committee to investigate the FCC on 19 May 1944, starting on page 3439, Volume III, of the Committee Report, GPO 1944. The wording of the resolution, page 3451, shows that the President was asked for \$300,000, and the Defense Communications Board expected to get its support for 1942 also from the emergency fund. Instead, the President allotted \$150,000, and FCC requested and obtained a congressional appropriation to finance the new service through the 1941-42 fiscal year. Thus the organization quickly got Congressional as well as Executive sanction for its operations.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Membership on the Defense Communications Board

included representatives from the Navy, State, War, and Treasury Departments and from FCC. Though State, Navy, and War were the departments most interested in information to be gleaned from monitoring of foreign broadcasts, there seems never to have been any question that the new assignment would go to FCC. The reason for this is obvious. It was the only group staffed and equipped to undertake the work. In addition to its regulatory activities, which required that FCC maintain a staff of radio engineers, it was assigned in 1940 the additional National Defense task of monitoring the airways for illicit operations. The Radio Intelligence Division (RID) of FCC received for the 1941-42 fiscal year a special defense appropriation of nearly two million dollars to carry on this work, and had set up primary monitoring posts in six states, Puerto Rico, Alaska, and Hawaii. In the fall of 1940, largely at the urging of the Department of Justice, it had started recording many foreign language broadcasts emanating from U.S. stations and had hired a staff of translators to supplement its engineers in the special defense work assigned to it. These operations, all financed from special defense appropriations, were called the National Defense Activities (NDA) of FCC. In its formal request to the President, the Defense Communications Board described its plan for the monitoring of foreign broadcasts as "a substantial expansion" in the current

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

monitoring activities of FCC.*

After the \$150,000 was transferred from the President's fund, the Bureau of the Budget approved an additional transfer of \$85,000 from RID's special appropriation, giving the new service \$235,000 to launch operations. Late in 1941 Congress approved a supplemental appropriation of \$600,000, making a total available through 30 June 1942 of \$835,000.

Assembling a Staff

The new organization set up by FCC was named the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS), and headquarters were obtained in an old garage at 316 F Street Northeast. Getting started was essentially a pioneering operation. Looking about for a working model, FCC found none in existence in the United States, though the BBC monitoring post in England might have provided a suitable model had an FCC man been sent to study its setup. Like FCC, the BBC had been selected to handle the monitoring operation because it was the organization physically equipped to do so.

However, nearer at hand was the Princeton Listening

* The full statement reads: "Accordingly, the Defense Communications Board recommends a substantial expansion in monitoring activities of the Federal Communications Commission to include continuous recordings of foreign press and propaganda broadcasts which can be heard within the United States." Page 3773, Volume III, Report of Special Congressional Committee to Investigate the FCC, GPO 1944.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Post, which had been operating for about 16 months and had attracted considerable attention. Though on a smaller scale than the governmental monitoring service envisioned by FCC and the Defense Communications Board, it offered a reasonable facsimile. Therefore FCC took a very logical first step. It hired Harold D. Graves, Jr., the young man who had been acting as director of the Princeton Listening Post since its inception, to help in organizing FBMS. Mr. Graves' first title was Senior Administrative Officer, and it was his duty to assemble a staff and help plan the next steps of the incipient organization. FCC officials set about to find a director with sufficient experience and prestige, and eventually chose Lloyd Free, editor of PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY, also of Princeton. In addition to having worked with the Princeton Listening Post, Mr. Free also had spent some time in England and was familiar with monitoring methods of the BBC. Eventually the FBMS staff was augmented by the addition of Jerome S. Bruner, Bennett Ferrell Ellington, Arthur Mathieu, and Arthur Cantor, all of whom had worked with the Princeton Center, so the Princeton imprint on the new organization was quite noticeable during its early stages. Mr. Free also had spent some time at Stanford, and was familiar with monitoring operations there. In a letter to a Princeton faculty member after FBMS was well launched, Mr. Graves

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

acknowledged the importance of the Princeton example.*

Mr. Graves later was named Assistant Director, and served as Acting Director during several periods before joining the Navy in 1943. Mr. Free assumed office as Director on 16 June 1941.

