

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow VOA — On the Front Lines of the World's Hot Spots

The Voice of America has long been a lifeline of information for audiences around the globe during times of peace or political upheaval.

VOA's mission, to provide reliable and balanced news and information, remains the same as it was when the service began over 62 years ago.

With a vibrant team of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual broadcasters, VOA is on the scene worldwide to report news as it happens.

In 2004, VOA's 1,167 employees produce broadcasts that weekly include more than 1,000 hours of radio programs in 44 languages and nearly 50 hours of television to more than 100 million listeners and viewers. This is accomplished on a budget of \$151 million. News and information is also available on the Internet (www.VOANews.com) to a growing audience of computer users. Broadcasts are available daily, 24 hours a day.

How VOA Began

In the late 1930s, Nazi Germany used radio to spread propaganda. As war broke out in Europe, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and other Allied broadcasters sought to respond. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Roosevelt Administration decided the United States needed a full-fledged international broadcasting service, and VOA was born.

From makeshift studios in New York City, VOA's inaugural broadcast occurred on February 24, 1942, 79 days after the United States entered World War II. Initially, the service used the BBC's transmitters.

"The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth," announcer William Harlan Hale proclaimed in German as he launched the service.

Broadcast Operations

Today, VOA offers a rich variety of media—shortwave, AM, and FM radio broadcasts; satellite radio and television transmissions; and Internet streaming. VOA relies on a global network of satellites and transmitting stations including more than 130 transmitters with a combined power capability of over 35 million watts.

To support production for radio, TV, and the Internet, VOA's Washington, D.C., headquarters has 55 radio studios, five television studios, a digital stereo master control facility capable of switching 512 incoming circuits and 448 outgoing circuits, and three intake centers to record live radio and television reports from VOA correspondents worldwide. The recently deployed Dalet Digital Media System provides radio broadcasters with the capability to edit and produce radio programs from their desktop computers. The Dalet system is also used throughout the studio facilities and broadcast automation systems for radio production and on-air broadcasts.

Journalistic Integrity

VOA's journalistic independence is central to its success with international audiences. The VOA Charter, signed into law on July 12, 1976, provides permanent protection for VOA's journalistic integrity.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), an independent federal agency, oversees the VOA and all other non-military U.S. international broadcasting. The BBG's mission is: "To promote and sustain freedom and democracy by broadcasting accurate and objective news and information about the United States and the world to audiences overseas."

Targeted Broadcasts

In Iran, VOA reaches millions of people daily with Persian-language television programs, including VOA's nightly newscast *News and Views*, a youth-oriented magazine program *Next Chapter*, and an interactive discussion show *Roundtable with You*. Radio Farda, a joint effort of VOA and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), combines news and popular Persian and Western music on two 24-hour AM stations, as well as on shortwave, digital audio satellite, and the Internet. It complements VOA's existing Persian radio broadcasts.

In Afghanistan, VOA, in conjunction with RFE/RL's Radio Free Afghanistan, launched a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week radio broadcast stream in Dari and Pashto in May 2002. Programs include hourly news and information from around the world and features on issues such as health, education, women's rights, and economic reconstruction.

In Pakistan, VOA's Radio Aap ki Dunyaa (Your World Radio) is a dynamic new 12-hour-a-day Urdu language broadcast that was launched in May, 2004. Radio Aap ki Dunyaa provides millions of Pakistanis and other Urdu speakers with news, information, roundtable discussions, interviews, features, and music. The programs are formatted to appeal to Pakistani listeners between the ages of 15 and 39 – who account for an estimated 60 million of Pakistan's 150 million people – as well as millions more potential listeners in India, the Gulf, and the diaspora. VOA's new Urdu broadcasts are carried on medium wave and FM in Pakistan's eight largest cities, as well as on shortwave, digital audio satellite, and the Internet.

Working in the Community

VOA seeks to meet the everyday needs of its audience for reliable news and information. In Africa, for example, VOA produces programs in 10 languages. VOA enjoys a large audience in the region through six 24-hour FM stations along with dozens of radio, television and cable affiliates, and a growing Internet audience.

