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MOBILIZING THE AIRWAVES: THE CHALLENGE TO THE VOICE OF AMERICA AND RFE/RL

INTRODUCTION

For tens of millions of East Europeans, the most reliable information about their own country comes from outside. Each day they listen -- often secretly -- to the radio broadcasts beamed from the West. No sources of information are more important to them, or to U.S. interests, than the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). The radios broadcast around the clock in some forty languages and their signals reach significant portions of the western Soviet Union and its European satellites. Without these programs, Poles certainly would not have been informed of the momentum of the Solidarity workers' movement, nor would other East Europeans have known of its existence.

It is clearly in the national interest of the United States that these stations continue to operate. As the peoples under Communist domination are informed about the realities of their governments and the nations of the West, they are less likely to be misled by Party propaganda. The Soviet Union pays tribute to the power of these programs in its own way by spending a tremendous sum to jam them.

Yet the radios are in danger at home. During the detente era, they were seriously underfunded and needed technical improvements were not made. In view of the potential these stations hold for American security policy, it is important that this trend be reversed. This study examines the current status of the radios and how to increase their effectiveness.

THE DECLINE OF THE BROADCASTS

The last ten years have taken their toll on RFE/RL and VOA. With the pursuit of "detente" and the proclamation that America

must get over its "inordinate fear of communism," the radios have been seriously underfunded and allowed to lapse into technical obsolescence. Efforts to make VOA programming as bland as possible have eroded employee morale. While the Voice of America, an agency of the U.S. government, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, a private corporation funded by the U.S. government, have differing missions, the inherent difficulties of broadcasting to the Eastern Bloc are similar.

Increased funding is urgently needed to modernize equipment, particularly to combat jamming by the Soviets and to extend the broadcast signal to regions not now reached. Programming must be more flexible to adapt to audience circumstances and interest. Staffs need to be increased, while security must be provided when personnel occupy vulnerable posts abroad.

HISTORY AND CURRENT OPERATIONS OF RFE/RL

Until 1976, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty functioned as two completely separate organizations. Radio Free Europe began broadcasting in July 1950 in the wake of the Berlin Blockade and the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia. After the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, accusations arose that inflammatory broadcasts by Radio Free Europe might have misled the people of Hungary into believing that the United States was ready to intervene on their behalf. Although these allegations were unfounded, Radio Free Europe modified its broadcasting policy; it became a surrogate free press for the countries of Eastern Europe.

Radio Liberty began broadcasts to the Soviet Union as Radio Liberation in January 1951. It was then a part of the "American Committee for Freedom of the Peoples of the U.S.S.R., Incorporated." The Committee's main activity was sponsoring shortwave broadcasts by recent emigres. Like Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberation's policy evolved from broadcasting quasi-wartime propaganda to providing a "home service" station that filled the Soviet people's need for information. This gradual shift in emphasis led to changing the name of the station to Radio Liberty in 1963.

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are unique in international broadcasting. They operate in much the same manner as the broadcast media in the United States, providing international news and commentary; but they supplement this by reporting and interpreting events in a manner understandable to Soviet or East European citizens. Correcting misinformation or expanding on the partial information given by the official Communist media are also integral parts of their programming.

When covert funding of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty by the Central Intelligence Agency was revealed in 1970, President Nixon was pressured to shift appropriation authority to Congress. In 1972, he established the "Presidential Study Commission on International Broadcasting" to examine whether Radio Liberty and

Radio Free Europe should continue to receive U.S. funding and support, and what form such funding should take, or whether the stations should be shut down. The Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, J. William Fulbright, led the attack against the radios and branded them "relics of the Cold War."

The Commission, chaired by Milton S. Eisenhower, published a report to the President in 1973 titled "The Right To Know" in which it concluded that:

...the Commission feels that the use of United States Government funds for Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty should be put into proper perspective. It is our conviction that the special contributions of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to a better understanding by citizens of the Iron Curtain countries of what is happening in the wider world and their own countries have an indirect but very appreciable long-term effect. Hence, the cost of the radios cannot be considered separately from our nation's total cost of working for peace and deterring aggression. Over a long period of years, the contribution can obviate military expenditures many times greater than the broadcasting costs. Contrariwise, elimination of the radios could lead over time to increased military costs.¹

The Eisenhower Commission suggested that a "Board for International Broadcasting" be created. In 1973, Public Law 93-129, later amended after the merger of the two radios in 1976, established the Board for International Broadcasting "to review and evaluate the mission and operation of RFE/RL, Incorporated, and to assess the quality, effectiveness and professional integrity of its broadcasting within the context of the broad foreign policy objectives of the United States."² The BIB is composed of five voting members appointed by the President to fixed three-year terms and two ex officio members (the chief operating executive of the radios and the Chairman of the Board of RFE/RL). It handles the funding for RFE/RL and acts as a coordinator between the radio and the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government.

