



RADIO FREE ASIA
WASHINGTON, D.C., U.S.A.

RADIO FREE ASIA GOES ON THE AIR

Washington, September 26, 1996 -- Radio Free Asia, established by the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-236), will broadcast its inaugural program, in Chinese, on Sunday, September 29.

The initial half-hour program, which will air from 7:00 to 7:30 AM Monday, Beijing time (7:00 PM EDT or 2300 UTC). The broadcast will be repeated during the following half hour and will be heard again in China that same night at 11 PM Beijing time (11 AM EDT or 1500 UTC). The second broadcast will have an updated section of breaking news. RFA's Chinese-language broadcast will eventually expand to five-and-a-half hours per day, seven days a week.

Radio Free Asia is a private corporation which is funded by grants authorized by Congress to broadcast to China, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Tibet, Vietnam and North Korea. Its mission, as defined by Section 309 of the 1994 International Broadcasting Act, is "to provide accurate and timely information, news, and commentary about events in the respective countries of Asia and elsewhere; and to be a forum for a variety of opinions and voices from within Asian nations whose people do not fully enjoy freedom of expression."

David Burke, Chairman of the bi-partisan, presidentially-appointed Broadcasting Board of Governors which has jurisdiction over Radio Free Asia and all of U.S. government overseas civilian broadcasting, said of the inaugural program, "Today's broadcast is a watershed event for the people of China, just as future RFA broadcasts will be for the peoples of other closed societies in Asia. Citizens of those countries will now be able to listen to the information that they should be able to hear from their own governments, but do not. That changes today."

Under an arrangement with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, RFA will initially broadcast from RFE/RL studios in Washington. RFA President Richard Richter, formerly Executive Producer for the ABC "Evening News" and later Executive Producer at WETA TV in Washington, said that the new broadcaster will move into its own Washington studios and start broadcasts in Tibetan and Burmese later this year.

Richter added, "All of us at Radio Free Asia are excited to be on the air. The people of China -- and eventually the peoples of other closed societies in Asia -- will now have in RFA an excellent source of straight, credible news dedicated solely to their own countries."

Dan Southerland, RFA Executive Editor and Vice President of programming and former Washington Post Beijing bureau chief and longtime reporter in Asia, said, "Radio Free Asia is a small, cost-effective network whose broadcasts will be governed by strict journalistic standards of objectivity, fairness and quality."

RFA's signal will be routed through the transmission facilities of the U.S. Information Agency's International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) at Voice of America (VOA) headquarters in Washington. From there it will be sent via satellite to relay stations overseas for broadcast on short wave.

RFA will rely on a large number of regular and free lance correspondents throughout Asia for its news coverage, including special correspondents in Tokyo, Taipei and Seoul. It will have permanent news operations in several Asian cities, including Hong Kong.

In its report to Congress last year on the establishment of a new broadcasting operation to Asia, the Broadcasting Board of Governors had proposed the name Asia Pacific Network. However, in keeping with the wishes of Congress, the official name, Radio Free Asia, will be used from now on. For further information, please contact Radio Free Asia at (202) 530-4900.

RADIO FREE ASIA • 1201 Connecticut Ave. N.W., • Washington, D.C. 20036 • 202-530-4900 • Fax: 202-457-6996