
BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
**Report To The Director, U.S. International
Communication Agency**

The Voice Of America Should Address Existing Problems To Ensure High Performance

The management of the Voice of America should aggressively pursue solutions to long-standing problems in order to continue broadcasting successfully. Although some problems--personnel management and physical space--have been addressed, others resulting from questionable practices in programing and technical operations threaten the effectiveness of VOA.

GAO recommends specific actions to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and economy of VOA including revisions to programing practices, the elimination of short-wave backup, and the establishment of a long-range plan for modernization of technical facilities.



Request for copies of GAO reports should be sent to:

**U.S. General Accounting Office
Document Handling and Information
Services Facility
P.O. Box 6015
Gaithersburg, Md. 20760**

Telephone (202) 275-6241

The first five copies of individual reports are free of charge. Additional copies of bound audit reports are \$3.25 each. Additional copies of unbound report (i.e., letter reports) and most other publications are \$1.00 each. There will be a 25% discount on all orders for 100 or more copies mailed to a single address. Sales orders must be prepaid on a cash, check, or money order basis. Check should be made out to the "Superintendent of Documents".



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

B-208173

The Honorable Charles Z. Wick
Director, United States International
Communication Agency

Dear Mr. Wick:

This report discusses the Agency's management of the Voice of America and actions which can be taken to improve its operation.

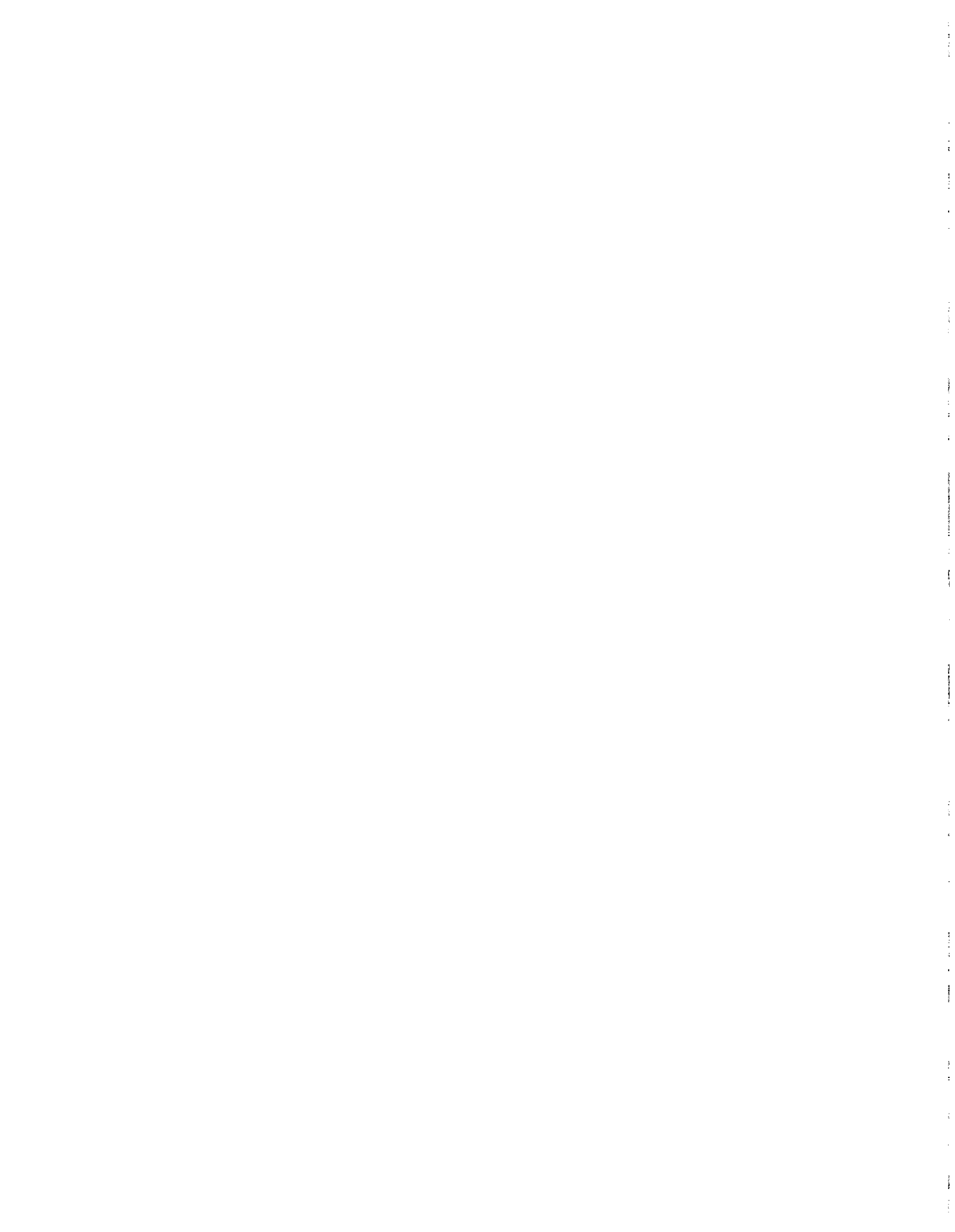
This report contains recommendations to you on pages 20, 34, and 43. As you know, Section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs and the House Committee on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the cognizant congressional appropriation and authorization committees; and others upon request.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank Conahan".

Frank C. Conahan
Director



GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR,
U.S. INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION
AGENCY

THE VOICE OF AMERICA
SHOULD ADDRESS
EXISTING PROBLEMS
TO ENSURE HIGH
PERFORMANCE

D I G E S T

Although the Voice of America (VOA) has been broadcasting to the world for more than 40 years, GAO found the management of technical, program, and administrative activities plagued by numerous problems. VOA officials are aware of these problems and have initiated or planned actions to correct some of them; but addressing all of them will require additional time, resources, and close attention of top management.

From its meager start, with no transmitters or even offices of its own, VOA has grown to become one of the largest international radio organizations. For fiscal year 1982, VOA has an estimated operating budget of \$109.6 million, a worldwide staff of more than 2,200 and a broadcast schedule of about 940 hours a week in 39 languages.

As a major element of the U.S. International Communication Agency, VOA is guided by an Associate Director for Broadcasting. GAO undertook this review of VOA to evaluate the management of technical, program, and administrative activities. (See pp. 1 to 5.)

PROBLEMS FACING NEW VOA MANAGEMENT

For varying reasons, many of the problems identified by VOA management and GAO, which have an adverse impact on the ability of VOA to operate effectively, have existed for a long time. The current management has had success in implementing some corrective actions--establishment of an independent personnel office and the acquisition of additional physical space. But other problems, including vacancies in key management and staff positions, continue to limit the effectiveness of VOA and its ability to maximize efficiency and economy in programming and operating the technical facilities. (See pp. 6 to 10.)

NEED FOR LONG-RANGE PLANNING

VOA has given little consideration to long-range planning for technical requirements, but GAO found VOA has embarked on a number of piecemeal modernization projects which could cost more than \$325 million. Virtually all of these projects have been subjected to one or more changes which has redefined the scope, delayed the estimated completion date, and increased the cost. GAO believes these projects should be halted until VOA establishes a long-range plan for the expansion and improvement of its technical facilities. (See pp. 36 to 43.)

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE TECHNICAL OPERATION

VOA has failed to maximize the economy and efficiency of its vast technical operation by not fully utilizing new technology. For example, although VOA estimates annual savings of \$1 million by eliminating unnecessary shortwave backup during satellite transmissions, no action has been taken. Furthermore, the use of shortwave backup has prevented VOA from realizing additional savings. (See pp. 23 to 28.)

VOA has not updated its construction practices to include new concepts, such as colocating receiver and transmitter plants, and using rapid deployment stations and standard-designed buildings at relay stations. Also, GAO found that VOA has not attempted to coordinate its technical needs with those of other U.S. Government agencies. (See pp. 28 to 33.)

PROGRAM PRACTICES COULD BE ENHANCED

GAO identified several programing practices which it believes are questionable, including limited guidance, and the replacement of centrally-produced material with service-originated material--a practice which may be resulting in a duplication of effort. Furthermore, audience research is dated, mail from listeners is not centrally analyzed, and the findings and recommendations of previous studies on program mixes and scheduling have received little attention. (See pp. 11 to 20.)