Today, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Incorporated, broadcasts over 1,017 hours weekly in six major languages of Eastern Europe and fifteen languages of the Soviet Union. Most of RFE/RL program operations are based in Munich, West Germany, but transmitters broadcast from Spain and Portugal, and correspondents report from several capitals of Europe. RFE/RL has studios, administrative offices, and programming facilities in New York

¹ "The Right to Know," Report of the Presidential Study Commission on International Broadcasting, 1973, p. 56.

² The Board for International Broadcasting, 6th Annual Report, 1980, p. 1.

City and Washington, D.C. Its staff numbers 1,662 worldwide. Its FY 1981 revised budget is \$97,495,000 at the exchange rate of 1.74 Deutsche Marks to the dollar, including \$3,000,000 in emergency funds should the exchange rate fall below DM 1.74.

Besides broadcasts to the Eastern Bloc, RFE/RL operates the largest private research facility in the West concentrating on Soviet, East European and Communist affairs. RFE/RL estimates that it reaches an audience of 32 million East Europeans and 14 million Soviet citizens. Constant Soviet jamming prevents millions more from receiving the broadcasts.

VOICE OF AMERICA

The Voice of America antedates the Cold War. It began broadcasting in German seventy-nine days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. During World War II, the Office of War Information absorbed the VOA. The first broadcast included a statement of purpose: "Daily at this time, we shall speak to you about America and the war -- the news may be good or bad -- we shall tell you the truth."

After the war, the State Department assumed responsibility to oversee the VOA. With the passage of the Smith-Mundt Act in 1948, the Voice of America became an integral element of American foreign policy. In 1953, responding to a recommendation by the Commission on Organization of the Government (the Hoover Commission), Congress created the United States Information Agency, of which the VOA became a part. In 1978, the Carter Administration merged the Department of State's Bureau of Cultural Information and the United States Information Agency to create the United States International Communication Agency.

At the height of World War II, the VOA broadcast in forty languages; by the end of the Korean War it peaked with forty-six languages. In 1953, twelve languages were dropped, and in 1955 direct shortwave broadcasts to Western Europe in all languages except English ceased. Currently VOA broadcasts regularly scheduled programs in forty languages, with special broadcasts in other languages. It broadcasts 904.75 hours weekly over 101 transmitters located in the United States and around the globe. The current FY 1981 operating budget of \$99,087,000 supports a staff of 2,214, including 750 American and foreign national personnel abroad.

PURPOSE OF RFE/RL AND VOA

Though similar in some respects, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Voice of America serve very different purposes. The VOA is an agency of the U.S. government, and is headed by the Associate Director of Broadcasting, who reports to the Director

of the United States International Communication Agency. Besides reporting accurate, objective, and comprehensive news, its mission is to "present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively and...also present responsible discussion and opinion on these policies." VOA is charged to "...represent America, not any single segment of American society, and [it] will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions." In other words, it is what the name implies: the "Voice" of America.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Incorporated, has never been a part of the United States government. It is an independent entity, registered as a corporation in the state of Delaware. RFE/RL is staffed primarily by East European and Soviet emigres and its broadcasts are specifically designed for audiences behind the Iron Curtain. Like VOA, RFE/RL's mission is to transmit world news accurately and reliably, but RFE/RL are also to "broadcast and critically analyze documents and works of political significance and/or cultural merit which have been produced by citizens of the U.S.S.R. or the Eastern European nations but have been denied official publication by censorship."³ RFE/RL operates as "home service" radio stations to fill the void created by the lack of free, diverse press. Independence of the official U.S. government is crucial to the operation of the radios. While RFE/RL by law does not make broadcasts "inconsistent with the broad foreign policy objectives of the United States," it can be hardhitting and controversial where this would be inappropriate for a government radio.