Until the middle of the summer of 1941, activities of FBMS consisted largely of assembling a staff, though engineers at the RID station at Laurel, Maryland, regularly were tuning in foreign stations and recording programs. As translators were hired they were set to work translating from these records, and in a few months a sizeable collection of transcripts had been accumulated. Editors and analysts also were hired and immediately put to work. Prior to August 1941 the amount of useful material obtained from broadcasts and put into the hands of officials needing it was practically negligible, but the time was not wasted, for new employees were getting practice and experience.

Clerical help was easy to find at first, and a skeleton staff was quickly assembled. As soon as a sufficient number

* Writing to John B. Whitton, credited with starting the Princeton Listening Center, Graves said on 29 December 1941: "The work of the Center, it goes without saying, has been of great assistance to the Monitoring Service. First, the Center's contribution of trained personnel to this organization has been of considerable value; second, its reports of broadcasting have proved to be valuable; and third, of course, the techniques developed at the Center have served us in good stead." FBIS Records, National Archives.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of editors and analysts were at work, FBMS began issuing spot bulletins summarizing specific Axis propaganda campaigns. One of the first ones, issued in July, made a study of German radio charges that the United States was a threat to the independence of Latin American states. This report was of sufficient interest to merit a small promotion campaign, with FCC Chairman Lawrence Fly sending copies to selected government officials along with a letter outlining the progress made by the growing FBMS staff.

Standards of capability set for FBMS editors and analysts were very high. In a letter to an applicant on 17 March 1941 Mr. Graves listed the minimum qualification for a report editor as a graduate degree in foreign affairs with three years of cable editing or two years as a foreign correspondent. A prospective wire editor was expected to have at least four years' experience in copy reading or newspaper desk work. In June Graves wrote that the most important requirement for FBMS editors was that they be well informed, "in a political sense," on various countries or geographical areas, and that "first-hand contact with foreign countries through residence" was highly desirable. He listed the sources from which FBMS had successfully obtained capable editors as organizations recently engaged in shortwave listening, foundations concerned with foreign studies, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, and voluntary

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

applicants.* Positions assigned to editors ranged up to CAF-11, paying \$3,800 a year. One of the first editors hired at this grade was Thomas A. Grandin, who had been CBS correspondent in Paris and was fired by CBS because he left Paris at the time of the German invasion without prior permission. Because of this mark on his record he was appointed conditionally, but soon was promoted and named Chief Editor, a position he held until he returned to work as a correspondent shortly before the Normandy invasion. Apparently editors who could meet the standards were not readily available, for in the autumn of 1941 Graves and Free were writing to such publications as the New York TIMES and EDITOR AND PUBLISHER outlining the agency's needs. On 17 October Free wrote EDITOR AND PUBLISHER correcting its news column statement that foreign experience was not required in FBMS editorial positions.**

Standards were even higher for analysts. Both Free and Graves made clear in all correspondence that FBMS was interested only in candidates on the Ph.D. level who had

* Graves' letter to the Civil Service Commission on 12 June 1941 explaining qualifications desired in FBMS editors and the apparent inability of the CSC to supply suitable candidates from its own register. FBIS Records, National Archives.

** Free explained that the requirement was "extensive foreign experience or at least a sound knowledge of foreign conditions gained through specialized study." FBIS Records, National Archives.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

done outstanding work in social psychology or political science. It was readily apparent that analysts were counted upon to produce the documents that would demonstrate the value of the new unit.* Prospective analysts were classified as high as P-6, starting at \$5,600, and it was with a real sense of accomplishment that Graves announced in October 1941 that Goodwin Watson, eminent social psychologist of Columbia University, would accept a P-6 and serve as head of the Analysis Section. Several other university professors with high credentials were enlisted, but here, too, standards had to be lowered somewhat. Quite a few Junior Professional Assistants

