

RFE/RL Review

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February 1-28, 2007

RADIO FREE IRAQ FOCUSES ON BAGHDAD SECURITY...

Radio Free Iraq correspondents in Baghdad are closely following the security situation and the new campaign launched by Iraqi and coalition forces to make the city safe.

An RFI Baghdad correspondent covered Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki's press conference February 11, asking for concrete details of the security plan. Al-Maliki said in response that "The plan will not start in a single district. It will proceed in all areas at the same time so that no one will say it has targeted one area to the exclusion of another. Those who will take part in implementing the plan come from the spectrum of recruits making up the police and army". Radio Free Iraq also reports daily on statements by US officials, the current discussion of strategy in the US Congress and analytical assessments of developments in Iraq and the broader Middle East region, as well as the positions of various Iraqi groups and groupings.

An RFA Baghdad correspondent spoke February 14 with leader of the Sadrite bloc in the Iraqi parliament, Nassar al-Rubay'i. He said in the RFI interview that: "We support the security plan and give our consent to the military to enter any area where the Sadrite line is said to be present, in order to carry out searches, seize weapons, and arrest anyone carrying arms."

...WEAPONS FROM IRAN

Radio Free Iraq aired an exclusive RFE/RL interview on February 12 by RFE/RL Central News correspondent Charles Recknagel with weapons expert David Claridge, managing director of Janusian Security Risk Management in London. Claridge explained the technology of the roadside bombs being used by some Shi'ite militia units to attack coalition troops in Iraq and why they are traced to Iran.

According to Claridge, "these devices can be constructed in an improvised fashion, but they do require the use of high explosives, which, obviously, is not always easy to acquire. And the knowledge of the technology and the triggering devices necessary is, I think, what the area of concern is." Claridge added that "it is not only in respect to shaped charges that the Iranians are suspected of playing a part in the conflict in Iraq. The use of intelligence, the use of training, the use of funding to support the Shi'ite portion of the war in Iraq is something that the Americans have had considerable concern about for some time."

In his view, Claridge told RFE/RL, "there probably is some degree of connection between Iranian forces and Iranian political representatives and the political components of the main Shi'ite parties, but the transfer of technology and the contacts

(more)

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between Iranian agents, if you like, and individual Shi'ite militia groupings on the ground is probably rather more ad hoc. So you have got some central direction, but also connection with Shi'ite militias who may be allied very closely, or officially part of, the larger Shi'ite militias, but which also act to some extent in their own territorial and political interest" (English transcript at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/2/C1C0268A-78EE-4080-8624-3DF52828F415.html>)

*** The Director of RFE/RL's Radio Free Iraq, Sergey Danilochkin, may be reached by email at <danilochkins@rferl.org>. Radio Free Iraq's website is at <http://www.iraqhurr.org/>; English-language news about events in Iraq can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/iraq.html>*

RADIO FREE AFGHANISTAN TALKS TO FOREIGN MINISTER

Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta gave an exclusive interview to Radio Free Afghanistan in Kabul, dismissing recent reports that Iran is interfering in Afghan affairs. In the interview with RFA correspondent Salehe Eshaghzay Khaleghi, aired February 2, Spanta also stressed that Kabul is eager to resolve its differences with Pakistan.

Spanta told RFE/RL that "Afghanistan wants friendship with Pakistan" and is "ready to resolve any differences with Pakistan through talks. We'd like to give Pakistan the opportunity to invest in Afghanistan, to use Afghanistan's roads. Central Asian energy could be transported through Afghanistan and Pakistan -- our economic exchanges could increase. We are ready for all of this, but the precondition for this deep friendship with Pakistan is that they should stop using terrorism as a tool of foreign policy" (English transcript at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/2/156A7B32-B828-4B1F-9841-B289776FDFA5.html>).