EASTERN BLOC INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING

The Soviet Union expends more resources on international broadcasting than any other nation. The Central Intelligence Agency estimates that the Soviets spend \$700 million a year on the operating budget of Radio Moscow, which broadcasts 2,000 hours weekly in eighty-two languages over 285 high-powered transmitters. Radio Moscow does not temper its broadcasts; explosive statements and extreme distortions of the truth form the basis of its programming. These probably played a major part in the sacking of the American Embassy in Pakistan by an angry mob; earlier broadcasts had implied American involvement in the takeover of the Great Mosque in Mecca. The Soviets also operate a "semi-official" station, Radio Peace and Progress -- that broadcasts more stridently than Radio Moscow -- and several "covert" or "liberation" radios such as the Voice of Free Turkey and the well-known National Voice of Iran, which broadcasted inflammatory and radically anti-American material during the hostage crisis in Iran and continues to do so.⁴ The other Eastern bloc nations do

³ "The Mission of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty," Board for International Broadcasting, 7th Annual Report, 1981, p. 31.

⁴ Kenneth L. Adelman, "Speaking of America: Public Diplomacy In Our Times," Foreign Affairs, Spring 1981.

a considerable amount of broadcasting, although not as intensively as the U.S.S.R.

An additional sum, estimated some years ago at \$300 million, is spent annually by the Soviets to jam incoming Western broadcasts. The Soviets have complained publicly and repeatedly that broadcasts by VOA and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty constitute interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. The Soviets even threatened to boycott the 1972 Olympics in Munich, West Germany, unless RFE/RL were shut down. The stations, however, remained on the air and the Soviets attended the games anyway. While Hungary and Romania have not jammed Western broadcasts since the early sixties, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and occasionally Poland continue to jam RFE/RL and VOA intermittently.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES OF RFE/RL AND THE VOA

The technical ability to reach a targeted audience with a constantly audible signal is a sine qua non of effective broadcasting. RFE/RL is now undertaking a limited program to modernize its transmitters. By 1982, the power RFE/RL uses to transmit will have almost doubled over eight years, from 3,775 kilowatts to 7,500 kilowatts. Even with this upgrading, Radio Liberty will not be able to send a reliable signal to Eastern Europe nor will it be able to reach Soviet Central Asia on a "first hop" basis. (A "hop" is the signal bounce from shortwave transmitters up to the ionosphere and down to the receiver. The "second hop" occurs when the signal goes back up to the ionosphere and then descends a second time. For each hop after the first, there is loss of approximately 90 percent of the signal strength. The "first hop" area of a Radio Liberty broadcast does not go beyond the Ural Mountains.) There are no current plans to remedy this problem. According to planners at RFE/RL, the main problem is finding a host country in the Middle East for RFE/RL transmitting. Countries such as Oman and Pakistan, which are ideally located, are subject to great pressure by the Soviets not to allow RFE/RL facilities. Considering the current situation in Afghanistan, and in light of the growing significance of the Soviet Moslem nationalities, encouraging a host government to allow the construction of RFE/RL transmitters (which takes years), should be a high priority at the BIB and the State Department.

Later this year, the modernization program will make signals transmitted to Eastern Europe meet the minimum technical criteria established by a presidential study of U.S. international broadcast requirements submitted to the Congress in 1977. Yet equipment remains inadequate. For example, VOA still uses a pre-World War II German transmitter. Spare parts are becoming difficult to find and equipment breaks down continually.

There have been a number of specific measures proposed in Congress to strengthen international broadcasting to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In a recent letter to President

Reagan, Representative Jim Courter (R-NJ) made several short-term suggestions:

- Increase the number of broadcasts by operating transmitters during hours normally unscheduled.
- Begin out-of-band broadcasting.
- Readjust VOA and RFE/RL transmitter schedules to increase audibility in Soviet languages.
- Allocate six to ten transmitter hours at VOA's facility at Kavala, Greece, to relay RL broadcasts to Soviet Central Asia.
- Explore the possibility with the British government of increasing BBC broadcasts to Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.
- Examine the possibility of cooperation with other allied governments. (Such initiatives might include requesting that U.S. broadcasters temporarily be allowed to use the radio facilities of allied governments.)
- Purchase, once again, transmitter time from Taiwan to broadcast RL programs to the Soviet Far East and Eastern Siberia.

These proposals are intended as interim measures until the United States constructs adequate facilities of its own.