* A memorandum by Graves dated 1 May 1941 adequately outlines the lofty goals he held for accomplishments of the analysts: "An Analysis Section will conduct scientific studies of content, primarily from a psychological point of view, with the purpose of clearly delineating the methods and objectives of foreign efforts to influence the attitudes of various national publics toward the United States and toward war issues generally. Such a scientific study is particularly necessary because such methods and objectives for the most part do not appear on the surface of the material. In general, the possible importance of the careful surveillance of foreign radio broadcasts lies in the fact that such broadcasts provide a convenient medium in which to observe propaganda efforts which may be made in other media not so easy to follow: that is, by word of mouth, or on the public platform, in printed literature, and in motion pictures distributed by Germany, for example, in Europe and in Latin America. The new service will therefore be able, in a great measure, to observe foreign efforts to prejudice the legitimate interests and policies of the United States, either here or elsewhere, and to keep our country informed of the nature and objectives of these efforts." FBIS Records, National Archives.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

were hired at salaries of \$2,300 and \$2,600 and trainees were paid as low as \$1,800. By 8 October 1941 the new service had 12 analysts and 16 editors at work.

In hiring translators, only those capable in at least two foreign languages were at first considered, with the additional requirement that they have some experience in foreign affairs or had resided in foreign countries. A surprisingly large number of capable translators were found at salaries of \$2,300, but most applicants had to be rejected. FBMS translators had to work from recordings of broadcasts, often interspersed with static and various other distortions common in shortwave transmissions. A high proportion of applicants simply could not do the work. Another handicap also developed quite early. Many of the most promising translators were not American citizens, and regulations forbade hiring aliens. Japanese translators were especially difficult to find. A report on 30 July 1941 showed that FBMS had communicated with 38 prospective Japanese translators, with only 16 showing up for the language test. Ten of the 16 had passed, but three had declined appointment, the loyalty of one had been questioned, three had been hired, and three more might yet be considered. Of the 22 who had not been tested, eight had refused to take the test, 11 simply had failed to report, and only three remained as prospects. Yet in

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

spite of the difficulties, Graves reported on 25 August 1941 that FBMS now had satisfactory language capability in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, Italian, Swedish, Finnish, German, Lithuanian, Polish, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Croat, Russian, Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese, and a few other Chinese dialects. For summaries and rough translations, the staff had additional limited capabilities in Danish, Norwegian, Czech, and Hungarian.

During October and November 1941, both Free and Graves devoted much of their time to answering letters from applicants. A majority were rejected because they were aliens, because they had not taken Civil Service examinations, or simply because they were not adjudged to have the proper credentials. Of those whose applications were received favorably, many later declined appointment. Yet, despite these many rejections, Graves reported in August 1941 that 220 persons had been hired.*

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) seems to have provided the most formidable handicaps. Lloyd Free wrote on 31 July 1941 that matters had taken "a bad turn;" FBMS had been relatively free to hire personnel after conferences with CSC personnel, but now it seemed that CSC was

* Graves letter to Arthur Cantor, 11 August 1941. Graves said that the total staff would number 380, but they had been "plowing through heavy seas -- Congress on one side and the CSC on the other." FBIS Records, National Archives.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

disallowing appointment of anyone not listed on a Civil Service register. Graves complained in a letter to a prospective employee that every day a new law or executive order placed more and more positions under Civil Service. "I do not know of a single agency, with the exception of the FBI, which is not now nailed to the Civil Service cross."* In a memorandum written a few days earlier, Free accused CSC of refusing to understand personnel problems of FBMS, of offering for employment persons from "completely inappropriate" registers, of adopting an obstructive attitude, and of not giving the cooperation due a National Defense Agency**

On 25 November 1941 Graves asked FCC to request that CSC make FBMS exempt from two regulations: That it be allowed to hire aliens, and that it be allowed to hire per diem consultants without regard to CSC registers. The first request was disallowed. Writing to CSC on

* Graves letter dated 11 August 1941, FBIS Records, National Archives.

** Lloyd Free memorandum to Chairman Fly of FCC, 9 August 1941. Free said CSC had presented 300 names on its visual translator register, when the FBMS had specifically called for speech translators. In seeking a chief for the Translation Section he had asked for candidates with both language and administrative experience. CSC had presented 14 names, not one with language skills. In sending candidates for editorial positions, CSC had flatly disregarded FBMS specifications. Only one of the 14 candidates CSC recommended as analysts was acceptable, as the others were trained in such fields as psychological aptitude testing. IBID.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

20 January 1942, Free said he was "glad to know" that CSC had established registers suitable for selection of FBMS personnel, but cited the "voluminous and burdensome" correspondence that his office had been forced to carry on with universities, the American Newspaper Guild, and the Foreign Press Correspondents Association during preceding months in an effort to find suitable candidates for FBMS positions.

