



July 27, 1999

## Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Broadcasting During the Kosovo Crisis

*During the Kosovo crisis, RFE/RL dramatically expanded its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual South Slavic broadcasts to provide all of the peoples of this strife-torn region a reliable and regular source of accurate news and analysis – on FM, AM, shortwave, satellite, and the Internet. In fact, a recent Belgrade survey found that RFE/RL was the most listened-to international broadcaster in Serbia during the NATO bombing campaign.*

*In addition, all of RFE/RL's 22 broadcast services provided cross-reporting that brought home to our audiences in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East the local reaction to and international significance of Kosovo-related events. RFE/RL's research specialists contributed written analyses of trends and events in the South Slavic region that added depth to RFE/RL broadcasts and have become required reading for decisionmakers throughout the world.*

*Today, RFE/RL broadcasts 13.5 hours live to Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia, and Croatia.*

### EXPANDED BROADCASTS:

- Following Serbia's adoption of media restrictions in October 1998, RFE/RL increased its South Slavic Service daily broadcasts from 7 to 9 hours.
- Anticipating renewed ethnic tension in Kosovo, on March 8, 1999, RFE/RL began daily 30-minute broadcasts in Albanian.
- Just hours after NATO's decision to begin air operations in the region, RFE/RL increased by 3.5 hours per day the amount of broadcasting in Serbian.
- The next day, RFE/RL doubled its daily Albanian language broadcasts, bringing to 9.5 hours RFE/RL's cumulative daily broadcasts in Serbian and Albanian. An additional 4 hours of programming focused on Bosnia and Croatia can be heard by and is also relevant to a Serbian audience.
- RFE/RL worked with VOA, BBC, Deutsche Welle, and Radio France International to assemble programming in Serbian and other languages for a joint, 24-hour international program stream for Serbia. This 24-hour stream is broadcast on FM transmitters located around Serbia as well as by satellite.
- RFE/RL also coordinated a 24-hour international program stream for Kosovo, with programs in Albanian, Serbian, and other languages from the five international broadcasters. This is currently carried on three FM frequencies by Radio Pristina.

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**"RFE/RL is stronger and stronger.  
Serbia has been listening to you  
and [the Milosevic regime]  
cannot do anything to prevent it"**

A senior Yugoslav official,  
July 1999

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**"We think Radio Free Europe...  
is extremely professional  
and is necessary for  
the people of Montenegro  
to understand the problem and  
what's caused this war situation."**

Radio news director Nebojsa Redzic,  
Podgorica, Montenegro  
Quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*,  
April 11, 1999

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## ENHANCED PROGRAM CONTENT:

- According to a poll of Serbian radio listeners reported in the July 16, 1999 issue of the Belgrade newspaper *Vecernje novosti*, RFE/RL was the most listened-to international broadcaster during the NATO bombing campaign, and the fourth most listened-to broadcaster overall.
- In spite of Yugoslav Army threats, 6 affiliate stations in Montenegro continued rebroadcasting RFE/RL programs.
- Throughout the crisis, RFE/RL continued to receive news reports from affiliate stations in Serbia and Montenegro, as well as from local reporters and stringers.

## EXPANDED INTERNET ACCESS:

- RFE/RL's Internet website (<http://www.rferl.org>) experienced a crisis-driven increase in page view traffic of 38% in March 1999. That same month, RFE/RL's live Internet broadcast traffic grew by 37%; traffic to RFE/RL's South Slavic broadcasts increased by 262%.
- Yugoslavia provided the fourth largest number of RFE/RL website visitors from any country; only the U.S. provided more visitors to the RFE/RL South Slavic Service website.
- A special Internet home page for RFE/RL Kosovo coverage provides constantly updated news and live, on-demand or ftp downloadable audio in four languages: Albanian, Russian, Serbian and English. (<http://www.rferl.org/nca/special/nato-kosovo/index.html>)

## RESPECTED REGIONAL NEWS AND ANALYSIS:

- RFE/RL's South Slavic Service relies on its network of correspondents throughout Yugoslavia, who provided live reports throughout the bombing campaign, reported on conditions in the refugee camps, and conducted face-to-face interviews with Serbian and Montenegrin officials and citizens. They continue to cover demonstrations against the Milosevic regime, the ongoing investigation of atrocities in Kosovo, and the actions of KFOR and the UN provisional government in Kosovo.
- Several other RFE/RL broadcast services, notably the Russian, Ukrainian, and Latvian Services, also featured live reports on the bombing campaign from Belgrade.
- RFE/RL's publications, including the daily journal *RFE/RL Newsline*<sup>TM</sup> and weekly *Balkan Report*, were supplemented by a daily *Kosovo Report*, providing both immediate news coverage and thoughtful analysis of events to readers on the Internet and to subscribers by fax and e-mail.

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**"I think that what we've heard here today [about one-sided Serbian] propaganda speaks to the importance of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty."**

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA),  
House Appropriations Committee  
April 15, 1999

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**"The only information I have is that there were two [Yugoslav Army] battalions... that decided to go AWOL and this was in response to reports that they were getting on Radio Free Europe."**

NATO spokesman Jamie Shea,  
during a press conference at  
NATO HQ, Brussels  
May 20, 1999

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**"Thank you. During the war we knew what was going on only through RFE/RL"**

Serb soldier  
to an RFE/RL correspondent,  
June 1999

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**"The Serbs listen to RFE. From midnight to 3:00 a.m. especially. You know what, it does matter."**

New York Times Correspondent  
Steven Erlanger,  
July 1, 1999

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