VOA management agrees with GAO that many of the programing practices may be inefficient or ineffective and has taken or plans action to improve them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GAO recommends that the Director of the International Communication Agency require the Associate Director for Broadcasting to:

- Develop a comprehensive long-range plan for the effective modernization and expansion of VOA technical facilities. If necessary, current construction projects should be delayed until the plan is developed. (See p. 43.)
- Eliminate backup shortwave transmissions.
- Establish a plan for the efficient use of or disposal of the Dixon and Bethany Relay Stations.
- Colocate receiver and transmitter plants at the Liberia Relay Station and plan for colocation at other relay stations.
- Develop plans to use the concepts of rapid deployment stations and standard-designed buildings in relay station construction and to employ those plans where appropriate. (See p. 34.)

GAO further recommends that the Director initiate discussions with other U.S. Government agencies involved in international broadcasting to identify existing and future technical facilities which may be appropriate for joint use. (See p. 34.)

GAO has made additional recommendations to improve VOA program management. (See p. 20.)

AGENCY COMMENTS

Comments provided by the International Communication Agency have been incorporated where appropriate and are included in appendix I. USICA concurred with the purpose, conclusions, and thrust of the recommendations of the report and noted that it was timely.

USICA commented that the top management of VOA was being assembled while the GAO report was in preparation and independent assessments of these managers paralleled

those of GAO. In this regard, USICA identified specific actions which have been implemented or planned to

- address lingering deficiencies which require the close attention of top management to prepare VOA for the future;

- revise past practices related to engineering, planning, execution, and technical operations; and

- revise inefficient and ineffective program development and scheduling practices in a timely manner to enhance the quality of programing.

GAO believes that actions implemented and planned by VOA will contribute to better management of VOA.

C o n t e n t s

		<u>Page</u>
DIGEST		i
CHAPTER		
1	A LOOK AT AMERICA'S VOICE TO THE WORLD	1
	Objectives, scope, and methodology	2
2	VOA IN TRANSITION	6
	Difficulties facing VOA management	6
	Changes in personnel management	6
	Additional physical space needs recognized	7
	Policy and program offices have been restructured	9
	Lack of continuity and vacancies in key positions	9
	Conclusions	10
	Agency comments and our evaluation	10
3	REVISIONS TO VOA PROGRAMING PRACTICES COULD BE BENEFICIAL	11
	Limited program guidance	11
	Service-originated material replaces centrally-produced material	14
	Practices for estimating audience size and handling listener mail need improvement	16
	Revisions in program mixes and scheduling have been recommended	18
	Conclusions and recommendation	20
	Agency comments and our evaluation	21
4	OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE TECHNICAL OPERATION	23
	Scope of technical operation	23
	Full benefits from new technology yet to be achieved	23
	Benefits possible by colocation of relay station facilities	28
	Better utilization of facilities possible	29
	New construction concepts should be explored	32
	Conclusions	33
	Recommendations	34
	Agency comments and our evaluation	34

CHAPTER		<u>Page</u>
5	LONG-RANGE PLANNING NECESSARY TO ENSURE COMPETITIVENESS	36
	Modernization of technical facilities is extensive	36
	Excessive changes have been made to construction projects	38
	Difficulties in maintaining and establishing technical facilities	40
	Conclusion	42
	Recommendation	43
	Agency comments and our evaluation	43

APPENDIX

I	USICA comments	44
---	----------------	----

ABBREVIATIONS

GAO	General Accounting Office
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
USICA	United States International Communication Agency
VOA	Voice of America

CHAPTER 1

A LOOK AT AMERICA'S

VOICE TO THE WORLD

With the words "this is a voice speaking from America" the United States on February 24, 1942, entered the international broadcasting arena with the Voice of America (VOA). In its initial broadcast during the midst of World War II, VOA announced "* * * we shall speak to you about America and the war--the news may be good or bad--we shall tell you the truth."

Since its inception, VOA has sought to establish a reputation with its listeners for reporting objectively and honestly even to the point of "washing our dirty linen in public." As VOA developed into a major international broadcaster certain governing principles evolved and, in 1976, these were enacted into law. Specifically, in amending the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, as amended, the Congress declared that the long-range interests of the United States are served by communicating directly with the peoples of the world and set the following principles:

"(1) VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective, and comprehensive.

"(2) VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant America thought and institutions.

"(3) VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies."

When VOA began broadcasting in 1942, it had no transmitters or even offices of its own. From this meager start, it has grown into one of the largest international radio organizations. Today, VOA broadcasts about 940 hours a week in 39 languages to an estimated audience of over one hundred million listeners.

VOA is a major element of the U.S. International Communication Agency (USICA). USICA seeks to (1) explain official Government policies to people overseas; (2) portray American society as accurately and completely as possible to the people of other nations; (3) advise and inform the President and the Government adequately as to foreign public opinion and foreign cultures for policymaking purposes; and (4) assist to develop American understanding of other nations. VOA is headed by an Associate Director for Broadcasting (hereafter referred to as the Director of VOA) and functions somewhat autonomously within USICA. (See chart on page 3 for VOA organization.)

For fiscal year 1982, the operating budget of VOA is estimated to be \$109.6 million to support a worldwide organization with an authorized staff of 2,297 of which 1,561 are located in the United States. All VOA programs originate in Washington, D.C., and are transmitted overseas via relay stations and commercial satellite circuits.

VOA is now preparing for the future with the goal of making virtually every program a listening experience which will draw a new generation--"the successor generation"--to VOA.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The overall objective of our review was to evaluate the management of the technical, program, and administrative activities of VOA. The specific objectives established to accomplish this were to

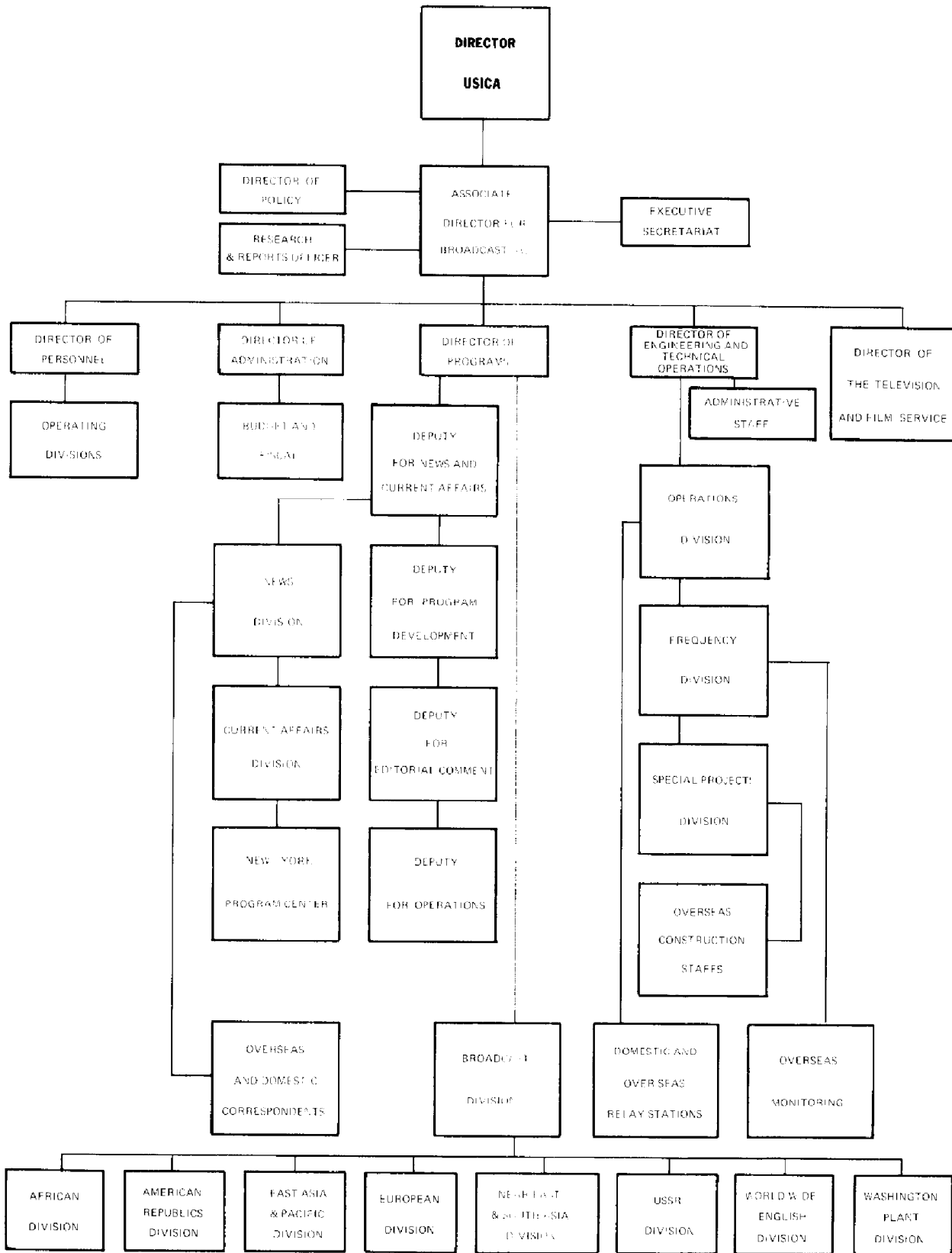
- determine the adequacy of the justification and long-range plans for upgrading the technical facilities and equipment;
- examine the operation of the technical facilities with emphasis on their adequacy and efficient utilization;
- determine the adequacy of justification for broadcast targets, program mixes, and hours;
- examine the program content, policy guidance, and internal evaluation; and
- examine the efficiency of personnel and administrative support services.

