Campaign of Truth

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As people with a personal stake in international affairs, and as Americans, you and I are up against a rough assignment — perhaps the roughest in the history of this nation. While we are trying to build a peace, and while we are pushing toward this objective, we have to fight a cold war with a ruthless and unprincipled adversary.

Essentially, we now are in a sort of purgatory between a shooting war and peace. We are participants in an underlying, fundamental conflict. It is a conflict of principles — of ideas. Our principles are those of freedom and truth. Our adversary has long since discarded truth as we understand it as a figment of bourgeois imagination and is bent on enslaving men by binding their minds with an unyielding and specious dialectic.

The scene of this conflict is a sick and confused world. A part of this world is struggling to recover from the ravages of the second world war in 40 years. Other areas carry on a ceaseless battle against worn-out land, disease and ignorance — merely to exist. Many peoples who have been quiescent, apathetic or impotent under alien rule are now responding to an urge for nationalist expression of some sort. There are varying degrees of popular discontent and, in many places, a vague demand for change — any change, just so long as it is different.

Unpalatable as such a scene appears — and is — it holds certain advantages for both the free world and the Soviet Union. In the areas where hunger and misery prevail, the phony facade of Communist propaganda makes a strong appeal. In turn, the United States and the other free nations find that the appetite for change has made people receptive to the idea of independence and self-government.

One characteristic of the situation, however, operates to the temporary advantage of the Soviet Union. Confusion and instability are made to order for their various techniques — subversion, trickery, political coups or threats of force. They are so organized that they can capitalize on any opening and gain a quick hold on a political organism. The process can be tragically quick.

The United States is compelled to follow a far slower procedure. We have discovered that progressive ideas concerning freedom and diversity can’t be imposed upon others. We know that freedom can develop only out of local conviction and experience. We can only spell out the meaning of freedom and, by persuasion, dissemination of information and example, demonstrate its worth. Thus, we are politically less mobile than our adversary — a handicap of the moment which, in the long run, will be offset by the durability of the product we are exporting.

Now what are the characteristics and the capabilities of our opponent? His political machinery is a monolithic dictatorship. Control is rigid. Absolute conformity is demanded. In the Russian and satellite world, there is no truth — no fact — except pronouncements of the Politburo.

The czars of the Politburo command a massive army which is backed by tremendous resources of manpower. They are unbelievably cynical.

The top-level clique employs force as its major instrument of power. Its dealings with the outside world are conducted in terms of on-the-post strength.

Soviet propaganda is a major weapon in the Kremlin’s political arsenal. Here again, their disregard for truth gives them great latitude of operation. They can slant their output in any direction, regardless of the facts. They can distort and twist to their hearts’ content.

At first glance, such freedom of action appears to give the Kremlin a definite edge. However, a close and penetrating inspection of both the Kremlin’s system and its weapons and tactics in the cold war reveals grave weaknesses. What the Soviets still present to the world as a revolutionary society is actually one of extreme reaction. The counterrevolution took place hard on the heels of the revolt that overthrew the Czars, and, instead of being led from servitude to freedom, the Russian people went from servitude to slavery. This contradiction is a point of vulnerability which can be exploited with damaging effect.

The Kremlin rulers, themselves, are very much aware of this weak point. They are afraid to permit large numbers of their people to compare their own conditions with those in the free world. The troops that moved into Western Europe at the end of World War II had to be brought back to the Soviet Union for a lengthy indoctrination — and, in many instances, the stronger medicine of the purge. This fear of comparison is the reason for the Iron Curtain. The political or social organism that requires total isolation from its neighbors cannot be regarded as a strong organism. It is simply too vulnerable to the truth.

A second major weakness of the Soviet Union lies in the basic deception in the Soviet world campaign. The Soviet is peddling its revolution to peoples motivated by a desire for liberty and a greater voice in the handling of their own affairs. By craft and

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subterfuge, Soviet propaganda presents communism and its revolutionary technique as a package deal for realizing that desire.