PROGRAMMING

While the ability to transmit to a specific area is essential for successful broadcasting, the nature of programming determines whether an audience is willing to endure jamming and risk prosecution to tune in to American broadcasts on a regular basis. It is obvious from the reports reaching the West and the tremendous jamming efforts by the Soviets that the programming is successful. Both VOA and RFE/RL broadcast international news, commentaries and "Round Tables," as well as features which include music, history, and human interest stories. Since the missions of the two radios differ, their respective programming must be examined separately.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty has a reputation in Eastern Europe for relevant and timely broadcasts. It has been estimated that during the recent unrest in Poland, more than two-thirds of the adult population tuned in to Radio Free Europe broadcasts each week. In the Soviet Union, those able to receive the broadcasts listen to Radio Liberty frequently. In the large cities, however, Soviet ground wave jamming has made reception nearly impossible most of the time.

RFE/RL first-run broadcasts are 50 percent news and news features, 35 percent political, economic and social-cultural features, and 15 percent other programming, such as music.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty programming has been criticized, particularly for how it deals with the Soviet Union. A recent memorandum prepared by James Critchlow, a programming and research officer with the Board of International Broadcasting, concluded that:

The program Policy Guidelines which are supposed to govern RFE/RL broadcasts are systematically being violated by the RL Russian Service, with detriment not only to the reputation of the radio station in the eyes of its listeners but with an impact damaging to American foreign policy interests.

Relying on very weak evidence, Critchlow alleged violations of Radio Liberty policy such as anti-democratic and anti-Western themes, anti-Catholic programming, and anti-Semitic overtones. Although the BIB took no significant action, this internal memorandum was leaked to Jack Anderson and became the subject of one of his daily columns. The result was a distorted public image of RFE/RL, causing some congressional staffs to reconsider funding and support of the radio.

On the other hand, Vladimir Bukovsky, a well-known Soviet dissident, has expressed legitimate criticism of the entire system of RFE/RL guidelines which serve to hamstring broadcasters and commentators. For example, the radio is directed to avoid:

...sweeping generalizations, propagandistic argumentation, gratuitous value judgments, unsupported criticism of the Communist system or its representatives, as well as the use of obsolete or inaccurate terminology such as "the Communist bloc," "Communist satellite countries," and "capitalism vs. communism."⁵

Bukovsky states that while the guidelines might be of some use, interpretation by some personnel leads to confusion and, more important, to self-censorship. To best serve the Soviet listener, the programs must be hard-hitting, and the news and opinions both diverse and controversial.

Bukovsky suggests that common sense should direct policy. Without well-informed, strategically-based common sense editing, he contends, guidelines are of little use. Bukovsky emphasizes that the radios are the best strategic resource that the United States has.⁶

⁵ RFE/RL Program Policy Guidelines, in paragraph 6, section 2, 6th Annual BIB Report.

⁶ Opinions expressed to the author of this paper by Vladimir Bukovsky.

There has been little criticism of the East European broadcasts of RFE/RL. A recent emigre from Poland has stated that Radio Free Europe is the most popular of the Western radios. Radio Free Europe broadcast hours total more than Voice of America, British Broadcasting Corporation, and Deutsche Welle/Deutschlandfunk combined: 555 hours per week of first-run and repeat transmissions. In light of the current situation in Poland, consideration should be given to increasing the broadcasts to that country from nineteen to twenty-four hours daily.

VOA programming consists of 60 percent news, compiled by a centralized news operations room, and 20 percent commentary describing U.S. foreign policy and coordinated with the State Department. The remaining 20 percent is feature programming such as music. VOA listeners around the world essentially hear the same news broadcasts. After the first several lead stories, the different language services are free to pick news items from a "news menu." Provision is also made on occasion for items of special interest for specific areas that are optional for other services.

VOA policy demands that all news items must have at least two sources. Like RFE/RL, VOA has a reputation for accurate reporting. However, while centralization is effective for accuracy, the standardization which results does not take into account the interests of diverse audiences or their access to alternative information sources. VOA has established priorities for air time among the languages in which it broadcasts. While English language broadcasts are on a twenty-four hour basis and Russian language service is sixteen hours daily, languages such as Swahili or Lao are on the air only one hour daily. The Polish language service broadcasts a mere two hours daily.