*** The Director of RFE/RL's Radio Free Afghanistan, Akbar Ayazi, may be reached by email at <ayazia@rferl.org>. Radio Free Afghanistan's website is located at <http://www.azadiradio.org/>; English-language news about events in Afghanistan can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/afghanistan.html>*

RUSSIAN SERVICE, RFE/RL TURN SPOTLIGHT ON PUTIN SPEECH

RFE/RL's Russian Service had two correspondents in Munich to cover the 43rd annual Munich Conference on Security Policy the weekend of February 10 and was able to promptly and fully report Russian President Vladimir Putin's strongly worded speech and reaction to his criticism of the United States. Putin criticized Washington for trying to impose what he called a unilateral vision on the world and said the US had "overstepped its boundaries in every sphere." He also said that "NATO is advancing its frontlines," and "this is a seriously provocative factor that reduces the level of mutual trust" (<http://www.svobodanews.ru/Article/2007/02/10/20070210221911687.html>)

Among the participants were US Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Joseph Lieberman (Ind-CT), who later gave exclusive interviews to RFE/RL's Russian Service that were aired that same night. Lieberman said: "Somebody asked me afterwards whether I thought a new cold war has begun. I said 'of course not.' But there was a lot of rhetoric in Putin's speech that sounded Cold War. And it surprised me. Because Russia is at a point of strength, and that speech did not sound like that." McCain said

he was not happy with Putin's comments on Kosovo that seemed to give Serbia the right of veto over the province's status and that "this is not a good approach."

In Prague, RFE/RL's Central News got an exclusive telephone interview February 12 with Professor Eberhard Sandschneider, of the German Council on Foreign Relations, who commented on European reaction to Putin's speech. Sandschneider said "people are certainly not accustomed any more to being told by Russian leaders what the flaws in their own policies are. That of course was a kind of new experience for this group of people." He added that "Europe will have to learn, first of all, to find a position of its own, which is difficult enough for the European Union, and then act -- cooperating both with our traditional partner the United States but also with important new partners like Russia, based on the agreement that without Russia there will hardly be any solution to any major international conflict. Be it Kosovo, be it Iran, wherever you look, we need Russia. So this is a learning process for the European Union which is ahead of us for the next few years."

BEREZOVSKY BREAKS SILENCE ON LITVINENKO SUSPICIONS TO RUSSIAN SERVICE

On February 7, in an exclusive interview with RFE/RL's Russian Service, exiled tycoon Boris Berezovsky broke his silence concerning the death of Aleksandr Litvinenko. Berezovsky told RFE/RL that he and Litvinenko shared suspicions that former Russian agent Andrei Lugovoi was responsible for Litvinenko's illness and eventual death. Litvinenko, a former Russian security officer, died in a London hospital in November after receiving a fatal dose of radioactive isotope polonium-210.

In the interview, granted to Russian Service correspondent Natalya Golitsyn in London, Berezovsky said he was surprised when Litvinenko first told him he thought Lugovoi had poisoned him, but said "my suspicions have recently grown much stronger, because there's a very simple way for Lugovoi to eliminate all the suspicion about him -- just get on a plane and fly here to Great Britain and voluntarily go to Scotland Yard. My experience with the English legal system shows that if you're sure you're in the right, then not even the smallest chance exists that you'll be subjected to illegal prosecution, that you'll become just a victim of legal arbitrariness... Lugovoi, by being afraid to come here -- I'm using precisely that word, "afraid" -- is simply increasing those suspicions" (An English transcript of the interview is at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/2/0F9BF730-283C-42E0-915C-6C39D984C012.html>; a transcript in the original Russian can be found at <http://www.svobodanews.ru/Article/2007/02/07/20070207102556443.html>).

RUSSIAN HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER INTERVIEWED BEFORE RECEIVING AWARD

Svetlana Gannushkina, head of the Russian NGO "Civil Assistance" committee and Ondrej Soukup of the Czech NGO "People In Need" participated on the RFE/RL Russian Service's live talk show "Time of Guests," hosted by broadcaster Irina Lagunina on February 28. The show aired just hours before Gannushkina was awarded the "Homo Homini" human rights award for her personal contribution to the protection of human rights and democratic freedoms in Russia. The award was established 12 years ago by "People in Need." "By awarding Svetlana Gannushkina this year "People In Need" wanted also to attract attention to the state of affairs in Russia and violations

of human rights and liberties in this country," said Soukup during the talk show (<http://www.svobodanews.ru/Transcript/2007/02/28/20070228200016193.html>)

*** The Director of RFE/RL's Russian Service, Maria Klein, may be reached by email at <kleinm@rferl.org>. The Russian Service's website is at <http://www.svobodanews.ru>; English-language news about events in Russia can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/russia.html>*

NEW CHECHNYA PRESIDENT GIVES EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW TO RFE/RL...

