

SPANISH MAY EXTEND

RADIO LIBERTY SETUP

NYTimes MAR 18 1976

Special to The New York Times

CIA

MADRID, March 17 — The Spanish Government agreed today to consider an American proposal to extend for three to five years a contract that allows Radio Liberty to beam broadcasts to the Soviet Union from Spanish soil.

After Spanish officials had indicated that they wished the powerful transmitters to halt operations, within months, Foreign Minister José María de Areilza indicated that an extension of the contract would be negotiable in talks with three officials of the station and the American Ambassador, Wells Stabler.

David Abshire, chairman of the board of International Broadcasting, which oversees Radio Liberty, was understood to have stressed to the Spanish that a minimum of three years was needed to find alternate sites and construct a new transmission system and that anything less would be "disruptive." He also argued that Radio Liberty's broadcasts, which depend on the Spanish site north of Barcelona for some three-quarters of their power, were within the letter and the spirit of the Helsinki agreements on European security.

This was apparently intended to counter Soviet pressure on Spain to halt the broadcasting.