Along with targeted news, VOA broadcasts critically important information on public health issues such as HIV-AIDS and child immunizations. VOA's popular *Hip-Hop Connection*, a youth oriented music program, has organized

concerts with local talent educating young people on HIV-AIDS awareness.

VOA provides balanced coverage of political and economic issues, sponsoring town hall meetings, and candidate forums during national elections in numerous countries. In this way, VOA fosters the democratic process by providing a level playing field for candidates where none typically exists.

News Around the Clock

VOA English-language broadcasts are heard worldwide. *VOA News Now* is a fast-paced mix of news and features and is available 19 hours a day on satellite and the Internet as well as on shortwave during select times.

The newly opened VOA Newscenter has five radio studios, three television studios, and one intake center for correspondent reports. Its staff of writers and editors produce more than 150 news reports each day. Twenty domestic and 21 overseas correspondents along with more than 100 freelance reporters cover news events in the U.S. and around the world.

VOA's language services use these news reports as the basis for their programming and supplement them with regional news. Every service, additionally, has its own network of stringers providing in-language reports to tailor newscasts for target audiences.

Much of the news is reported for simulcast on radio, television, and the Internet, requiring VOA correspondents to master the technical demands of different media.

A Voice in Many Languages

VOA provides news and information in 44 languages including English and Special English.

VOA's Special English staff produce news and programs using a slow-paced delivery and simplified vocabulary, which has proved to be popular in Asia and elsewhere. Special English broadcasts have been credited with teaching English to listeners around the globe.

Interest is so high among VOA's audience that many language broadcasts and email subscription services include features on learning English.

Music and Information

VOA features a 24-hour satellite stream devoted entirely to American music, providing a window into American music artists and genres.

VOA's broadcasters, like the late Willis Conover, have acquired international acclaim. Conover, whose music program was on the air from 1955 to 1996, introduced jazz to music fans worldwide. He received fan mail from every corner of the earth, and was described by *Reader's Digest* as "the world's favorite American."

Working with Local Stations

VOA provides programs to 1,250 affiliate radio and television stations around the world via satellite downlinks and MP3 files. In South America, more than 80 AM and FM affiliates air *Enfoque Andino*, a daily Spanish-language program featuring issues of the Andean region with emphasis on conflict resolution, democracy building, and economic development.

Jamming

Throughout VOA's history, governments that want to censor information have jammed VOA's broadcasts. VOA has often circumvented those obstacles by increasing power, adding additional antennas, and boosting the number of broadcasts.

On the Internet

VOA provides the latest text news and information on www.VOAnews.com along with audio and video features. VOA's news is available via email subscription service in English and an increasing number of its broadcast languages. In China, VOA has more than two million email news subscribers. VOA streams live and on-demand its almost 1,000 hours of programs each week.

Across all broadcast media and from the front lines of the world's hot spots, VOA's mission remains the same—to provide accurate, balanced, and comprehensive news and information—yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

The VOA Charter

The VOA Charter, drafted in 1960, protects the integrity of VOA programming and defines the organization's mission. On July 12, 1976, President Gerald Ford signed it into law. The Charter now applies to all VOA broadcasts on radio, TV, and the Internet. It reads:

The long-range interests of the United States are served by communicating directly with the peoples of the world by radio. To be effective, the Voice of America must win the attention and respect of listeners. These principles will therefore govern Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts:

1. *VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective, and comprehensive.*
2. *VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions.*
3. *VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussion and opinion on these policies.*

VOA Broadcasts in the Following Languages

Afan Oromo	Dari	Korean	Shona
Albanian	English	Kurdish	Spanish
Amharic	French	Lao	Swahili
Armenian	Georgian	Macedonian	Thai
Azerbaijani	Greek	Mandarin	Tibetan
Bangla	Hausa	Ndebele	Tigrigna
Bosnian	Hindi	Pashto	Turkish
Burmese	Indonesian	Persian	Ukrainian
Cantonese	Khmer	Portuguese	Urdu
Creole	Kinyarwanda	Russian	Uzbek
Croatian	Kirundi	Serbian	Vietnamese

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