Our review focused on the management of VOA during fiscal years 1981 and 1982. In addition, we included the development of the technical modernization program started in 1977 with the President's report to the Congress on U.S. international broadcasting.

The review was performed in accordance with the Comptroller General's "Standards for Audit of Governmental Organizations, Programs, Activities, and Functions."

Our detailed examination of the selected aspects of the VOA operation were performed at VOA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The headquarters is the source of policy direction; location of program development, production, and broadcast; and administrative management.

We interviewed officials in all major VOA elements--Office of the Director, Program Division, Office of Policy, Office of Administration, Office of Personnel, and Engineering and Technical Operations Division. We reviewed pertinent records



Prepared by VCA.

and documents relating to financial and administrative management, program development, facilities and technical management, and technical modernization.

We attended a number of VOA program reviews and policy guidance meetings to obtain an understanding of program management. We also obtained and analyzed statistical data compiled by VOA to assess the justification for program mixes by hours and categories. In addition, we selected 11 of the 39 broadcast services for detailed review and interviewed officials in these services to discuss program development, scheduling and mixes, and monitoring by VOA management. The services were selected using several factors, including the relative size of the staff and broadcast hours, geographic location of the target areas, and availability of key personnel. The 11 services were:

Portuguese to Brazil	Czechoslovak
Greek	Armenian
Persian	Russian
Korean	Chinese
Latvian	Worldwide English
English to Africa	

There have been a number of studies made of the VOA technical operation since 1972. These studies were conducted by consultants, VOA and USICA staff, and the Congressional Research Service. We have used criteria set forth in these studies as a guide in reviewing the technical operation and justification for modernization.

To obtain an understanding of the technical operation, we visited the VOA Greenville, North Carolina, Relay Station. We also inspected the Washington Plant which houses the studios, production facilities, and master control which is responsible for the transmission of broadcasts to relay stations. At both locations, we interviewed officials and reviewed pertinent documents. We did not visit other domestic relay stations as we were advised that the operations were similar.

We did not visit the overseas relay stations because of the availability in the United States of officials who had recently completed tours as overseas managers. In addition to interviewing these officials, we reviewed reports which are regularly submitted by overseas relay station managers.

We reviewed reports by and held discussions with officials of the Office of Audits, USICA. At the time of our review, staff of the Offices of Audit and Security were jointly investigating allegations of mismanagement in VOA engineering and programing divisions. We did not duplicate this work, but have used the results where appropriate in formulating our conclusions on the management of the technical and program operations.

The International Communication Agency provided comments on this report which are included as appendix I. Overall, USICA found the report to be timely and provided comments to underscore its basic concurrence with both the purpose and conclusions of the report. Specific agency comments on our conclusions and recommendations, as well as our evaluation of those comments, are reflected in this report.

CHAPTER 2

VOA IN TRANSITION

VOA entered 1981 facing uncertainty with the change in administrations and the need to deal with lingering problems in program direction, administrative services, and technical support. Subsequent to the start of our review, a new management team initiated actions or developed plans to correct some of the problems. These steps are encouraging, but they can only be effective if plans are fully implemented in a timely manner.

DIFFICULTIES FACING VOA MANAGEMENT

Many of the problems facing the new management--continuing changes in leadership, vacancies in key positions, poor facilities, and outmoded equipment--have existed for a long period of time. For varying reasons, including budgetary constraints, management style, and political philosophy, the problems continue to the point where the effectiveness of VOA is being compromised. A former Director of VOA stated that:

"Any broadcasting center of worth has good people, competitive programming, state-of-the-art production and transmission equipment, audience research and promotional activities. The Voice of America * * * lacks much of what is considered essential in normal broadcasting terms * * * and much of its production equipment belongs in a museum. * * *"

Other problems that have affected the management of VOA include inconsistencies in program practices and the absence of comprehensive plans for multimillion dollar technical improvements.

Our observations on the long-standing problems and some of the corrective actions being initiated are discussed below. The problems in program practices and planning for technical improvements are discussed in subsequent chapters.

CHANGES IN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

As of October 1, 1981, the Director of VOA was delegated authority to establish a personnel office to meet the needs of VOA. Before that time, VOA personnel needs were served by the USICA Personnel Office. The establishment of an independent personnel office is intended to solve the many personnel problems which have plagued VOA for years. The VOA Personnel Office has been established and staffed, and its Director, who has complete authority for all personnel matters, reports solely to the Director of VOA.

In a December 1980 memorandum, the Director of VOA described the problem of recruiting through USICA's Personnel Office as follows:

"The present Agency Recruitment Office functions with the best efforts of a highly dedicated staff. However, it is simply not equipped to respond to the needs of VOA in a reasonable, timely fashion. It takes far too long to schedule candidates for testing; the testing process is cumbersome and embarrassing errors are made; and, because of the sheer workload volume, the Agency must resort to the assembly-line approach of preprinted form-letter responses to applicants--responses that are often inappropriate in dealing with the feelings and concerns of individuals."

Other problems encountered by VOA management with USICA's Personnel Office included

- insufficient resources to perform necessary classification reviews,
- long delays in obtaining security clearances,
- limited availability of trained and experienced personnel management specialists, and
- the absence of a long-range training program.

According to the VOA Director of Personnel, he and the staff are very much aware of the problems and, although it will take time, they plan to address each area. Specifically, we were told that they are concerned about the appropriateness of authorized staffing levels, aging workforce, absence of intern and other training programs, recruiting methods, and the use of purchase order vendors to augment program staff.

To address these and other concerns of VOA management, the Personnel Office, in January 1982, initiated position management reviews of all VOA elements. The findings of these reviews will be incorporated into the long-range VOA planning process which is designed to achieve optimum position and organizational structure within budget and position constraints. The Personnel Office completed its position management review in all elements in June 1982 and the results along with recommendations for changes have been proposed to management.

ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL SPACE
NEEDS RECOGNIZED

VOA management has complained for years that the physical space which VOA occupied in the Health and Human Services Building was inadequate and that additional space was required. Furthermore, VOA officials have stated that because authorized space was not

adequate they were experiencing problems in employee morale, productivity, creativity and the quality of broadcast material. The most important deficiency which VOA encountered in connection with its space problem, however, may be ineffective physical security.

The rationale used by VOA managers in requesting additional space was based on the number of personnel needed to meet past and planned program expansions and the scattered locations of its operational elements. Although VOA acquired additional space in 1976, management argued that the intent of that acquisition was to satisfy then current and long standing needs, without any anticipation of future requirements. In December 1980, the Director of VOA described the physical space as follows:

"When one walks in the HHS-North Building at 330 Independence Avenue, SW, he does not have the feeling that he is in a radio center. The space allotted to the Voice of America is woefully inadequate in size, dismal and dirty in appearance, and it lacks the security which the nature of its operations demand."