Development of Plans and Methods

First actual monitoring was done at the RID monitoring post at Laurel, Maryland. FCC engineers stationed at Laurel were assigned to cruise for foreign shortwave programs, record them, and send the records to FBMS at 316 F St. As work progressed, more recordings were made, and were transported to headquarters more frequently. By the end of the summer of 1941 the station wagon used to haul records was making several trips a day, and fresh records were pouring into 316 F St. night and day. Some were translated immediately, with transcripts in the hands of editors and analysts in a few hours after the broadcasts appeared on the air. At first the engineers were entirely on their own in selecting stations, but as translators, editors, and analysts became familiar with the different programs the engineers were requested to record some of them regularly, while others were dropped. Gradually

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

fixed schedules took shape, and monitoring achieved some semblance of order. The transporting of records soon was recognized as burdensome and inefficient. Engineers began to look for a site nearer Washington, and found a satisfactory one, including a building that required only some repairs, at Silver Hill, Maryland. FCC on 23 August approved use of the new site for FBMS monitoring, and Laurel was abandoned except for normal RID operations. As soon as arrangements could be made, telephone lines were run between Silver Hill and 316 F St., so translators could listen to the programs as they were being broadcast. By October this procedure was being followed. Now engineers tuned in the programs at Silver Hill, "piped" them by wire to receivers at FBMS headquarters, and the translator there listened to the program while it was being recorded. Actual monitoring, as distinguished from recording, translating, and reporting, seems to have been a pet project of Lloyd Free. From October 1941 he insisted that as many linguists as possible listen to the piped-in broadcasts with their typewriters before them, and attempt to provide immediate monitored summaries of broadcasts. This was Free's adaptation of the system already in use in the BBC.*

Government officials first concerned about foreign broadcasts had in mind those programs beamed to the United

* Undated "History of FBIS" found in CIA Records Center, Job 54-27, Box 15.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

States and aimed at influencing the thoughts and attitudes of Americans. They wanted to detect the intent and techniques of foreign propagandists in order to counteract the propaganda. The system of monitoring envisioned by Harold Graves was based essentially on an analysis of foreign broadcasts. The aim at Princeton was to study foreign propaganda, and to Graves the heart of FBMS must be the Analysis Section. He outlined his conception rather clearly to an applicant on 26 May 1941.* Lloyd Free, on the other hand, familiar with BBC monitoring operations as well as the Princeton and Stanford listening posts, attached as much -- perhaps more -- importance to direct reporting of what the foreign radio was saying as to analysis, and foresaw that FBMS must devote considerable attention to direct and rapid monitoring and reporting. This was a possibility that Graves considered very remote when he started to enlist a staff. After October 1941,

* Graves said: "This service, as you perhaps know, will receive, record, transcribe, and analyze broadcasts originating all over the world, with primary attention to transmissions directed to the Western Hemisphere. It is part of our intention to subject these programs to a careful classification and tabulation of references which will enable us to describe precisely the main stresses of foreign propaganda, to follow in some detail the trends and shifts which will develop, and to interpret these things carefully in relation to the intent of the various broadcasting nations. In connection with this work, we consider a knowledge of social psychology to be of prime importance." FBIS Records, National Archives.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

when telephone lines to Silver Hill were installed, the more highly skilled translators became monitors, listening to programs as they were being recorded and typing running summaries of the news broadcasts and commentaries. Translators who were able to do this satisfactorily, who could produce accurate and readable summaries immediately after the broadcasts ended, were no longer called translators; they were monitors, and commanded a higher CSC rating and higher pay.