In those areas where people have been taken in by the Soviet sales campaign, disillusionment sets in early. The people soon discover they have been gulled by a group of pitiless 20th century imperialists. That is why we today have a team at work gathering and reporting to the Voice all possible facts as to what really went on in the Communist colony of North Korea.

From start to finish, the Kremlin strategy is wide open to effective counterattack. The ingrained dishonesty of the Soviet promises as compared to their intentions can be unmasked and spotlighted. The soft spot here is identical with that in the Soviet organization itself. It cannot stand against the truth.

**NOW, WHAT OF OUR OWN capabilities?** To begin with, we are strong where the Soviet's are weak. The independence and the freedom which we have preserved for ourselves and which we are trying to extend is the hallmark of a solid and a strong organization.

Moreover, we have the great advantage of not wanting anything from anyone. We seek neither power nor domain. We have declared our purposes. We want lasting peace, an improvement in the world standard of living to be brought about by international collaboration. We are, finally, basically committed to individual rights and human freedom. When we talk in such terms, we speak a universal language which has at least some meaning for all men.

Consequently, it is obvious that the most telling weapon we can bring to bear on the Soviet Union in this war of ideas is an information program — or propaganda program, if you want to call it that — which deals exclusively in facts. And I mean all the facts.

We've got to expand and develop this Campaign of Truth. This is the weapon which has the firepower to pierce the Iron Curtain. This is the weapon that has the explosive force to rip the camouflage from the Soviet position and reveal it as it truly is — a stronghold of reaction and imperialism.

**VERY WELL, THEN, how have we gone about the employment of this weapon?** Have we capitalized on native talents and capacities? What are the problems that still trouble us? And what do we have to do that we are not now doing?

Obviously, the machinery of spreading the big truth as a counter to the big lie is, basically, one of communications. Here, at home, we have developed communications techniques to a high degree — and we are well on the road to an effective adaptation of these techniques for international use. In radio, for example, we are building the Voice of America into a world network. Currently, we operate 38 short-wave transmitters in the United States which deliver radio signals to specific target areas abroad and — even more important — feed relay bases in England, Germany, Tangier and Greece as well as in Hawaii and the Philippines. These relay stations pick up the signal and boost it along by both short and medium wave. The transmitter stations are now being improved so that, within the next two years, the Voice of America should be capable of reaching every receiving set in the Soviet Union — and the rest of the Iron Curtain area.

The Voice is on the air 24 hours a day, in English and in 24 foreign languages. Every day, we put on 70 separate programs of varied content. Each of these programs is hand-tailored for the target audience at which it is directed. For listeners behind the Iron Curtain, program content is almost entirely news, political, social and economic commentary, and features about American life and aims. On this side of the Curtain, for listeners who have access to adequate sources of free information, the emphasis is away from news and in the direction of what we call Americana. The aim, here, is to improve our friends' understanding of American policies and points of view and of our American way of life. Within the year, we will nearly double the Voice's total output — and the number of languages will be doubled to reach, among others, important minority groups in vital parts of the world.

**THE VOICE HAS ESTABLISHED** a close co-operative relationship with the radio industry here in the United States with the result that a number of the more commendable American radio programs go out to a world audience over the Voice's transmitters. Local networks in other
friendly countries also pick up Voice programs for domestic broadcast.

Unfortunately, there is no global counterpart of the Hooper-Nielson ratings, so we cannot be certain as to the size of our audience. However, some tests in friendly countries have been run, and we know that, in Germany, for example, 50 percent of all residents are fairly regular listeners. In France, we have an audience of 4,500,000 listeners, and a majority of these tune in the Voice each day. Listeners’ response has been steadily increasing and has recently reached a level of 30,000 letters a month—compared with 10,000 a year ago. Demand for the Voice’s program booklet has forced an increase in the press run for upcoming issues to 1,000,000 copies.