Inadequate and ineffective security in the Health and Human Services Building has caused documented problems for VOA management and employees. This occurs primarily because the building is open to the general public, but is complicated by the nature and dollar value of VOA equipment, and the fact that broadcasting around the clock requires employees to work varying and unconventional hours. In addition to the problems already encountered by VOA, the need to provide security for an international broadcaster, with a sensitive mission, was highlighted by the 1981 bombing of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Headquarters in Munich.

The Department of Health and Human Services released approximately 55,000 square feet of floor space to VOA in April 1982. While we did not review the appropriateness or adequacy of the additional space, VOA believes it should result in increased security, more efficient operations, and will impact positively on employee morale and productivity. VOA plans to consolidate all of its program and technical operations on two floors of the Health and Human Services--North Building instead of its present fragmented locations on four floors of that building. According to VOA, this consolidation will, for the first time, make a properly implemented physical security program a possibility. VOA also plans to consolidate its engineering operations--currently located six blocks from other VOA operations--into the same building complex. VOA believes this move will significantly improve management oversight of the engineering operations.

POLICY AND PROGRAM OFFICES HAVE
BEEN RESTRUCTURED

A realignment in the organizational structure of VOA in November 1981 resulted in several changes which included an increased emphasis in policy and program guidance. Specifically, a position of Deputy Director for Policy and Programs was created, and the respective staffs for these functions were expanded.

The Deputy Director told us these changes were intended to insure uniform interpretation and consistent application of the VOA charter. He speculated that there will not be any drastic changes in the direction of VOA broadcast. Although some of the emphasis will be affected, he said the flexibility of individual broadcast services may be increased. The expansion in the policy function involved an increase from a policy application staff of three to a policy office of six, and the program Director's staff was increased from one to four deputies.

LACK OF CONTINUITY AND VACANCIES IN KEY POSITIONS

In recent years, VOA has been faced with a lack of continuity in the Office of the Director of VOA and vacancies in other key positions which have lasted for long periods. This comes at a time when VOA is being asked to increase its broadcast in languages and hours and to expand its technical capabilities.

Since March 1980, VOA has had a series of directors as shown here:

March 5, 1980 - January 20, 1981	Director
January 20, 1981 - August 6, 1981	Acting Director
August 6, 1981 - March 22, 1982	Director
March 22, 1982 - July 1, 1982	Director (Designate)
July 1, 1982 - Present	Director

Also, during this period there was no Director of Programs for 10 months and the position of Director of Engineering and Technical Operations was vacant from November 1979 to June 1982. In January 1982, VOA had about 200 positions or 10 percent of its non-administrative positions vacant.

The impact of the changes and vacancies are illustrated through the problems which have been encountered by the Engineering and Technical Operations Division. During the last 2 years, the Division has had two internal reviews on allegations of mismanagement which were followed by the resignation of officials in key positions and the inability to fill a number of staff positions. As the result, the Division has operated in a crisis environment and has been unable to develop comprehensive long-range plans. These problems in turn caused delays in and added to the cost of expanding the technical facilities. (See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion.)

CONCLUSIONS

The problems, i.e., space, personnel management, inconsistent program practices, are well known to VOA management. Management has initiated action that if fully implemented would, in our opinion, be a positive step toward preparing VOA for the future. VOA efforts to achieve corrective action suggested by internal reviews or outside consultants in the past have had a tendency to get sidetracked. Therefore, close attention will be required of both the Director of VOA and the Director of USICA to see that the corrective actions are taken.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR EVALUATION

USICA agreed with our observations on VOA in transition and noted that while VOA faces major opportunities for expansion it must address lingering managerial deficiencies. In this regard, the comments stated that over the last six months the new VOA Office of Personnel has taken a programatic approach in attempting to resolve long-standing problems. Specific accomplishments, some of which are mentioned in this report, include improvements in recruiting and placement, position-in-pay management, and training and development. In addition, USICA emphasized that the enhanced space allocation, along with improved physical security, should result in more efficient operations and have a definite, positive impact on employee morale and productivity.

The concurrence of USICA with our conclusion on the range of issues which require close attention of top management is encouraging. In our opinion, continued positive action--similar to that noted in this report and in USICA comments--at addressing lingering deficiencies should prepare VOA for the future.

CHAPTER 3

REVISIONS TO VOA PROGRAMING PRACTICES

COULD BE BENEFICIAL

VOA programing could be enhanced by revising inefficient and ineffective program development and scheduling practices. The guidance provided to the various broadcast services by VOA management has been limited and often viewed as self-serving in nature. Furthermore, centrally-produced materials, which could provide continuity, were not fully or consistently utilized by the services and this may be causing a duplication of effort. Most of the audience research data used by VOA is dated and mail from listeners was not centrally analyzed or used in identifying program interest of listeners.

Although previous studies have recommended changes in program mixes and scheduling, little action has been taken. Many of the deficiencies identified during our review have been recognized by VOA management and actions were initiated or are planned to address them. In our opinion, however, the past performance of VOA in dealing with identified problems indicates that increased emphasis is needed to insure that corrective actions are timely and adequate.

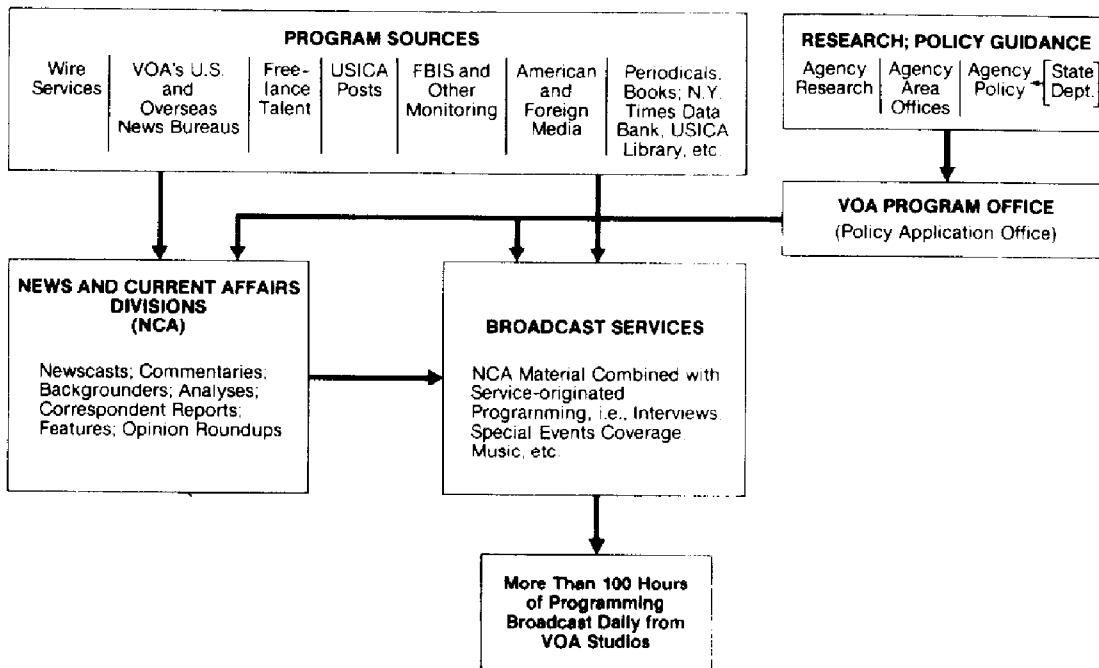
LIMITED PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Although programs are independently developed by the 38 foreign language services and the worldwide English service, (broadcast services), we found that program guidance from VOA management has been limited. Outside of the VOA charter and a guide for the news writers and editors, there are no written guidelines for the services on how to achieve the VOA style. The primary mechanisms used by management to provide desired guidance and feedback to broadcast personnel have been oral briefings and reviews of selected programs. The Director of Programs, who was appointed in November 1981, told us he was concerned over the absence of centralized guidance in the past and that corrective action was being taken. The chart on page 12 shows the flow of program development.

Although the 39 broadcast services are organized into seven divisions (see p. 3) based on the geographic location of the target area, we were told that each service is responsible for developing its own programs. Centrally-produced materials such as newscasts, background reports, interviews, music programs, and special events coverage, are supplied to the services in English by the News and Current Affairs Divisions. Under VOA procedures, however, newscasts are the only centrally-produced materials which services must use. Newscasts are prepared by the News Division and take the form of regional lineups which are item-by-item listings of centrally-produced materials. Changes in the order or content of newscast may be made only after clearing them with the appropriate editor in the News Division.