Chechnya's newly-appointed president, Ramzan Kadyrov gave an exclusive interview to RFE/RL North Caucasus Service correspondent Llyoma Chabaev in his hometown of Gudermes. Kadyrov is not only the most powerful official in Chechnya, but is rapidly becoming one of the best-known officials in all of Russia. The North Caucasus Service spoke to Kadyrov one week after he was appointed acting president by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The interview was aired in two parts on February 23 and February 25 (An English transcript can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/02/d67ef59e-83f6-4062-842a-25406d0f1de7.html>).

...NORTH CAUCASUS SERVICE LOOKS AT CHECHNYA GOVERNMENT SHAKEUP

RFE/RL's North Caucasus Service aired interviews and analyses on February 16 that looked into the implications of Russian president Vladimir Putin's decision to remove sitting Chechen president Alu Alkhanov and replace him with 30-year old Ramzan Kadyrov.

Exiled Chechen separatist leader Akhmed Zakayev told RFE/RL by phone from London about Kadyrov's appointment as acting Chechen president. In the exclusive interview with RFE/RL's North Caucasus Service, Zakayev said Kadyrov, a former rebel, will be more independent than the outgoing Alkhanov, and more sympathetic to the separatists' agenda. According to Zakayev, "On the whole, we consider it positive" (<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/2/596B85D7-3A42-4185-B439-EBB0A1AB57F0.html>)

Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed Alkhanov on February 15, appointing him instead as deputy justice minister of Russia. RFE/RL analyst Liz Fuller noted that "Alkhanov's departure effectively ends a two-year rivalry between him and Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov, the son of Alkhanov's predecessor Akhmed-hadji Kadyrov, who was killed in a terrorist bombing in May 2004." Fuller said, in an analysis prepared for broadcast that, "given Kadyrov's reputation as Chechnya's unofficial strongman, and the deference with which Putin treated him at the time of his father's death, it was predicted even at the time of Alkhanov's election in August 2004 that he was intended as only a temporary figure. Analysts said he would be shunted aside in October 2006 when Kadyrov turned 30, the minimum age for the position of republic head" (<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/02/63cd2e24-bc2c-4e96-883e-461b4dbbd367.html>)

*** The Director of RFE/RL's North Caucasus Service, Aslan Doukaeva, may be reached by email at <doukaeva@rferl.org>. English-language news about events in the North Caucasus region can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/subregion/northcaucasus.html>*

TATAR-BASHKIR SERVICE FOLLOWS PUTIN TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST...

RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir Service focused in the second week of February on Russian president Vladimir Putin's trip to the Middle East. His entourage included Tatarstan president Mintimer Shaimiev, who represented Russia's Muslim community. While in Riyadh, Shaimiev was awarded the King Feysal Prize for promoting Islamic culture and tolerance and dialogue between religions.

On February 16, the Tatar-Bashkir Service broadcast from its Kazan bureau a roundtable discussion on Tatarstan's deepening engagement with Islamic countries. Experts in Kazan said in the program that Russia is using Tatarstan and other members of its Muslim minority to improve Russian influence in Mideast and Arab countries.

...LOOKS AT RUSSIA AND ISLAMIC WORLD...

RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir Service sent a correspondent to Istanbul February 1-2 to cover the third annual "Russia-Islamic World" conference of religious and political leaders, aimed at strengthening Russia's ties with Islamic countries. Tatarstan president Mintimer Shaimiev chaired the gathering with former Turkish foreign minister Yasar Yakis. Reports from the conference were also aired by RFE/RL's Armenian Service.

...REPORTS RUSSIAN DUMA RATIFICATION, FEDERATION COUNCIL REJECTION OF POWER-SHARING TREATY

The Moscow correspondent for RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir Service reported live from Russia's State Duma on the debate and ratification, on February 9, of a 10-year power-sharing agreement between the Russian federal government and the government of Tatarstan. The treaty gives the predominantly-Muslim Volga region republic a degree of economic and political autonomy that no other region enjoys. It was only approved in the Duma after a heated debate (English coverage at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/02/b6f445b4-09ea-45c7-986e-5eb9496af3c7.html>).