Another early innovation of Lloyd Free was inauguration of a wire service to report quickly the contents of foreign broadcasts. He first approached William Langer of the office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) headed by Col. William Donovan, learned that the Washington and New York offices of COI would be enthusiastic about receiving promptly the summaries of monitored broadcasts -- in fact would be willing to pay the costs of teletyping the material from FBMS headquarters to their offices -- and had the service installed before the end of October 1941.* In November 1941, following conversations of Free with officials of the State Department, a separate wire

* Langer wrote Chairman Fly as follows on 3 December 1941: "All of this material seems to me to be not only interesting, but important for our purposes, and I know that I am speaking for Colonel Donovan when I say that we, in this office, are eager to maintain the closest contact and cooperation with your agency." FBIS Records, National Archives.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

service to State was inaugurated, operating eight hours a day. The two wires were kept separate, as COI wanted monitored summaries, while State desired texts of significant items. The State circuit later was named the "A Wire," with that to COI called the "B Wire."

Free also must be credited with establishment of the Program Information Unit in September 1941 for use of monitors in keeping up with schedule changes. This unit did not start issuing a regular publication until March 1942, but new programs located by the engineers, program changes and revisions reported by the engineers and consultants, were forwarded to one employee, who organized them and made sure they were in the hands of all responsible personnel who could use the information.

In a letter written in March 1942 Graves stated that FBMS "did not begin full and formal operations until early in August." However, special publications on an experimental basis were being distributed several months before that. The first one, called "German Broadcasts to North America," was issued in March 1941 and was produced irregularly until June. In July, with facilities for mimeographing having been installed and adequately staffed, the "Spot Bulletins" began, each one treating a separate subject. On 11 August 1941 appeared a new format -- "Foreign Broadcasts: Highlights of 11 August." This consisted largely of a summarization of broadcasts. By September it had

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

undergone another change. Now four separate publications were appearing: A Daily Digest of Broadcasts to North America; a Daily Digest of Broadcasts to Latin America; a Daily Analysis of Broadcasts to North and Latin America; and the Special Reports, published irregularly. On 18 November 1941 appeared the first "Daily Report of Foreign Radio Broadcasts." It carried both texts and summaries, and from that date remained the standard product of the Report Section. The Analysis Section continued to issue a daily analysis of foreign broadcasts, but before 6 December 1941 it was decided to abandon daily analyses and use the week as a time unit. The first weekly analysis, the "Weekly Review," appearing the day before Pearl Harbor, was of particular significance because it showed that the Japanese radio had dropped its tone of caution and was assuming a belligerent attitude.

FCC cooperated fully with FBMS in introducing monitoring products to various government offices. The primary method was for a publication to be mailed from the office of Chairman Lawrence Fly, with a covering letter signed by him to the department head of the recipient office. Such a letter went to President Roosevelt on 8 July 1941 along with a spot report showing the "German Attempt to Bewilder U.S. Public Opinion." Chairman Fly called the document "a special, preliminary report," and noted that FBMS was getting organized and

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

soon would be providing daily reports. Similar letters at various times went to Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of State Hull, and many lesser department heads.* Replies were received thanking Chairman Fly for the publications and asking that certain offices be placed on the mailing list. By the time the regular Daily Report was issued on 18 November 1941, the mailing list included 87 offices.

Harold Graves had wide contacts with universities and other non-governmental organizations as a result of his work at the Princeton Listening Post. Many of these were desirous of getting regularly FBMS publications and transcripts of radio broadcasts. Graves at first was inclined to honor such requests, but FCC ruled that distribution should be confined largely to U.S. Government offices. In addition, it was soon evident that the demand would soon overtax reproduction facilities of the infant organization. On 9 July 1941 Graves wrote the Institute

* A typical letter was that written to Lauchlin Currie, Administrative Assistant to the President, on 30 August 1941. In it Fly said: "For the last few days you have been receiving copies of the spot bulletins describing the highlights of foreign shortwave broadcasts issued by FBMS. The monitoring service is still in its organizational phases, and will not be prepared to issue its regular complete daily reports until a week or ten days from now. Needless to say, you will receive them, and also weekly analyses of foreign shortwave broadcasts, as soon as the monitoring service begins to issue them." Of course these letters were prepared in FBMS to be mailed over Chairman Fly's signature. FBIS Records, National Archives.

- 24 -
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of Pacific Relations regretfully refusing its request for transcripts, explaining that the newly adopted policy supplied only Princeton and Stanford outside the government. Lloyd Free, in a letter on 29 September 1941 to Charles Rolo, who was preparing a book on shortwave broadcasting and monitoring, explained that "existing policy requires that the work of FBMS be veiled in considerable secrecy," with distribution only to government offices.