While the goal in requiring use of newscasts is to provide uniformity between services, there is no requirement for using centrally-produced, non-news materials. In fact, services have the discretion to select non-news materials from any source, including those used by the News and Current Affairs Divisions, their own staffs, and purchase order vendors. Analysis of programming mixes for all services have shown that non-news material accounts for approximately 44 percent of total air time. Despite the relatively high percentage of air time the non-news material accounts for, there are no written procedures or guidelines

VOA PROGRAM FLOW



FEBRUARY 1982

--similar to the guide which is available for the news writers and editors--for the services on the use, or methods for writing VOA material.

In discussions with officials of management and 11 selected services, we were told that guidance on the selection and use of non-news related material is obtained from

- the VOA charter (see p. 1),
- daily program director's meeting,
- daily division meeting,
- USICA worldwide themes and country plans,
- listing of feature materials and anticipated correspondent reports, and
- annual/biennial program reviews.

While these appear to provide a wide range of guidance, they provide, in our opinion, relatively broad suggestions of objectives to be achieved and/or topics to be addressed. None of these sources contain any direction on how the objectives or topics can be achieved or addressed. For example, the daily meetings, which we attended, highlighted major policy topics, and discussed issues which would be covered by the News and Current Affairs Divisions. We believe the flexibility in selecting non-news material and the high percentage of time it accounts for, dictate the need for definitive guidance--including the rules of usage and method for writing non-news material--which will ensure a consistent VOA style.

Also, 5 chiefs of the 11 services we interviewed expressed reservations about the nature of past program reviews. The reviews are a process in which officials of the Program and Policy Offices, News and Current Affairs Divisions, and selected services review the programing of a language for 1 day to evaluate content for quality and conformance with the VOA charter. For example, some felt that review board members were at times concerned with insignificant points and could not, or would not, provide constructive criticism. In other cases, it was noted that board members from the News and Current Affairs Divisions, tended to use the reviews as a forum for justifying their existence by criticizing the lack of use of, or advocating the use of, centrally-produced material.

All 11 of the service chiefs, however, told us they understood what needed to be done and that the guidance provided by VOA management was sufficient to ensure effective programing. We believe the guidance is too limited to ensure a consistent VOA style.

The new Director of Programs expressed concern over the absence of centralized guidance in the past. He stated that the objective in expanding the staff of his office was to decrease his involvement with administrative needs of the services and concentrate on providing program guidance.

SERVICE-ORIGINATED MATERIAL REPLACES
CENTRALLY-PRODUCED MATERIAL

Our analysis of program content for 11 selected services showed that approximately 27 percent of the non-news material has been written by service staff members or purchase order vendors (hereafter referred to as service-originated material). Centrally-produced material has been replaced by service-originated material because service staff view centrally-produced material as inappropriate or inadequate for broadcast to specific geographic areas. VOA management believes that service originations are necessary to overcome the obstacle of broadcasting in 39 languages. There is some concern, however, within VOA management, that the current system may result in duplicate programing efforts, and actions to identify and minimize duplication are being pursued.

The Current Affairs Division produces commentaries, news analyses, backgrounders, obituaries, U.S. and world opinion packages, and feature closeups in English for use or translation by the services. The Division's music service acquires and makes available recordings of classical, popular, and folk music. The Special Event Branch also arranges interviews and stringer reports. As previously discussed, there is no requirement that any of this material be used by the services. Each service is, therefore, free to translate or use the material as written, change it as determined necessary for the target area, or replace it with a service origination.

Managers at all levels told us that approximately 15 to 30 percent of non-news programing is service-originated material. Also, a 1980 VOA analysis of program content for 17 services showed that service-originated material accounted for approximately 21 percent of news and non-news programing over a 30-day period.

To assess the validity of these statements, we analyzed the program content reports of 11 selected services for a 7-day period. Our analysis disclosed that 22 percent of all material and 27 percent of the non-news material was service-originated. As shown in the table on page 15, there was, however, some deviation between the 11 services in the use of these materials which ranged from none to a high of approximately 44 percent.

Service-originated material
as a percent of

<u>Service</u>	<u>All material</u>	<u>Non-news material</u>
Portuguese to Brazil	7.00	9.87
Greek	30.56	37.93
Persian	22.79	29.52
Korean	-	-
Latvian	23.02	36.99
English to Africa	34.50	44.38
Czechoslovak	21.95	33.33
Armenian	12.50	16.00
Russian (note a)	3.90	43.95
Chinese	20.43	24.08
Worldwide English	<u>16.57</u>	<u>17.09</u>
Total	22.20	27.13

a/ Figures are for 5 days only.

From the perspective of VOA, the question has not been whether, but how, to use service-originated material, and the staffs have indeed been encouraged throughout the years to seek out sources for targeted material. The rationale for replacing centrally-produced material with service originations is as follows,

- a desire to target non-news material to the varying conditions of audiences in differing geographic areas,
- the need for special skills and/or expertise to adequately target material for specific areas, and
- staffing levels not adequate to meet broadcast requirements.

The 11 service chiefs we contacted consistently described centrally-produced material as not adequately targeted for their audiences. Almost all stated that the material did not contain sufficient background or an identifiable frame of reference and, therefore, would not be understood by their audience. They also noted that it is often easier, and therefore more desirable, to

simply replace a centrally-produced material than it is to make changes necessary for an adequate "adaptation."

In our discussions with VOA officials, concern was expressed that the current system which allows development of both centrally-produced and service-originated material without any coordination may be resulting in an inefficient use of personnel resources. Specifically, if a service originates material on the same or similar topics as centrally-produced material, there may be duplication of effort in identifying, researching, and developing background information. While the Director of Programs noted the most likely areas of duplication are between the English service and News and Current Affairs, he added that there may be some potential between other services because of a failure to cross-share service-originated material.

As a result of this concern, VOA management has initiated actions to identify potential duplication and explore alternative scripting procedures which may be more efficient. The following areas of interest are included in the scope of a comprehensive review being conducted by the VOA Office of Personnel,

- delegations of authority and the management decision making process and

- workflow and coordination between interacting organizational elements.

The objective is to identify the extent of cooperation and/or duplication between services and recommend alternatives to correct any deficiencies. In this regard, the Director of Programs has initiated a pilot program to increase the flexibility for preparing newscasts in two of the largest services. Under this approach the two services are still required to follow the order of newscasts prepared by the News Division, but each will be allowed to write the accompanying stories instead of using the centrally prepared ones.

PRACTICES FOR ESTIMATING AUDIENCE SIZE AND HANDLING LISTENER MAIL NEED IMPROVEMENT

The worldwide audience for VOA is estimated at 104 million adults, age 15 and above, who listen at least once a week. This audience is defined by VOA as individuals who are attuned to and concerned for the world around them and news and news-related programs are their primary reasons for listening to VOA. Most of the data used to estimate this audience and explore why these individuals listen to VOA was, however, accumulated prior to 1977. Furthermore, mail from listeners, which totaled approximately 185,000 pieces in 1981, was not centrally analyzed or used to identify program interests of listeners. The estimated audiences by geographic regions for 1982 are as follows:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Estimated audience</u>
Sub-Sahara Africa	6,730,000
Latin America	4,830,000
East Asia/Pacific	1,985,000
China	18,000,000
Near East/South Asia	19,691,000
Western Europe	2,329,000
Eastern Europe	17,945,000
USSR	32,274,000
Total	<u>103,784,000</u>

Information on VOA audiences is based primarily on surveys conducted by independent contractors under the auspices of the USICA Office of Research. These surveys normally cover national or urban populations with the objectives of measuring the size, composition, and program interest of foreign radio audiences, and explore why individuals select VOA. In addition, VOA relies on research studies conducted by other broadcast and commercial organizations which examine media behavior, ownership of radio sets, and the reach and impact of international broadcasts. To estimate audiences in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, for example, VOA relied on reports published by RFE/RL. The VOA estimate of 18 million listeners in China, which is characterized as "an informed guess," is based on indicators such as ownership of radio sets and use of shortwave bands, as well as interviews with former residents.

