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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 7661

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PL XH

SURJ: EVALUATION REPORTS OF RADIO FREE EUROPE OUTPUT *J. E. Wolf RFE/*

REF: (A) WARSAW 5319 (NOTAL), (B) WARSAW 2096

1. SUMMARY: WE CONTINUE TO REGARD HIGHLY THE OUTPUT OF BOTH RFE'S POLISH BROADCASTING SERVICE AND ITS RESEARCH SERVICE. RFE'S POLISH LISTENERSHIP INCREASES DRAMATICALLY DURING TIMES OF DOMESTIC TENSION, THUS INCREASING THE NECESSITY FOR COMPREHENSIVE AND OBJECTIVE NEWS COVERAGE AND ANALYSIS. THE RADIO PROVIDED VALUABLE SERVICE TO ITS POLISH AUDIENCE DURING THE JUNE 24-25 PRICE-RISE FIASCO AND AFTERWARDS. OUR COMMENTS ON THE JUNE 24-JULY 7 PERIOD HAVE BEEN REPORTED SEPARATELY
(REF A). END SUMMARY.

2. RFE PROVIDED EXCELLENT FOLLOW-UP COVERAGE OF THE DRAMATIC EVENTS OF JUNE 25, AT TIMES SERVING AS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE SOURCE OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE POLISH LISTENER. THE

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WORKERS PROGRAM OF JULY 21 (1109) AND FACTS AND VIEWS 5048 (AUGUST 11), DEALING WITH THE TRIALS IN RADOM AND AT URSUS, ARE GOOD EXAMPLES. ALSO, FACTS AND VIEWS 5032 (JULY 23) IS ADROITLY WRITTEN AND HIGHLY EFFECTIVE.

3. THE RADIO CONTINUES TO BE A RELIABLE SOURCE CONCERNING CHURCH AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL PROTEST. FACTS AND VIEWS 5062 (AUGUST 27) IS ONE EXAMPLE OF MANY. UNFORTUNATELY, ITS CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH CONTAINS "OUR COUNTRY," IN CLEAR VIOLATION OF RFE'S INTERNAL GUIDELINES.

4. ALTHOUGH RFE HAS A DEVOTED FOLLOWING OF REGULAR LISTENERS IN POLAND AND IS ASSURED OF AN EVEN LARGER AUDIENCE IN CRISIS SITUATIONS, THERE IS STILL A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION WHICH IN OUR VIEW NORMALLY PAYS LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE STATION. WE BELIEVE THAT FURTHER CHANGES IN BROADCASTING CONTENT WOULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO MANY OF THESE POTENTIAL LISTENERS. AN OVERLY HARSH OR CYNICAL TONE CAN DETRACT FROM SOUND ARGUMENTATION. WE CITE FOR EXAMPLE THE MAY 3 DAILY COMMENTARY (3121) AND ITS REFERENCE TO PARTY "TRAINWASHING," AND THE ALLUSION IN FACTS AND VIEWS 5009 (JUNE 26) TO POLISH "AUTOCRACY" AND TO THE SEJM AS A "MOCKERY OF DEMOCRACY". FACTS AND VIEWS 4994 (JUNE 9) AND PANORAMA NO. 5605 (JUNE 10) BOTH EMPHASIZE THE DISCREPANCY IN GERMAN AND POLISH PRESS COVERAGE OF GIEREK'S VISIT TO THE FRG. WHILE THE FORMER PROGRAM CONTAINS MORE INFORMATION, ITS EFFECT ON THE UNCOMMITTED LISTENER IS LESS ARRESTING BECAUSE OF ITS HARSH TONE. SIMILARLY, MILOTOWSKA-KRZYSZTOFIK SCORES MORE POINTS IN HER AUGUST 7 EDITORIAL (FACTS AND VIEWS 5045) ON THE SUGAR SHORTAGE THAN SZNARBACHOWSKI, (PANORAMA 5649, AUGUST 11) BECAUSE SHE STICKS TO THE SUBJECT AND AVOIDS ASKING RHETORICAL QUESTIONS.

5. RFE HAS IMPROVED ITS REPORTING OF SEJM EVENTS AND THE CONTROVERSY INSIDE ZNAK SINCE OUR LAST SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT (REF B). FACTS AND VIEWS 4949 OF APRIL 15 AND FACTS AND VIEWS 4965 OF MAY 6 PRESENTING BOTH SIDES OF THE QUESTIONS TREATED, ARE GREATLY PREFERABLE TO THE APPROACHES WE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY.

6. RFE REPORTING OF ECONOMIC EVENTS AND PROBLEMS IN POLAND CONTINUES TO BE OUTSTANDING. PROGRAMS SUCH AS ECONOMICS 1106 OF AUGUST 9 AND FACTS AND VIEWS 5055 OF AUGUST 19 DEAL WITH HIGHLY IMPORTANT TOPICS IN MEASURED TONES AND WITH TELLING LOGIC. IN

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UNFORTUNATE CONTRAST. "BLACK ON WHITE," NO. 439, AUGUST 28, DISCUSSING THE "EXPLOITATION" TO WHICH POLISH YOUTH IS SUBJECTED WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO ENGAGE IN "SOCIAL WORK", REPRESENTS A SHALLOW TREATMENT OF THIS SUBJECT. THIS TYPE OF TREATMENT, WHICH FORTUNATELY APPEARS TO BE DECREASING IN VOLUME, DETRACTS FROM THE IMPACT OF RFE BROADCASTING GENERALLY.

7. SPECIAL PROGRAM 6689 OF SEPTEMBER 5 AND THE WORKERS PROGRAM OF SEPTEMBER 8 (1123) BOTH ADDRESS THE ISSUES IN A THOUGHT-PROVOKING MANNER. WE HOPE THE TENDENCY IN BOTH SCRIPTS TO OVEREMPHASIZE OBVIOUS POINTS WILL BECOME RARER IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. RFE'S POLISH AUDIENCE HAS SHOWN ITSELF TIME AND AGAIN TO BE POLITICALLY SOPHISTICATED AND ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE MESSAGE WITHOUT HAVING TO BE HIT ON THE HEAD BY EXCESSIVE REPETITION.
DAVIES

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