

March 14, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
The Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write this letter collectively as the Board of Directors of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. RFE/RL is one of America's most effective and efficient foreign policy organizations, and yet, due to uncertainty surrounding its funding, we are increasingly concerned about its future. We believe that RFE/RL plays a vital role in advancing American national interests — using technology to defeat censorship — and that its elimination would be a gift to our country's most dangerous adversaries: China, Iran, and Russia.

Thanks to decades of strong bipartisan Congressional support, RFE/RL reaches over 47 million people every week in 27 languages across 23 countries in Europe, the Near East, and Central Asia. RFE/RL's operating budget in FY 2024 was \$142.2 million; China, Iran, and Russia spend *fifty times* that amount on their insidious global propaganda.

RFE/RL is funded by the U.S. Congress through a grant from the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM), which oversees U.S. international media. As a private corporation, RFE/RL operates with an agility and efficiency that government entities cannot match - no bloated bureaucracy, no cumbersome regulations. Indeed, in September 2024, U.S. Representative and former Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Michael McCaul said: "Look no further than Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: it is a shining example of how these outlets should function."

Founded 75 years ago, RFE/RL is needed more than ever today, and our work aligns perfectly with President Trump's "America First" agenda. By using technology to defeat censorship in countries that lack a free press, RFE/RL achieves on the cheap what expensive military power often cannot: making America safer and more respected simply by telling the truth. We also don't continue operations any longer than necessary - RFE/RL has a long history of shutting down our work as soon as a country's own free press becomes self-sustaining.

RFE/RL's Persian-language service, Radio Farda, exemplifies our impact. Ten percent of Iranian adults consume Farda content each week, and Farda has an especially large following among young people in Iran – exactly the people who are pressuring the regime from below and will one day lead their country towards better relations with the U.S. As you have repeatedly drawn attention to the brutal tactics of the regime in Tehran, we have conveyed your words deep inside the country. Millions of Iranians have heard your powerful messages, and many of them have written us with words of support. This is the type of impactful – and inexpensive – work that RFE/RL does across our broadcast area, be it in Russia, Ukraine, Afghanistan, or elsewhere.

RFE/RL has also been at the forefront of exposing China's secretive and malign influence operations across our entire coverage area, from the Balkans to Central Asia. In fact it was RFE/RL who [broke the story](#) of China's first military base in Central Asia – an outpost in Tajikistan near the Afghan border.

RFE/RL's commitment to telling the truth does not waver when reporting on U.S. allies. In wartime Ukraine, where nearly 29 percent of the population consume our news coverage, stories on corruption from our investigative project *Schemes* have resulted in the dismissals or resignations of top Ukrainian government officials.

The proof of our impact is the efforts by America's adversaries to stop our reporting and block it from reaching their people. Cyber-attacks are constant. [Four RFE/RL journalists](#) are currently imprisoned for simply doing their jobs. We have been extremely fortunate to welcome home two jailed colleagues in the last year– American journalist Alsu Kurmasheva in August 2024 and Belarusian journalist Andrei Kuznechyk in February 2025. This would not have been possible without the extraordinary efforts of the U. S. Department of State, the National Security Council, and the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs. It was President Trump's strong leadership that led to Andrei's release after more than three years in a Belarusian prison.

In short, RFE/RL effectively advances our foreign-policy goals—at very little cost to the American taxpayer. Over 75 years, RFE/RL has built a sterling reputation with its audiences around the world, who see in our work the best of America. But now some are questioning the purpose and value of RFE/RL.

In his speech at the Munich Security Conference last month, Vice President Vance reminded us that “To believe in democracy is to understand that each of our citizens has wisdom and has a voice. And if we refuse to listen to that voice, even our most successful fights will secure very little.” RFE/RL ensures that the voices of the people are heard. We

know that you value our mission, and we are ready to work in partnership with the Trump Administration as we continue broadcasting the truth around the world.

With respect,

The Board of Directors of RFE/RL, Inc.

Lisa Curtis, Board Chair

Stephen Capus, President and CEO

Ilan I. Berman

Michael Kempner

Scott Carpenter

Tom Malinowski

Usha Chaudhary

Vance Serchuk

Jackson Diehl

Mark Thiessen

Margaret Hoover