Although VOA characterizes its appeal as varying from country-to-country, and from region-to-region, its audiences are known to share a number of common characteristics. Urban, rather than rural, residents are much more likely to listen to VOA and it appeals particularly to the young and the educated. While news and news-related programs are the principal reasons for listening, many also select VOA for music, images of American life, and views of the U.S. Government on world issues. Although most listeners tune to VOA programs in their native language, this preference is not as pronounced among the university educated and there is a regular audience to VOA's worldwide English broadcasts.

Most of the data used by VOA to estimate the audience for 1982 is, however, dated. For example, 36 of the 47 audience research studies used by VOA are dated 1977 or earlier and 24 of those are in the 1972-75 range.

In commenting on our report, USICA noted that VOA also used studies by other reliable sources to estimate the 1982 audience which were not on the list analyzed by us. When these studies are included in the analysis, the percent of studies dated prior to 1977 decreases from 76 percent to 54 percent. In our

opinion, this figure is still significant, and the need to improve it is highlighted by the expressed concern within VOA and USICA.

An April 1978 USICA report on the handling of audience mail reflected several problems with the VOA system and recommended changes, but no action was taken. Most of the problems identified involved irregularities and anomalies in the processing and utilization of audience mail. The study concluded that the cause of these problems was the absence of a centralized system for handling mail and the use of 31 different systems. No services were found to handle mail in the same manner. Although the report evaluated both the pros and cons of centralized versus decentralized mail processing, the final recommendations were for increased centralization and coordination between the services and the Director of Programs.

According to VOA officials, analyzing audience mail is one of the weakest efforts in VOA. In the opinion of one official, there is no comparison between the VOA effort of analyzing mail and that of the British Broadcasting Corporation's centralized system for processing and analyzing audience mail which is considered a "model" among international broadcasters.

The Director of Programs told us he believes there is potential for enhancing VOA programming through the efficient and effective utilization of audience mail. Although he had not fully analyzed this area, at the time of our discussion, he was planning to review and revise the current system with the objective of increasing the use of audience feedback in programming.

REVISIONS IN PROGRAM MIXES AND SCHEDULING HAVE BEEN RECOMMENDED

Previous studies and reports on various aspects of VOA have identified inconsistencies or weaknesses in program mixes and scheduling, but little action has been taken to address them or implement recommendations. Some examples involve the varying amounts of air time devoted to news analysis versus music, the limitations of programs which are less than 30 minutes in duration, and non-prime time broadcasting.

We discussed the area of program mixes and scheduling with the new Director of Programs, and he told us that he was planning revisions to selected practices. Specifically, he said his office would be enhancing and emphasizing the use of editorials, political commentaries, and features on America. Some deficiencies he had identified and hopes to eliminate include, the use of newswriters to prepare editorials and an "East Coast" emphasis on political opinion and life in America.

Varying program proportions

An analysis of program content by VOA has shown that the time devoted to news analysis and commentary versus music varies between services by significant amounts. VOA management is aware of the

varying program proportions and encourages flexibility in program development, although it does expect each service to follow the VOA charter.

In our opinion, the VOA position on this subject raises a question as to whether the principle of the VOA charter--to present a balanced and comprehensive projection of America--can be achieved if 39 services independently determine program proportions. We believe the answer is reflected in the VOA analysis, which shows significant inconsistencies between services in the coverage provided to news analysis and commentary versus music.

The system of annual or biennial reviews does not provide for the evaluation of whether individual audiences receive balanced programming until well after the fact. We believe that VOA management needs to establish some parameters for program proportions to ensure that listeners of the various services are presented consistent projections of America.

Minimum broadcast periods

Another aspect of programming, which has been the subject of previous studies, is the minimum broadcast periods which should be used for VOA broadcasts. Previous technical studies have recommended minimum broadcast periods of 30 minutes. According to these studies, shortwave tuning and listening requires time and concentration, and potential listeners would not go to this trouble for a program which is shorter than 30 minutes.

Despite the recommendations of these studies, VOA is broadcasting daily 15 minute programs in 11 languages. The service chiefs in 3 of these services were among the 11 contacted during our review. All three service chiefs disagreed with the study recommendations and supported use of the 15 minute broadcasts. According to the chiefs, these programs, which are broadcast during morning hours in the target areas, are exactly what the audiences are interested in at that time of day. According to one of the chiefs, anything longer than a newscast and related correspondent reports, which is what is presented, would be overwhelming and tend to discourage, rather than encourage, listenership.

Non-prime time broadcasts

Another alternative for increasing the effectiveness of VOA which has not been adequately pursued is the use of non-prime time programming. Previous studies have not only identified potential audiences, but also that other international broadcasters have had success with non-prime time programs. The availability of VOA transmitters is discussed on page 30.

For example, a report on a 1980 visit by staff of the Chinese Branch to China, noted that some listeners had expressed a desire to receive VOA broadcasts during their "siesta period" which ranges from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. According to the report, this period represents the only truly free time individuals have to do things of their choosing without worrying about being called away or otherwise interrupted. The current transmitter schedules, indicate that 8 of 10 VOA transmitters at the Tinang Relay Station in the Philippines, which are used for broadcasts to China, are idle during this time. Furthermore, a USICA audience research report on the Caribbean has indicated that other foreign broadcasters enjoy success with non-prime time programing in that region.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The procedures used by VOA for program development and scheduling are not always consistent and may result in duplication of efforts between the various broadcast and support elements. In our opinion, the primary cause of these inconsistencies and possible duplication has been the absence of centralized guidance for program development. VOA management, which has been restructured and restaffed under the current management, agree that a more aggressive and coordinated approach to defining program direction for broadcasters is needed. In this regard, reorganizations have and are occurring, a comprehensive study of programing is underway, and numerous alternatives to past methods are being tested and evaluated.

In our opinion, these efforts are warranted and necessary to enhance the efficient and effective utilization of VOA resources. Therefore, to ensure these efforts result in timely and adequate corrective action, we recommend that the Director of the International Communication Agency require the Associate Director for Broadcasting to establish a timetable to provide

- a definitive level of program guidance including rules of usage and method for writing non-news material to insure a consistent style,
- a system which will minimize duplication of effort in developing centrally-produced and service-originated non-news material,
- a centralized process for analyzing and utilizing listener mail in establishing program guidance, and
- short- and long-range plans for VOA programing which will be directed toward achieving maximum efficiency and effectiveness in program mixes and scheduling.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND
OUR EVALUATION

USICA agreed with our conclusions and recommendation to establish a specific timetable for corrective action in VOA programing. The comments provided by USICA noted VOA is engaged in an internal discussion of a reorganization proposal which addresses several issues we raised, including the elimination of duplicative efforts in program development. VOA expects to reach a decision and to begin implementation by September 1, 1982. Additionally, VOA has

- begun work on a manual, for publication by the end of 1982, which will prescribe suggested program mixes, content standards, and production techniques;
- reformed the program review process so that it now provides specific steps to improve programing and sets deadlines for compliance which are monitored through post program reviews;
- proposed a reorganization to eliminate duplication between centrally-produced and service-originated material;
- initiated efforts to raise the level of communication and cooperation between and among various language elements and the central services;
- initiated action to establish a centralized audience relations program to analyze, coordinate, and reply to listener mail;
- increased the utilization of research to assist in future program development;
- established some required programs which together with long established program practices and the corrective actions being implemented are intended to help each service achieve a program mix to suit its particular needs; and
- identified the enhancements needed to support the 30 minute minimum broadcast time standard.

We believe the corrective actions identified by VOA are timely and adequate and appear reasonable considering the changes in top management. Furthermore, the actions

are directed towards revising inefficient and ineffective program development practices and they should enhance the quality of VOA programing.

CHAPTER 4

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE TECHNICAL OPERATION

VOA has opportunities to more effectively use its vast network of technical facilities by limiting redundant operations, employing idle transmitters, and revising construction practices. The introduction of satellite service to transmit VOA programs to overseas relay stations has made traditional methods redundant and brings into question the need for two of its domestic relay stations. Many of the VOA transmitters are idle about 50 percent of the time and this represents a significant unused resource. Increased economy and efficiency are possible if VOA were to colocate relay station receiver and transmitter plants and make use of new construction concepts.