The Voice of America Russian language service has its critics. Ludmilla Alexeyeva, a noted Soviet dissident, has been VOA listener for twenty years. She states that most Soviet citizens listen to VOA more than the other Western services because it is the most audible, not because it is the most favored. In a recent article she states that:

VOA's broadcasts are frequently boring...Politically acute topics, which other radio stations are discussing, are avoided. Very often facts, unpleasant for the Soviet authorities, are either hushed up or smoothed over....Only dissidents have overcome the state monopoly on information, and dissidents constitute the only moral and intellectual opposition. Therefore, no matter how small their numbers and how alienated from the rest of the society they may be, everything they do or say is acutely interesting to the rest of the "silent majority" -- even to those who dislike them. Meanwhile, VOA broadcasts on the independent life in Soviet society are far and few between, and they almost never deal

with what the dissidents are doing, but only with their arrests and trials.⁷

In a recent television interview with Congressman John Leboutillier (R-NY), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn spoke of the inadequate content of Western broadcasts. He pointed out that most of the programming dwells on the material aspects of Western life rather than subjects of intense interest to the Soviet listener, such as ideology, history, and religion.

The VOA can reach more of the Soviet Union than any other Western radio. Until RFE/RL is able to broadcast strong transmissions, VOA should make its programming more diverse. There are many emigres from the Soviet Union who are fully integrated into American society and are capable of writing the politically dynamic material the Soviet listener desires.

VOA Russian Service broadcasts only forty-five minutes of first-run religious programming, fifteen of which is devoted to Judaism. Since there are many indications that there is a Christian revival, an increase of religious programming should be seriously considered. The wisdom of broadcasting music during periods of jamming is also questionable. Although news is distorted, it often is audible through jamming, where music becomes a jumble of noise.

MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Because of the non-governmental nature of RFE/RL, the Board of International Broadcasting was created to grant and oversee funds allocated by the Congress to the radio. This has created dual management, consisting of the Board of Directors of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Board of International Broadcasting. The BIB has been headed by political appointees, while the Board of Directors of RFE/RL has been staffed by professionals. There is friction between the two bodies.

Lack of funding, poor programming, and shortage of personnel, are some of the issues. However, the primary source of discontent has been BIB actions perceived as a detriment to the radio. Since 1973, there have been solid proposals for revitalization, yet the BIB has asked for only moderate increases in funding for the radio. John Gronouski, previous chairman of the BIB, even wanted to allow officials of the Communist governments of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union "equal time" to respond to RFE/RL broadcasts which they felt to "be unfair." Many at RFE/RL opposed this recommendation, since Communist governments have a monopoly on the domestic media. Some RFE/RL executives feel that the BIB

⁷ Ludmilla Alexeyeva, "Voice of America Russian-Language Broadcasts," Russia, Issue #2, 1981.

has been a hindrance to the radio and a source of negative and inaccurate leaks to the media. They feel that BIB should try harder to obtain more funds and find ways to promote financial efficiency. Instead, RFE/RL administrators have had to spend time on Capitol Hill lobbying to counter the efforts of the BIB.

It is widely felt in Congress that the current management structure is awkward. Pending legislation would eliminate the RFE/RL Board of Directors and allow the BIB full control of RFE/RL. Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) has introduced an amendment for the FY 1982 budget authorization; it has passed the Senate and is now before the House. It states:

Sec. 304(a) The Board for International Broadcasting Act of 1973 is amended by adding to the end thereof the following new section:

"MERGER OF THE BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING AND THE RFE/RL BOARD"

"Sec. 11.(a) Effective January 1, 1982, no grant may be made under this Act to RFE/RL, Incorporated, unless the certificate of incorporation of RFE/RL, Incorporated, has been amended to provide that --

"(1) the Board of Directors of RFE/RL, Incorporated, shall consist of the members of the Board for International Broadcasting and of no other members; and

"(2) such Board of Directors shall make all major policy determinations governing the operation of RFE/RL, Incorporated, and shall appoint and fix the compensation of such managerial officers and employees of RFE/RL, Incorporated, as it deems necessary to carry out the requirements of this Act.