As with the State Duma ratification earlier in the month, the Tatar-Bashkir Service had a correspondent on the floor of Russia's upper house of parliament, the Federation Council on February 22, who later reported from RFE/RL's Moscow bureau that the Council had rejected the agreement. Both opponents and proponents of the bill were interviewed, while the service's bureau in Kazan provided immediate expert reaction from the Tatarstan capital. Media in Tatarstan only reported on the rejection the next day (English coverage at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/02/135AA370-F83A-4390-964D-BEA497B99659.html>)

*** The Director of RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir Service, Rim Gilfanov, may be reached by email at <gilfanovr@rferl.org>. The Tatar-Bashkir Service's website is at <http://www.azatliq.org/>; English-language news about events in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/subregion/tatarstanandbashkortostan.html>*

TURKMEN SERVICE COVERS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

RFE/RL's Turkmen Service provided listeners extensive coverage of Turkmenistan's presidential election -- an election deemed by one of the unofficial observers from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as "absolutely not free and fair."

On election day, February 11, Turkmen Service correspondents reported from key locations throughout the country, including the capital city of Ashgabat. Despite of the challenges faced by RFE/RL correspondents in Turkmenistan, they were able to visit several polling stations, where they talked to voters about their impressions of the election for the program "Mood of the People." Those interviewed raised urgent issues and expressed their hopes for change (to read an English wrap-up of the election based on coverage by RFE/RL's Turkmen and Kyrgyz Services see <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/2/6FE7467B-71B5-49CE-8781-2AE20875EC77.html>).

From February 5 to February 15, Turkmen Service broadcasts were extended by two hours over shortwave. This extended broadcast time was used by the service to provide listeners as much information as possible, as the Turkmen Service is the only alternative media outlet available to listeners within Turkmenistan in the Turkmen language.

A Turkmen Service correspondent in Ashgabat was able to attend a press conference with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher, who met on February 15 with new president Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov. During an exclusive Q&A session with Boucher that was aired by the Turkmen Service, he emphasized that "media outlets and journalists deserve to cover all events taking place in the region."

*** The Director of RFE/RL's Turkmen Service, Oguljamal Yazliyeva, may be reached by email at <yazliyevao@rferl.org>. English-language news about events in Turkmenistan can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/turkmenistan.html>*

KYRGYZ SERVICE REPORTS FROM UZBEK BORDER

A major story for RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service was the implementation of a non-visa regime between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The move, lifting visa requirements for up to 60 days, was agreed by treaty last October but only went into force February 15. RFE/RL's correspondent in the southern city of Osh confirmed for listeners that border guards on both sides were letting people through and a Kyrgyz foreign ministry official in southern Kyrgyzstan gave an exclusive telephone interview to RFE/RL, saying "a command was given to the Uzbekistan border guards. Now they are permitting citizens of both countries to travel in accordance with the non-visa regime, and there are no obstacles there."

*** The Director of RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service, Tyntchtykbek Tchoroiev, may be reached by email at <tchoroievt@rferl.org>. The Kyrgyz Service's website is at <http://www.azattyk.org/>; English-language news about events in Kyrgyzstan can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/kyrgyzstan.html>*

GEORGIAN SERVICE INTERVIEWS

COUNCIL OF EUROPE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER

Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights gave an exclusive interview to RFE/RL Georgian Service correspondent Nino Gelashvili on February 18, just before completing a six-day visit to Georgia.

During Hammarberg's visit, his second to the country, was the release of a Georgian man who has been imprisoned for several years by the self-proclaimed government of Abkhazia. In addition to meeting with Georgian government officials,

Hammarberg also met with Abkhaz and Ossetian separatist leaders in Sukhumi and Tskhinvali.

At the final press conference, Hammarberg again reminded the Georgian government about its responsibility to facilitate the return of so-called "Meskhetian Turks" (Muslim residents of Georgia deported in the 1940s) to Georgia. Hammarberg said that the Georgian government should tackle this issue and, despite the potential difficulties, repatriate these people as soon as possible (<http://www.tavisupleba.org/special/humanrights/2007/02/20070219145421.asp>).