We have evidence also of the existence of a substantial Voice audience on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The Voice is under constant attack from the Communist press and radio. Soviet jamming efforts testify that the Voice’s truth hurts. Recently, the Soviet and satellite press have staged an increasing tirade against the Voice. One new example: A prominent Hungarian paper recently said:

“...The workers must consider it their duty to catch hysterical hoarders who buy all the goods in stores on instructions from the Voice of America... the American radio told them to specialize in matches and in the KOZERT Store No. 1226, 1,330 boxes of matches were sold, instead of the average 30 boxes a day...”

We are increasing our effectiveness in other media as well. We have learned some tricks about getting our film strips and motion pictures to audiences which, at first were out of our reach. We have a fleet of jeeps, now, with special rigs that carry projectors, screens and amplifiers. With this equipment, the only facility a locality need provide is an open field.

The news and feature program is getting more and more space in foreign publications. Distribution methods have been improved, and experience has taught us the type of material which is best suited to the various regions of the world. The effectiveness of our presentation has been steadily stepped up.

I must regretfully report today that we have encountered a new type of “jamming” directed against our Russian-language magazine, Amerika. The Soviet Government has alleged that sales of the State Department’s Russian-language magazine Amerika have taken a sudden decline. Since Amerika has enjoyed a wide and established popularity since 1945, it is notable that this allegation of diminishing sales has been accompanied by a progressive limitation of opportunities for Russian readers to buy the magazine and by more than 25 separate attacks on Amerika in the Soviet press as a “tool of decadent capitalism.”

The State Department has made repeated representations to the Soviet Government, requesting that effective distribution methods be maintained in order to carry out the Soviet agreement made in 1946 to distribute 50,000 copies of the magazine monthly. After more than two years, during which Amerika was a complete sellout at that figure, the Soviet Government reported a more than 50 percent drop in sales over a 12-month period in 1949-50.

Following the Department’s representations, however, the latest report shows an upturn from 18,250 copies sold in August to 21,617 in September. It is hoped that this increase reflects improved distribution and will continue until the former full circulation of 50,000 copies is restored.

Even in the comparatively brief span of our operations, the world-wide information program has achieved some important objectives. Some basic conceptions about the United States have been corrected. The picture of Uncle Shylock is fading. Gangsters, Babbitts and penthouse playboys are no longer regarded as the typical Americans. We have also gotten out to a larger audience the whys and wherefores of America’s postwar moves. We have spelled out the true objectives of the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty and Point 4. All this has been done despite the persistent and strenuous effort of the Soviet Union to poison the minds of millions of the world’s people against these—and against us.

This is all obviously to the good—but it is not enough. As far as the government operation is concerned, our organization is not yet complete—and rounding it out into the effective mechanism that is required will take time and effort. Moreover, while we have a knowledge of the fundamentals in handling truth as a cold-war weapon, we still have lots to learn about the finer points of this truth strategy.

New techniques must be developed and new ways must be found to get to additional millions of people that we do not now reach. The latest moves in that direction are now well along. The President, this year, called for a greatly expanded Campaign of Truth; the Congress voted most of the funds we asked, and the Campaign is now getting under way.

An Advisory Commission of nationally known figures in the information field has been working with us for two years. The suggestions and the counsel of this Commission have been invaluable. So, now, we are going a step farther. We are setting up panels for each of the media—radio, news, pictures and movies—as well as one for broad questions of substance. A member of the Advisory Commission is in charge of each panel and will draft some of the best scientific and strategic brains in the country. These specialists will scrutinize the entire information and exchange program with an eye to stepping up its scope and effectiveness. By this means, we will be able to draw on our great resources of private talent and experience—and I assure you that we are going to need them.

However, the Campaign of Truth cannot succeed if it is exclusively a government effort. It requires a broader base—to include private business and particularly such private organizations as are represented here today. You people, perhaps more than any others, are aware of many of the problems involved in dealing with people of other nations. You, long ago, learned the importance of behavior when traveling abroad.

I was very pleased to know that the recent Thirty-seventh National Foreign Trade Association Convention

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