SCOPE OF TECHNICAL OPERATION

All VOA broadcasts originate in Washington, D.C., where they are transmitted from a master control facility to relay stations for direct broadcast to listeners. A number of methods are used to transmit programs to relay stations, including: (1) satellite circuit, (2) shortwave radio, (3) leased-land line, (4) microwave, (5) telephone, and (6) preshipped tape. An illustration of the primary methods now used to transmit broadcast material is presented on page 24.

VOA has 16 active relay stations around the world and utilizes over 100 transmitters with combined power greater than 21 million watts. Twelve of the relay stations are located overseas and four relay stations operate from the United States. In addition, VOA has another domestic station in caretaker status.

To reach listeners over distances of several thousand miles, most broadcasting is done via shortwave radio. In selected areas, VOA relay stations use medium-wave transmitters to reach audiences over standard AM radio.

Most relay stations consist of two plants, one that receives programs and another which transmits (or rebroadcasts) the programs to the target areas. The two plants are usually located at least 10 miles from one another and are linked by microwave or other communications circuits.

FULL BENEFITS FROM NEW TECHNOLOGY YET TO BE ACHIEVED

First used in 1977 to transmit programs overseas, satellites have proven their utility by providing increased reliability and a better quality of service than more traditional methods. VOA continues to use a backup for satellite services which reduces the cost savings.

Savings not fully realized

Before satellites, VOA used a network of four shortwave relay stations in the United States to transmit programs to overseas stations and provide direct broadcast to some foreign areas. VOA explained that the relay station network was necessary because radio propagation conditions prevent direct broadcast from the United States to many world areas on a consistent basis.

In the mid-1970s, VOA was using satellite circuits on a limited-operational basis. Because satellites appeared to improve the reliability of broadcast operations and offered economic advantages, a major study of transmission systems was undertaken in 1976. The study reported that the VOA technical operation was experiencing escalating costs and increasing its use of redundant transmission systems. It concluded that

"* * * major improvements in the VOA technical system cannot be treated as additives but must be purchased by trade-offs within the system, to wit, by economies achieved through the elimination of less efficient techniques and equipment."

A primary option presented by the task force was the substitution of satellite circuits for shortwave relays.

After studying several options and the quality of satellite circuits, approval was granted in December 1977 by the Deputy Director of USICA to proceed with plans to lease satellite circuits and close two relay stations. The Dixon Relay Station (California) was closed in 1979 and plans called for the Bethany Relay Station (Ohio) to be closed in 1982 when satellite circuits were completed to Europe and Africa.

Today, VOA leases 18 active satellite circuits and 2 additional satellite circuits are scheduled to be completed in 1983. Satellite costs for fiscal year 1982 were estimated at \$4.3 million. Presently, VOA also sends program material to overseas relay stations via shortwave transmission as a backup to the satellite circuits. VOA estimated the annual costs just for the power used by the transmitters in the backup operation at \$1 million.

Key VOA officials maintain that reliance upon satellites without redundant shortwave backup would jeopardize the security of the relay station system through possible service interruptions by the host government or hostile forces. A Congressional Research Service study in 1975, however, pointed out that VOA's

"* * * argument against reliance on satellite * * * ignores the possibility that foreign governments could also deny VOA the use of existing relay station transmitters during crises."

Requests could be made by foreign governments to cease broadcasting or possibly even initiate service interruptions between

VOA's receiver and transmitter plants regardless of the system used. These possibilities have been determined "to be an acceptable risk factor" by VOA and USICA when the decision was first made to use satellites.

There has been controversy within VOA surrounding the use of the satellites. The controversy centers around the reliability of satellites because of technical outage, vulnerability to potential interference from foreign governments, and cost compared to the use of shortwave transmitters to relay the programs.

A 1980 report by the VOA Office of Administration on the use of satellites stated that the circuits to the Philippines for a 1-year period had a reliability factor of 97.2 percent. In October 1981, a VOA evaluation of all its satellite circuits disclosed that reliability for a 6-month period was in excess of 99.7 percent.

VOA officials have stated that several alternatives are available during satellite outages as follows: (1) backup shortwave transmission from the United States; (2) radio transmissions picked up from other VOA overseas relay stations; (3) telephone; and (4) preshipped tapes.

VOA budget documents prepared in 1978 show that initial plans for conversion to satellite service estimated about \$1.5 million in additional operating costs after closing the Dixon and Bethany relay stations and eliminating 40 domestic and 20 overseas positions. A 1980 assessment of satellite costs by VOA stated

" * * * it must be remembered that the cost factor was secondary to the consideration of converting to satellite feeds because of the significantly increased quality of the program transmissions, and because of the increased reliability of the transmission signal compared to high frequency shortwave relay which is subject to all of the changing conditions of atmospheric and solar interferences." (Underscoring added.)

In 1982, VOA and USICA considered eliminating shortwave backup as an economy measure. Some officials in VOA advised us that satellites have an excellent performance record and find the use of redundant shortwave transmission unnecessary. Accordingly, they thought satellite outages could be handled with existing alternatives available to the affected relay station. Other VOA officials oppose the elimination of shortwave backup. A January 1982 VOA memorandum, in response to a proposal to eliminate shortwave backup, offered several factors for consideration under the intensified jamming of VOA broadcasts:

--At limited times determined listeners could hear VOA's 500-kilowatt transmitters broadcasting from the United States although the signal may not meet VOA standards.

--Most of the backup circuits can be received by those with access to sophisticated radio equipment.

The question remains on the efficient utility of shortwave backup for VOA unjammed languages. Furthermore, a May 1978 VOA memorandum stated that VOA should be much more concerned with an ability to broadcast directly from the United States rather than backing up satellites which are not likely to fail. VOA officials admit that "* * * the pros and cons of the issue are endless."

Future of Dixon and Bethany Relay Stations

Decision documents prepared in late 1977 contemplated that cost effectiveness of satellite service could be achieved by eliminating the two relay stations located in Dixon, California, and Bethany, Ohio. The closures were based upon the premise that the stations would not be needed for backup and probably could not provide satisfactory signals into target areas should an overseas relay station be lost. Since the decision to close the stations was made, VOA reversed its decision which has reduced the cost savings.

Although the Dixon Relay Station was closed in 1979, it has been maintained in caretaker status to provide emergency broadcast capability in the event of the loss of either of the relay stations in the Philippines. In August 1979, VOA reconsidered its decision to eliminate the Dixon station when it discovered that listeners in China could receive signals from the station even though it did not meet minimum technical standard for a satisfactory signal. Similarly, VOA changed its plans to close the Bethany Relay Station. According to VOA documents, prepared in 1980, the usefulness of Bethany to back up the Liberia Relay Station was raised when Liberia experienced a political coup. The coup caused delays in starting up satellite service to Liberia and as a result it was determined that Bethany should be kept operational until the Liberia satellite circuits are functioning and properly tested. The satellite circuits are due to be completed in 1983.

We asked VOA officials what was planned for the two relay stations and they replied that they did not know. They said VOA is faced with deterioration of facilities at the Dixon Relay Station while in caretaker status and large costs of operating Bethany as a backup relay station. Furthermore, they are uncertain as to how effective the two relay stations would be in emergency situations.

Funding for the two relay stations is a drain of budget resources. Expenses in fiscal year 1982 to maintain Dixon were estimated to be \$172,165 while operating expenses for Bethany were estimated at about \$1.5 million. VOA has estimated the cost to reactivate Dixon at about \$0.2 million; annual operating costs are estimated at \$1.5 million.

Additionally, VOA engineers have indicated that deterioration of transmitter equipment begins shortly after a station is deactivated. Correspondence from the Director of VOA to the Dixon Relay Station staff in March 1978 stated that a station could be returned to full operation within 30 to 60 days. The length of time to reactivate transmitters depends upon how long they are in caretaker status.

In discussions with VOA officials, we learned of (1) requests by private international broadcasters to lease transmitter time and (2) considerations for exchanging transmitter time with foreign broadcasters. Furthermore, in reviewing the VOA transmission schedules, we found that the Bethany Relay Station has a large proportion of its transmitter time used by broadcasters other than VOA. For example, the VOA transmissions schedule for the period of November 1, 1981 to March 6, 1982, indicates that VOA uses about 42 percent of Bethany's transmitter time. The majority of transmitter time, 53 percent, is used by the American Forces Radio and Television Service while the Organization of American States uses 3 percent and the United Nations uses 2 percent. The American Forces Radio and the United Nations reimburse VOA for some of the costs.