Occasionally this policy was relaxed. In a memorandum to Chairman Fly on 10 October 1941, Free inclosed a copy of an Army daily digest based on FBMS reports which was going to public subscribers, and recommended that FCC offer no objection to the practice. Yet Graves reported on 5 December 1941, in rejecting another request, that FBMS reporting was not being released "to any persons or organizations outside the government," and that "Lloyd is quite strict about this."

With the hiring of Lech Zychlinsky in December 1941, organization of the professional sections of FBMS was complete. Grandin headed the Report Section, Watson the Analysis Section, and Zychlinsky the Translation Section. Engineers remained under RID and were not considered a part of FBMS. Clerical work -- typing, mimeographing, mailing -- was organized into a number of units.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Moves Toward Expansion

It was never anticipated that all monitoring would be handled in the F St. office of FBMS or that all recordings initially would be made at Laurel, Maryland, but the extent of dispersal seems to have been pretty much a question mark for a number of months. A news release by FCC on 19 March 1941 stated rather vaguely that "after being recorded in the field" the radio material would be "coordinated and studied in Washington." Wayne Mason, named by FCC to direct FCC National Defense Operations (NDO), the name given to the engineering division of NDA, wrote a memorandum on 7 March 1941 concerning the new broadcast recording operations and the NDO staff that would be required to carry it out. He listed RID stations that would take part in the program as Laurel; Grand Island, Nebraska; Millis, Massachusetts; Portland, Oregon; and San Juan, Puerto Rico. According to an undated account of the early plans found in FBIS records,* engineering plans at first envisioned use of these five stations plus Kingsville, Texas. Laurel was to record programs from Latin America, Asiatic Russia, and the Far East; Portland, Asia and Latin America; Millis, Europe, the USSR, Africa, and Australia; San Juan, Europe and Central and South America; Kingsville, Central America and Mexico; Grand Island, Europe, Asia, and Latin

* f. History of FBIS, RC Job No. 54-27, Box 15, CIA Records Center.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

America. Millis and Grand Island soon were dropped to simplify communications, the account says, and a heavier load was assigned to Laurel. All of these posts were primary monitoring stations of RID. About all this preliminary planning demonstrates is the utter lack of knowledge concerning the practice of shortwave broadcast monitoring.

There is no evidence that Millis and Grand Island ever did any recording for FBMS, but the other four stations did from the beginning, or as soon as they could be staffed for it. Graves said in a letter to George E. Sterling, Chief of RID, on 6 May 1941 that "in about two weeks" NDA should start providing translations from Japanese. He estimated they would be able to place these translations in the hands of Hawaii military commanders in three or four days after the broadcasts. Graves wrote the Stanford Listening Center on 30 April 1941 that the Pacific Coast station had "now gone into preliminary operations," and on or about 1 June would be "recording trans-Pacific transmissions," including those being covered by Stanford. The programs he referred to were to be recorded at Portland. A New York TIMES article on 24 April 1941 described operations of the new monitoring agency, saying that eventually

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

there would be eight listening posts.*

It is apparent that the early plans underwent a rapid change, for on 1 April 1941 Wayne Mason wrote that "about 50 percent" of NDA work would be concentrated at Laurel; this would require 16 engineers, 16 radio receivers, 8 continuous recorders, and a new antenna system. Work proceeded on that basis, and in a progress report to FCC on 22 May 1941 Graves said that 20 of the assigned engineers were at work in four stations, that antenna had been installed at San Juan and soon would be in at the other three locations, and that all of the four stations had received half their assigned quota of recording equipment. He suggested that full operations might be possible by 15 July. In a letter on 24 July 1941 Graves explained that all except engineering operations were being conducted in Washington, but "as part of the new plan," translators, stenographers, and reporters would be sent to Portland and Puerto Rico "in order to make quick reports to Washington and avoid the necessity of waiting for mail shipments or recordings." Mention of the "new plan" suggests that originally there was no thought of dispersing the non-engineering staff

* The TIMES article explained: "The stations are units of the Commission's monitoring system which, for years, has been able to police the air and punish illegal transmissions and other violations of the rules of the ether. There are in all about 90 stations in the monitoring system, but the larger ones will undertake the principal work of receiving the broadcasts from other nations."

