

RELEASE IN PART  
B6

**From:** H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2010 6:26 PM  
**To:** 'mchaleja@state.gov'  
**Subject:** Re: Notes on meeting on SW reductions

Let the fun begin---and let's keep going w our plans.

----- Original Message -----

**From:** McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>  
**To:** H  
**Sent:** Thu Nov 04 18:00:18 2010  
**Subject:** Fw: Notes on meeting on SW reductions

A bit down in the weeds but thought you'd like to see R's are already getting started.

Jm

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**From:** Susan Andross [redacted]  
**To:** BBG Board Mail Group [redacted]  
**Cc:** Richard Lobo [redacted]; Jeffrey Trimble [redacted]; Maryjean Buhler [redacted]  
 Danforth W. Austin [redacted]  
**Sent:** Thu Nov 04 17:39:45 2010  
**Subject:** Notes on meeting on SW reductions

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This morning, Governors Meehan and Perino, accompanied by IBB Director Lobo and VOA Director Austin, met with staff of Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member on House Foreign Affairs and likely chair of the Committee in the new Congress. Below is a summary of that meeting.

#### Meeting on VOA Shortwave Reductions

BBG Governors Michael Meehan and Dana Perino, along with agency officials Dick Lobo, Dan Austin, Alberto Mascaro, Bill Bell and Susan Andross, met with staff of Reps. Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), and Albio Sires (D-FL) to discuss the proposed VOA SW reductions that were scheduled to go into effect last weekend. These reductions include Spanish to Latin America, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Mandarin and represent the final phase of an Internet enhancement initiative proposed in FY 2009. Savings from the SW reductions would be reallocated to support the Internet enhancements – many of which are well underway.

The meeting began with a request from the Hill staff that we affirm that none of the proposed shortwave reductions would affect OCB transmissions. We assured them that this was the case. The Governors also pledge to pursue a transparent relationship with the Foreign Affairs Committee, noting that the Board decision to defer the transmission reductions was made to ensure continued dialogue on the subject. After amicable and in-depth discussion the assembled congressional staff asked that we provide additional information on a number of questions to inform their principals' review. Much of the requested information reflects concerns about how the people of Cuba would be affected by the reductions. Concerns raised by the staff include:

- While BBG is preserving all OCB transmissions, Cubans also tune into VOA Spanish to Latin America. What is BBG doing to “compensate” the Cuban audience for the loss of this information?
- Will eliminating VOA Spanish SW allow the Cuban government to focus all of their efforts on jamming OCB’s SW, rather than having to jam both Services?
- Congress has been supportive of a multi-pronged transmission strategy to repressive markets – if one transmission is jammed, then a broadcast alternative is available. How does this affect this traditional strategy?
- What are the “opportunity costs” involved in the proposal (or exactly what are we buying by walking out of SW and into new media); and how effective are BBG’s web censorship countermeasures.

Rep. Ros-Lehtinen’s Chief of Staff, Yleem Poblete, noted that the Congress will be driving “smart cuts” in the years ahead. But they want to ensure that important audiences are not adversely affected by these cuts, or policy goals undermined. She suggested that, if the BBG’s SW reductions could be more targeted or be refined to a smaller scale (reflecting priorities given to Cuba, Venezuela, and Ecuador) to achieve budget goals, the package might be more palatable. As it stands, members of Congress see high priority languages to China, Vietnam and Cuba and become sensitive to the proposal.

BBG pledged to provide additional information to address their concerns by the first week of December, after the Board discusses the pending reductions at the November board meeting. The staffers supported this timetable, noting it coincides with Republican Conference meetings to select the leadership. Staff would also have a better feel for the leadership’s budget goals going forward. BBG will also provide further detail on audience research in Cuba relating to VOA Spanish, and keep the committee informed of future BBG surveys in Cuba.