"(b) Compliance with the requirement of Paragraph (1) of subsection (a) shall not be construed to make RFE/RL, Incorporated, a Federal agency or instrumentality."⁸

This proposal, similar to George McGovern's abortive proposal of 1977, could have several negative effects. It would make the U.S. government directly responsible for what is broadcast by RFE/RL, which would be awkward should the Administration be engaged in SALT or other delicate negotiations with the Soviets. Moreover, opponents of this amendment contend it would mean that direct control of the radio would be in the hands of presidential appointees whose main commitment would be to the specific foreign policy of the President. Thus RFE/RL could become as bland as VOA did during the Nixon and Ford Administrations.

⁸ Congressional Record, June 17, 1978, pp. S6387-8.

Proponents of the Pell Amendment perceive it to be the way to unify management of RFE/RL, the BIB and the Board of Directors of the RFE/RL. Currently, the only leverage the BIB chairman holds is the threat to withhold funds, which is impractical in most circumstances. It has been further suggested that the passage of the amendment would allow the current Administration as well as future administrations more authority over the radio, necessary because the funds of taxpayers enable the radios to exist. Consideration of the amendment is expected during November.

PERSONNEL PROBLEMS AT VOA

The VOA runs as an agency of the United States International Communication Agency. Employees are part of the Civil Service and are given GS ratings. (Some are also Reserve Foreign Service Officers and contract employees.) For many years, quiet animosity has existed between career foreign service information officers, who are often placed temporarily in the VOA as service directors, and career VOA staff. Advancement is another source of frustration within the language services: the best rating one can achieve in assignments other than editor is GS-11. While an employee can be promoted to other positions, such as a news writer, such positions use only English. As a result, some of the most effective bilingual employees leave VOA for better opportunities both in and out of the federal government. The positions are then often filled with emigre personnel who are not as fluent in English as their assignments require. Consequently, mistakes both in translation and in the home language become more frequent.

FUNDING

Since the Soviet Union spends approximately \$300 million on jamming alone, the Soviets spend more money on U.S.-sponsored broadcasts than the U.S. government does. Inflation, increased energy costs, and fluctuating currency rates have impaired growth of the radios.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty has been limited to a growth in funding of between 5.9 percent and 9.4 percent; this has not kept pace with inflation. Indeed, it has been barely adequate to continue operations. Hiring new talent, inaugurating new programs, undertaking needed long-term maintenance have all been beyond the financial reach of the radio. RFE/RL has allotted \$2.4 million for FY 1981 to move some of the Munich staff to New York City, as recommended by the General Accounting Office. The Reagan Administration reconsidered the political and morale effects of this move and recommended against implementing it. The Administration also allowed RFE/RL to keep the funds allotted as a supplemental for operations. However, the funds had to be used to offset the \$3 million in damages caused by the bomb blast in Munich in February of 1981. Additional operational budget

funds were needed to completely cover the damages. The final amount given to the radio in excess of funds originally appropriated by Congress was \$4 million dollars. As for the FY 1982, the Administration has cut the operating budget by 12 percent from the original figure proposed. This would mean an increase of approximately 8 percent from the FY 1981 budget -- an amount woefully inadequate.⁹

For the Voice of America, the picture is somewhat brighter. Congress has allotted \$79.3 million to augment the transmitter facilities in Botswana and Sri Lanka. This project will be especially important to the Central and Southeast Asian region where the present transmitting capabilities have been weak. However, the budget is still inadequate. In 1977, the budget for ICA (upon which VOA is dependent) was \$320,766,000; the proposed 1982 budget as of September 1981 is \$466,638,000. In 1977 dollars this is \$288,206,000, or a real dollar decrease of \$32 million.

VOA still lacks funds to broadcast the hours needed to counter Communist jamming and propoganda. The engineering staff is shorthanded, as are most of the services. In almost every language service there are positions vacant, in part through lack of funds. Both VOA and RFE/RL still lack the resources to finish replacing 1950s vacuum-tube era equipment.

OPERATION BUDGETS OF RFE/FL AND VOA, FY78 TO FY81 (PROJECTED)

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>VOA</u>	<u>RFE/RL</u>	<u>DM Conv. Rate</u>
1978	\$ 69,728,000	\$64,457,000	2.58
1979	\$ 75,294,000	\$72,490,000	2.1075
1980	\$ 85,670,000	\$80,430,000	1.93
1981	\$ 99,087,000	\$97,495,000	1.74
1982 (Projected)	\$107,022,000 ¹⁰	\$86,500,014	1.93

A proposal from Congressman Courter addresses the problem of technical facility modernization of RFE/RL. Among his major points are:

- Replacement of obsolescent medium wave transmitters in West Germany for East European coverage.
- Installation of ten to twelve transmitters at new West European site for coverage of European targets.