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

outside Washington. No documents have been found outlining the processes by which this change came about. However, in a memorandum to the staff on 26 August 1941, Graves reported that the appropriation bill recently signed by the President provided for "decentralization" of FBMS, with posts to be established in Portland and Santurce, Puerto Rico, as soon as possible, modeled after the headquarters setup except for the absence of analysts. Employees, he said, would have a choice as to transfer "wherever practicable." This appropriation bill was of necessity prepared months before.

Of the three stations away from Washington, need for the Portland post was most apparent. Recordings of Japanese broadcasts began arriving in Washington about the middle of April, consisting first of three or four programs daily. By June the number had reached 20, and by August it was 25. By 13 September 1941 engineers were recording Japanese broadcasts 24 hours a day.** The FBMS office was not equipped to process all the

* Graves' announcement was anticipated by a WASHINGTON POST article on 22 August 1941 which told of funds for decentralization and said that FBMS would send 49 employees to Portland and 46 to Puerto Rico, and would hire 105 new employees. A longer item in the DAILY NEWS the same day added that plans also called for a similar station at Kingsville, Texas.

** "Report of FBMS Coverage of Tokyo up to Pearl Harbor," f. History of FBIS, RC Job No. 54-27, Box 15, CIA Records Center.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

records from any station, and by August was merely attempting to sample them. Especially was it impossible for the tiny Japanese Translation Section to process all Japanese language records. At the time, Tokyo was broadcasting to 13 areas in 16 languages, a total of 41 hours a day. The demand for Japanese transcripts was growing rapidly, especially within the military. On 17 September 1941 Graves announced that 20 persons were being transferred to Portland to set up a new monitoring station. Included in the 20 were the three Japanese and one Chinese linguists currently on the Washington staff. Most of the group left by train for Portland on 27 September 1941, and were ready for operations about 1 October. They were stationed in a farmhouse 10 miles from Portland and two miles from the RID primary. William Carter was named Chief of the new post.

It was soon discovered that monitoring Japanese broadcasts from Portland was not easy. Carter wrote Grandin on 6 October 1941 that reception was "rotten" on the material beamed to China, that the engineers "have to fight" to get Tokyo broadcasts 24 hours a day. On 11 October he wrote that Tokyo seemed to have got its broadcast to Hawaii beamed "more accurately," and as a result it was impossible to pick it up, though they suspected that most of it was a repeat of other broadcasts.

- 30 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Communications problems also now appeared for the first time. The station at first sent its material in a night letter via Western Union -- one long telegram summarizing the day's broadcasts. Grandin complained in a letter to Carter on 9 October 1941 that the telegram was not arriving before 0930, and Western Union had been asked to investigate. Writing on 14 October 1941, Carter explained that his editors were trying to do an over-all job for both the Analysis and Reports Sections in Washington, and thus could not get the telegram to the Western Union office before 0200 Portland time. He added that the cost was running about \$10 a night, or between \$3,000 and \$4,000 a year. In another letter on 23 October Carter said the engineers were trying to bring in Russian stations, but found reception very uneven. The Japanese staff, he said, had "no sense of urgency" because of the "stereotyped quality" of the Japanese language broadcasts, which were largely repeats of the English, and because of the poor reception. He suggested that many of their troubles might be dissolved if engineers in Alaska were able to copy internal Japanese broadcasts and send the recordings to Portland for processing -- overlooking the fact that this would represent only a slight improvement over sending them to Washington for processing.

It was apparent that FEMS officials in Washington

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

considered the daily telegram from Portland unsatisfactory -- at best a stop-gap arrangement. Graves in a letter to Carter on 24 October 1941 agreed that Western Union was preferable at present, but that "when the monitoring operation commences" copy would need to arrive in Washington sooner, and that the office was ready to hire a trained teletypist as soon as Portland was ready for it. (He also revealed that the original plan was for Portland to run its copy off on master sheets, ditto what was needed, and send the sheets to Washington for further processing. Apparently this plan already had been abandoned.) Writing on 30 November, Carter continued to complain of poor reception, but praised the two Chinese monitors and spoke of "seriously considering" a "monitoring operation in Chinese." Obviously, prior to Pearl Harbor the Portland staff had given little thought to the rapid processing of significant texts from Japanese broadcasts for immediate publication and distribution in Washington.