*** The Director of RFE/RL's Georgian Service, David Kakabadze, may be reached by email at <kakabadzed@rferl.org>. The Georgian Service's website is at <http://www.tavisupleba.org/>; English-language news about events in Georgia can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/georgia.html>*

ROMANIA-MOLDOVA SERVICE LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM ON SECURITATE FILES

A new weekly program, launched February 8 by RFE/RL's Romania-Moldova Service, has touched a nerve among listeners in Romania, eliciting numerous letters, e-mails and mentions in the media. The weekly program, called "Me and My Securitate Guard Dog" features the recollections of Neculi Constantin Munteanu, one of the Romanian Service's best-known and most popular broadcasters, who was known for outspoken criticism of the Communist regime. In the new program, Munteanu, a homosexual, tells the story of how he was hounded and blackmailed in Romania because of his sexual orientation. He juxtaposes his own memories with more than 1,000 pages he found in his own Securitate file. In the 1970s and 1980s, being a homosexual was a criminal offense in Romania, punishable with a prison term. Munteanu was under constant surveillance, interrogated and discredited by the authorities. The program has been widely quoted in the Romanian press and the Romania-Moldova Service has been praised for "having the courage to broadcast this kind of testimony from one of the many victims of the Communist regime," and "touch a sensitive issue in the recent history of Romania" (<http://www.europalibera.org/rubrics/ro/archives/2007/02.ASP>).

STATE DEPARTMENT'S COLLEEN GRAFFY IN RFE/RL'S CHISINAU STUDIO

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy Colleen Graffy paid a surprise visit to RFE/RL's Chisinau bureau February 13, where she gave an exclusive interview to bureau chief Vasile Botnaru. In the wide-ranging conversation, Graffy expressed U.S. views on relations with Russia and frozen issues in the region, including the Transdniester conflict. Graffy noted the significant differences between the Kosovo status problem in Serbia and the frozen conflicts of the former Soviet Union, while stressing the need to re-start meaningful negotiations on Transdniester. The interview aired in two parts, on February 13 (http://www.europalibera.org/rubrics/ro/2007/02/17C04A2D-DF1A-4C8B-85C4-7D5B956F7F95_3094500.RAM) and February 14 (http://www.europalibera.org/rubrics/ro/2007/02/BD3B997E-A972-40AD-81A8-9F936F85E56A_3094801.RAM).

*** The Director of RFE/RL's Romania-Moldova Service, Oana Serafim, may be reached by email at <serafimo@rferl.org>. The Romania-Moldova Service's website is at <http://www.europalibera.org/>; English-language news about events in Moldova can be*

found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/moldova.html> and in Romania at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/romania.html>

ALBANIAN PARLIAMENT SPEAKER VISITS RFE/RL

Speaker of the Albanian parliament Josefina Topalli visited RFE/RL's Prague studios on February 9 to give an exclusive interview to RFE/RL Central News correspondent Charles Recknagel. During the interview, Topalli spoke about Albania's position and the response in the region to UN special envoy Martti Ahtisaari's proposal of limited statehood for Kosovo. Topalli noted that, for more than half a century, the Albanian parliament has passed resolutions supporting independence for Kosovo. Topalli added that Albania does not want to play what she called "a patriarchal role." She said in the interview that the people of Albania and the people of Kosovo have been separated for decades, where they have lived in different realities with different dreams: "our dream was to change our system. Kosovo has another dream: to be independent and separated from Serbia"

(<http://www.rferl.org/features/features Article.aspx?m=02&y=2007&id=A1DDB811-46F8-AF73-98CE1A191D45>)

*** The Executive Producer of RFE/RL's Central Newsroom, Deborah Seward, may be reached by email at <sewardd@rferl.org>; RFE/RL English-language news reports can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/features/>*

RFE/RL AT KOSOVO PROTEST...

Correspondents from the Prishtina bureau of RFE/RL's South Slavic & Albanian Languages Service (SSALS) were on the scene of a violent protest in Prishtina February 10, during which UN police fired rubber bullets into the crowd. The clash between police and demonstrators left two dead and more than 70 people wounded. RFE/RL's Albanian language broadcasts were the leading source of local news on the violence and its aftermath, the first to report the deaths and, subsequently, the resignations of Interior Minister Fatmir Rexhepi and UN Police Chief Commissioner Stephen Curtis. RFE/RL followed the investigation into the deaths, which found that the protesters had been killed by rubber bullets and that a Romanian anti-riot squad attached to the United Nations had in fact fired rubber bullets. The service's website, <http://www.europaelire.org> was continuously updated with new reports, reaction and analyses of the event.