⁹ Figures according to Arthur D. Levin, Financial Manager for the Board for International Broadcasting.

¹⁰ As of this writing, the Office of Management and Budget has announced that the International Communications Agency will have to cut 12 percent from its original FY 1982 budget. The effect on the VOA operational budget is unknown, although the transmitter augmentation will not be affected.

- Erection of eight transmitters at a new Middle Eastern/South Asian site for Soviet Central Asian and West Siberian coverage.
- Miscellaneous technical improvements.
- Replacement of obsolescent transmitters in West Germany for coverage of European targets.

This package, based on a more modest proposal by RFE/RL, is estimated to cost \$130 million. A bill to appropriate the necessary funds is now being written and potential co-sponsors are being sought.

SECURITY

Since Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty links with the CIA were severed, individual safety has been a major problem. Employees have been threatened and the intelligence agencies of several of the Eastern Bloc countries have attempted to recruit them. RFE/RL's equipment and facilities have also been the target of Eastern Bloc sabotage. The vulnerability of the radio was nakedly exposed on February 21, 1981, when the Munich headquarters was bombed. The blast caused several million dollars in damage to equipment and hurt morale seriously. Although repairs have been made, the attack was successful in diverting the operating supplemental funds granted to the station by the Reagan Administration.

On July 25, 1981, Jack Anderson reported that the personal secretary of the central news director had been arrested by Bavarian police on charges of spying for the Romanian secret police. In that same article, Anderson reported that Emil Georgescu, a supervising program editor, complained of being harassed by death threats and physical abuse by the Romanian secret police. A few days after the article was published, Georgescu was stabbed twenty-six times in his garage and required intensive care treatment.

Another example of problems with security occurred in the early seventies. When Vladimir Bukovsky was freed from prison for a short time in 1970, he was given a samizdat (an underground dissident publication) by Vladimir Osipov with Osipov's own handwritten corrections on it. Bukovsky then passed the document to the West, where it was subsequently placed in the Radio Liberty samizdat archive. In 1974, when Bukovsky again was in prison, he was interrogated by the KGB about Osipov. As Bukovsky was denying any knowledge of Osipov, the interrogator produced the same samizdat he had passed to the West four years earlier. It was unmistakably the same because it contained the corrections in Osipov's handwriting. The cover sheet had the Radio Liberty Archive logo and was stamped with the date it was received. As a result, the Soviet authorities sentenced Osipov to four years in prison.

The staff and facilities of RFE/RL must be protected since they are and will continue to be targets of Eastern Bloc covert actions. The government of the Federal Republic of Germany is reluctant to cooperate with the radio because it views RFE/RL as a strictly American operation. An added factor is that some officials in the FRG government view RFE/RL as an obstacle to the forging of closer ties to the Soviet Union and East Germany.

The following steps could improve security:

- The CIA should once again conduct background investigations of potential employees.
- Updates on the clearances of employees working for RFE/RL should be conducted as soon as possible.
- Funds for conventional security of the physical plant should be increased.

These measures should apply not only to the facility in Munich, but to all RFE/RL personnel and property abroad.

CONCLUSION

Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty have suffered from insufficient funding, technical inadequacy, and over-restrictive programming guidelines. Even under these conditions, the staffs have done a remarkable job. From what is known, both radios have wide audiences despite jamming and weak signals. However, much improvement is necessary. The Solidarity movement in Poland, the invasion of Afghanistan, and nationalist and religious awakening in the Soviet Union all point to a new era in the Eastern Bloc -- and new opportunities for the West. International broadcasting to those areas is vital. As Congressman Courter observed:

The truth is one of our greatest weapons -- and, as such it should be regard as an essential element in our defense policy. It is an extremely cost-effective non-military weapon that we must use as energetically as possible in order to prevent ever having to use our military weapons.¹¹

VOA and RFE/RL should be permitted to coordinate broadcasts in terms of what geographic areas can and cannot be reached, which transmitters can be shared, and what each knows about the audiences

¹¹ Representative Jim Courter, "Truth is a powerful weapon," The Washington Star, August 9, 1980.

reached or not being reached. Further neglect of the radios would be a waste of a great national security resource.

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