Setting up an FBMS office in London represented a radical departure from the original aims of the organization. First plans envisioned only the monitoring and analysis of broadcasts beamed to North and South America and the Caribbean -- shortwave broadcasts targeted on the Western Hemisphere. Establishment of a staff in London to make use of the product of BBC monitoring

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

broadened this assignment considerably, as much of the BBC effort was devoted to coverage of long and medium wave broadcasts beamed to Europe. The Special Congressional Committee Investigating FCC later attempted to demonstrate that establishment of a bureau in London was illegal and unauthorized, but examination of the first appropriation act granting funds to FBMS, approved by Congress in the summer of 1941, showed the fallacy of this argument.*

Being acquainted with BBC operations, Lloyd Free established contacts with BBC officials very soon after he assumed office with the idea of attaching a staff to BBC. A wire to Broadcasting House, London, on 19 August 1941 stated that FBMS was anxiously awaiting a reply to his proposal. On 26 August 1941 Free informed Gerald Cook, a representative of BBC in New York, that BBC had agreed to give an FBMS staff access to its monitored materials, and in return FBMS would supply BBC with materials broadcast from the Far East and Latin America.** Free wrote to Lindsay Wellington, newly appointed BBC

* Page 3777 and following pages, Volume III, Report of the Special Committee to Investigate the FCC. GPO 1944.

** The actual papers documenting this agreement, referred to in the Free letter, have not showed up in the FBIS Records, but this outlined exchange of services has always been considered as the basis for U.S. - British cooperation.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

representative in North America with headquarters in New York, on 10 September 1941 expressing pleasure that FBMS would be allowed to send a representative to London. The man had been selected, Free said, and after a brief period of preliminary training FBMS would be "ready to begin the cooperative arrangements discussed with you some time ago -- at any time you give the signal."

Tom Grandin had been considered to head the London office, but when it was decided that he should remain in Washington as Chief Editor, a 29-year-old Columbia graduate named Peter J. Rhodes, who had served five years as a foreign correspondent for the United Press, was selected. Writing Rhodes on 2 October 1941, Free said he hoped to have his appointment through by 16 October, and upon his arrival in Washington they would discuss conditions under which he would work in England. A letter from Chairman Fly to Secretary of State Cordell Hull on 19 October 1941 outlined plans for sending men to London, and the project was given formal State Department approval in a reply by Breckinridge Long dated 24 November. By that time both Rhodes and Free were on their way to London, having left by clipper on 21 November 1941. Two other editors, Bennett (Duke) Ellington and Vincent O. Anderson, left for London a few days later. Free's letters during this period of preparation indicated that material obtained from BBC would be telephoned to Washington.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Meantime, steps were continued for opening other field stations. Fly wrote FCC representatives in Puerto Rico on 24 September 1941 that Carroll Hauser from RID would arrive in San Juan on 12 October to make plans for opening a monitoring post there. Free, in a letter to Puerto Rico Commissioner Pagan, noted on 11 October 1941 that establishment of a bureau in Puerto Rico had proved to be "extraordinarily complicated," and it would be at least six weeks before even a start could be made. However, Graves notified George Sterling on 24 November that Edward B. Rand, who would be in charge of NDA work in Puerto Rico, would dock at San Juan on 1 December and would proceed to work with the engineers in setting up a monitoring post at Santurse, a suburb of San Juan. Hauser had selected the site on his earlier trip, and antenna already had been installed.

Technical changes were made in the primary RID station at Kingsville, Texas, early in 1941, and on 1 July the station started recording Latin American broadcasts and airmailing them to Washington. The Kingsville antenna built for monitoring Latin American broadcasts was considered exceptionally well constructed. In the early autumn George Chesnutt, a translator in the Washington office who formerly lived in Texas, was sent to Kingsville to sample broadcasts, advise on cruising, and take the first steps toward organizing a field station. With the

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

aid of one additional translator, he was at work when the Pearl Harbor attack came and was sending a considerable amount of broadcast copy to Washington. Arrangements already had been made for installation of a teletype line between the two stations.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~