...COVERS U.S. CONGRESSIONAL VISIT TO KOSOVO...

A group of ten U.S. Senators and Congressmen, led by Senator Joseph Lieberman (Ind-CT) visited Kosovo February 9 on a fact-finding mission. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and several others met with Kosovo prime minister Agim Ceku and spoke to reporters afterwards. SSALS aired Sen. McCain's comment that this is a critical time for Kosovo and that "we can applaud the people of Kosovo on their struggle for freedom and democracy." In response to a question from RFE/RL's correspondent in Prishtina, Senator Lieberman said the U.S. looks forward to implementing the recommendations made by UN Representative Martti Ahtisaari and that "the interest of the American people will not diminish, we'll stay with you until we achieve the values that we all share." Sen. McCain also told RFE/RL that "the United States will remain present for a long time. The question is, and it will be a subject of negotiations, on exactly how and how necessary our presence will be. But the commitment remains."

...INTERVIEWS MONTENEGRIN POLICEMAN ABOUT VOTER MANIPULATION

On February 21, SSALS aired the testimony of a Montenegrin policeman who revealed that the head of his unit had forced him to recruit voters for the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro during the September 2006 parliamentary election campaign. The policeman said he convinced 34 neighbors to vote for candidates representing the ruling party. Although rumors and unconfirmed reports swirled that the ruling party had used police to facilitate its election campaign, this was the first time a member of a police unit had confirmed the rumors publicly. The RFE/RL story made headlines on nearly all Montenegrin media and provoked a chain reaction of responses -- the ruling party denied the accusation, claiming it never asked the policeman to recruit voters; while opposition leaders found in his testimony confirmation of their suspicions that the ruling party used policemen as its own activists (<http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/article/2007/02/22/edc43e28-0ae6-4943-9ba4-783cd50a7431.html>).

*** The Director of RFE/RL's South Slavic and Albanian Languages Service (SSALS), Omer Karabeg, may be reached by email at <karabego@rferl.org>. The SSALS website in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian is located at <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org>, in Albanian at <http://www.europaelire.org> and in Macedonian at <http://www.makdenes.org>; English-language news about events in Bosnia-Herzegovina can be found at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/bosnia-herzegovina.html>, in Macedonia at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/macedonia.html>, in Serbia and Montenegro at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/country/serbiaandmontenegro.html> and in Kosovo at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarchive/subregion/kosovo.html>*

RFE/RL in the News

RADIO FREE AFGHANISTAN ANNIVERSARY DRAWS HUNDREDS IN KABUL

More than 300 politicians and dignitaries attended an anniversary celebration in Kabul February 14, marking the fifth year of renewed Radio Free Afghanistan broadcasts. Participants included Afghan vice president Karim Khalili and four other ministers of the Afghan government, 11 deputy ministers, more than 30 members of parliament, religious dignitaries and scholars, governors of the Ghazni and Logar provinces, diplomats from the US and other embassies, and representatives of international organizations and the media. Information minister Karim Khuram read a message from President Hamid Karzai, which praised Radio Free Afghanistan for "effective reporting on promotion of democracy, human rights, women movements and reconstruction." The event was widely reported in Afghan and regional media.

RFE/RL BOOK LAUNCH IN MOLDOVA

RFE/RL's Romania-Moldova Service gave a book party in Chisinau February 14 that was heralded as a "Valentine Day present to listeners." More than 100 officials, fans and journalists came to the launch of a book and CD based on the service's 2006 "The End of the Week with Radio Free Europe" broadcasts. During the weekly program, aired on Saturdays, the featured person reads on-air comments from a daily diary kept for that week. Diary readers are selected from all walks of life, including political

activists, foreign visitors to Moldova, diplomats, housewives and everyday workers. In addition to the diary, the book includes a factual daily news summary, thus combining the political and the personal in a unique historical record. Major Moldovan newspapers -- Flux, Jurnal de Chisinau, Timpul -- reported the event and RFE/RL broadcasters were interviewed on Euro television and local Moldovan TV stations.

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