

**House Report 110-197 - STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND  
RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2008**

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## **INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING OPERATIONS**

The Committee recommendation includes \$671,632,000 to carry out United States International Broadcasting Operations, which is \$32,506,000 above the fiscal year 2007 level and \$14,155,000 above the request, after factoring in the separate request for Cuba broadcasting. This account funds the operating and engineering costs of Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). The recommendation also includes funding for Broadcasting to Cuba under this account. In the request, this funding was proposed under a separate account.

### *Middle East Broadcasting Networks, including Alhurra*

The United States continues to face an enormous challenge to provide the people of Arab and Muslim countries with accurate information about United States policies and values. The Committee continues to support efforts to expand the audience of listeners and viewers in the Arab and Muslim world. The Committee recommendation includes \$88,362,000 for television and radio broadcasting in Arabic, including Middle East Television and Radio Sawa, which is \$5,412,000 above the fiscal year 2007 level, excluding emergency appropriations, and \$13,402,000 below the request. The resources will provide for continued news capability of 24/7 coverage, including breaking news.

The Committee is deeply troubled by several programming decisions at Alhurra television during the period November 2006 through March 2007. On more than one occasion, the network aired live, and without opposing comment, statements by Hezbollah and Hamas leaders that were hateful, anti-American, and anti-Israel. The Network's coverage of the Holocaust Denial Conference also evidenced a lack of journalistic judgment and sensitivity. While just a portion of the overall broadcast program, these

incidents call into question the management and overall journalistic philosophy of the Network's leadership.

Accordingly, the Committee recommendation has deferred providing the funds requested to enhance Alhurra's programming in fiscal year 2008. In addition, the Committee recommendation includes up to \$2,200,000 to provide for 24/7 streaming and 60-day archiving on the station's website of all original programs for the Alhurra stream. The recommendation also includes up to \$2,080,000 for the random translation of 20 hours per week of Alhurra's original programming by an independent entity. All transcripts should be publicly available on the station's website in a timely fashion. The Committee believes that these steps should enhance the transparency and accountability of Alhurra.

The Committee also has requested that the Inspector General of the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors immediately review and report to the Committees on Appropriations on: the editorial policy in place in 2006 and 2007 regarding broadcasts involving terrorists or those who support them; whether any changes were made to that policy or the Alhurra's journalistic code during the period; who was responsible for enforcing the policy; what action, if any, was taken against those who violated the policy; what management changes have been made to ensure the policy and journalistic code is monitored and enforced; and whether there are clear lines of authority at Alhurra to provide for accountability of journalistic decisions.

#### *Anti-jamming efforts*

The Committee continues to support initiatives by the BBG to defeat jamming and reach a wider audience for Radio Free Asia and Voice of America broadcasts to China, Tibet, Vietnam, and North Korea. The Committee is aware that new technologies may allow the VOA and RFA to more effectively defeat jamming efforts. The Committee encourages the Board to evaluate the usefulness of these technologies. The Committee expects the BBG to expand such efforts in fiscal year 2008. Further, the Committee supports efforts to counter internet censorship imposed by China and Iran.

#### *Voice of America (VOA)*

The Committee recommendation includes \$194,093,000 for VOA, which is \$22,561,000 above the fiscal year 2007 level and \$15,747,000 above the request. The Committee recognizes VOA for its essential contribution to United States public diplomacy.

The VOA's English-language radio programming is especially important since it provides accurate, objective and comprehensive news to a potential English-speaking audience of 1.6 billion people worldwide. The

Committee recommendation includes \$8,000,000 for VOA English, which is \$798,000 above the fiscal year 2007 level and \$5,005,000 above the request.

The Committee recommendation includes sufficient funding to fully restore the reductions proposed in the fiscal year 2008 request in the following VOA language services: Albanian; Bosnian; Croatian; Greek; Macedonian; Serbian; Ukrainian; Georgian; Uzbek; Hindi; Cantonese; Thai; and Tibetan.

The recommendation for VOA includes the increase requested for broadcasting to North Korea in accordance with the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-333).

#### *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)*

The Committee recommendation provides \$80,471,000 for RFE/RL, which is \$5,420,000 above the fiscal year 2007 level and \$5,326,000 above the request. Within these amounts, \$4,635,000 is for Radio Farda, \$3,980,000 is for Radio Free Afghanistan, \$1,988,000 is for Radio Free Iraq. The Committee recommendation includes sufficient funds to fully restore the reductions proposed in the fiscal year 2008 request for the following language services: South Slavic; Romanian; Kazakh; Russian; and Ukrainian.

#### *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*

The Committee recommendation includes \$35,220,000 for RFA, which is \$3,636,000 above the fiscal year 2007 level and \$3,763,000 above the request. The Committee strongly supports increased broadcasting efforts to China, Tibet, Burma, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, and Cambodia. The Committee recommendation includes sufficient funding to fully restore the reductions proposed in the fiscal year 2008 request in the Tibetan and Cantonese language services. In addition, the recommendation includes the increased funding proposed for broadcasting to North Korea to pursue objectives outlined in the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-333).

#### *Broadcasting to Cuba*

The Committee recommendation includes \$33,681,000 for radio and television broadcasting to Cuba, which is the same as the fiscal year 2007 level and \$5,019,000 below the request.

## **BROADCASTING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

The Committee recommendation includes \$10,748,000 in new budget authority for broadcasting capital improvements, which is \$3,124,000 above the fiscal year 2007 level and the same as the request. The recommendation will provide for the continuation of base costs for maintenance, improvements, replacements and repairs, digital production capability development, and security upgrades at transmitting stations overseas. In addition, the recommendation will support the replacement of obsolete servers and computers in order to better safeguard the Agency's internal communications systems and enhance the capabilities of Voice of America broadcasts.