VOA officials told us that they have contracted with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study what alternatives are available to improve and effectively use the VOA transmitter network. The study is expected to be completed in September 1982.

BENEFITS POSSIBLE BY COLOCATION OF RELAY STATION FACILITIES

Studies performed by VOA and independent engineers have concluded that colocating receiver and transmitter plants at certain relay stations is feasible. Increased economy, efficiency, and effectiveness are benefits that have been identified by collocation of facilities but changes have been delayed due to a lack of management support for the project. For example, the plans for the new stations in Botswana and Sri Lanka do not include collocation of receiver and transmitter plants.

In 1978, the Liberia Relay Station completed an initial feasibility test and study to relocate its receiver plant with the transmitter plant and recommended collocation. The study concluded that the collocation was practical and could result in (1) annual operating savings of \$151,500, (2) increased reception and reliability, and (3) greater efficiencies in plant control, inventory requirements, and personnel utilization. Further tests conducted by the Relay Station personnel over a 2-year period reaffirmed the practicality and feasibility of the collocation project. In 1980, the Station estimated that collocation could be accomplished with funding of approximately \$243,000 and would provide annual savings of about \$225,000.

In 1978, VOA contracted with the National Scientific Laboratories to study design concepts and the feasibility of colocation of receiver and transmitter plants at the Kavala (Greece) and Tinang (Philippines) Relay Stations. The Laboratories reported on May 11, 1979, that the " * * * examination of available data indicates that co-site operation should be feasible at the Kavala and Tinang transmitting relay sites."

An internal VOA facilities planning study in October 1979 confirmed the capability of colocation at the Liberia Relay Station but identified some problems for consideration,

- a solution to the transmitter noise problem at Kavala and Tinang,
- labor relations at the Kavala station had to be evaluated, and
- a proposal to install satellite reception at the Philippines receiver plant rather than the transmitter plant.

Despite these problems, the VOA study suggested that other relay stations such as Rhodes (Greece) and Bangkok (Thailand) be considered for colocation projects. It also stated that any new facility such as the new station in Sri Lanka " * * * be planned around a single site for reception and transmission."

In discussions with the Acting Director of Engineering and Technical Operations (hereafter referred to as the Director of Engineering), we were told that the colocation of receiver and transmitter plants is opposed because of potential operating difficulties if the plants were combined. It was explained that collocated plants are harder to operate because the powerful transmitters are more likely to interfere with receivers. As explained earlier, however, most of VOA transmissions are done by satellite circuits which are not affected by colocation.

VOA has the potential to economize operations and increase efficiency at its relay stations by colocating receiver and transmitter plants. Unless VOA proceeds with the colocation of facilities at one of its relay stations the opportunities for practical analysis and realized economies will be lost.

BETTER UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES POSSIBLE

VOA has potential for more air time with greater utilization of idle transmitters and more efficient program scheduling. There is a need for VOA to strengthen its cooperation with other U.S. Government agencies to meet transmitter and facility requirements.

Available transmitter time

We analyzed transmission schedules for 107 active VOA transmitters both domestically and overseas, and found that on the average they are used 50.3 percent of the time or 12 hours per day. Both VOA and USICA documents stress the importance of prime time--5:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., and 6 p.m. to midnight--broadcasting to target areas to attract and maximize listenership. For the most part, VOA broadcast schedules adhere to the prime time requirement, however, there may be potential to increase listenership by using transmitters which are idle during prime and non-prime time hours.

For example, the transmission schedule for November 1, 1981 to March 6, 1982, indicated that at least four transmitters were available for additional morning broadcasts to Eastern Europe. Transmitters at the Kavala, Munich, and Woofferton Relay Stations, for example, are available and could be used for broadcasts to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. Currently, VOA broadcasts a total of 1 hour in the morning to each of these countries.

At the Poro Relay Station in the Philippines--the most powerful transmitter owned by VOA--a 1 million-watt medium wave is only used 2 hours a day for evening broadcasts to Vietnam. Although the transmitter can reach audiences in Hong Kong, Indonesia, and China, it is not used for these purposes. A proposal was made by VOA engineering to use this transmitter for prime time evening broadcast of English programs to the area but no action has been taken. Furthermore, we found that eight transmitters in the Philippines were idle during mid-day periods, despite requests by some Chinese listeners to receive VOA broadcasts during the mid-day. Elsewhere, we found 11 transmitters capable of broadcasting 1 hour of prime time evening programs into such Middle East countries as Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia which were idle.

Although these are specific examples of available transmitter time, we recognize that many transmitters are committed to prime time broadcasting. However, the transmitter network offers flexibility and significant scheduling possibilities for additional broadcast time. The average transmitter usage of 50 percent indicates a potential to increase broadcast time without adding more transmitters. We recognize that any additional usage of the transmitters could increase the resources needed to add broadcast hours.

There is evidence to suggest that other international broadcasters do not have this percentage of unused transmitter time. The 1977 Presidential Report on International Broadcasting illustrates the high use of transmitters by other broadcasters:

"* * * Deutsche Welle's eight powerful 500 KW transmitters are in use 24 hours daily; the scheduling demands for these transmitters is such that contrary to the engineering practices

of other broadcasters, no allowance is made in their transmitter schedule for routine or periodic maintenance work. Radio Netherlands has no open time in any of its transmission schedules during prime time broadcasting hours. All its transmitters are broadcasting 18 hours daily; six hours daily are required for cooling and maintenance, a practice prescribed by Radio Netherlands' engineering requirements and tradition. * * *

We recognize that the average 50 percent usage rate for transmitters excludes the four hours per day VOA reserves for equipment maintenance. Our objective in raising the question of available transmitter time is to suggest that, if broadcast requirements are increased along with program resources, there may be another alternative to obtaining more transmitters.

Need for cooperation among Government agencies

In discussions with VOA officials, we sought to determine the extent of their efforts to use or share other U.S. Government-owned radio facilities. We concluded that little or no consideration is given to sharing or using resources of other U.S. Government agencies.

The planned expansion of the Colombo Relay Station in Sri Lanka is estimated to cost about \$96 million. We asked VOA officials if the transmitter requirements of RFE/RL were considered in planning for the Sri Lanka station. RFE/RL has been looking for a suitable location since at least 1979 to place eight high-power transmitters to improve its broadcast signal into the Soviet's Central Asia region. Although the Sri Lanka station will have this capability, VOA officials told us that no consideration was given to consolidating VOA's and RFE/RL's transmitter requirements because a joint use facility would complicate negotiations with Sri Lanka and cause possible operational problems.

Similarly, there is a plan currently before the Congress for a new radio station (Radio Marti) to broadcast to Cuba news and events that affect the Cuban people. The plan calls for the new station to construct transmitter facilities in Florida and the Caribbean. This is being done at a time when VOA is planning to rebuild its Marathon Relay Station, which has been broadcasting to Cuba for 20 years, and to construct several new transmitter facilities in the Caribbean. VOA transmission schedules indicate that Marathon is used only about 6 hours a day. There are no indications that VOA or Radio Marti will share existing or planned facilities.

We believe that efforts should be made to consolidate similar transmitter requirements of U.S. Government radio operations. Joint use of facilities should, at a minimum, be explored in new construction projects and in negotiations with host governments before being precluded from consideration.

In a related issue, we found that VOA was unaware of existing U.S. Government facilities that had potential use. For example, in a previous report,^{1/} we discussed delays in disposing of 28 U.S. Air Force communication sites in Alaska. The report noted that General Services Administration officials stated that screening of these excess communication sites with civilian agencies had taken place. However, VOA officials were unaware that the Alaskan sites were available.

Although VOA has considered Alaska as a possible site for a relay station, it eliminated from further consideration any Alaskan location due to high construction costs and technical factors. The closed Alaskan radio sites offered the potential to reduce the construction costs.

VOA was also unaware of closed radio navigation stations operated by the U.S. Coast Guard. For example, in 1977 the Coast Guard closed radio navigation stations in the Pacific including those in the Mariana and Marshall Islands. During the same period, VOA was seeking a new Pacific relay station site. We found no information in VOA files to indicate that VOA had evaluated the Coast Guard facilities for possible use.

We believe that VOA should coordinate with other U.S. agencies to maximize the efficient use of existing U.S. Government-owned radio station assets. In addition, VOA construction proposals should be evaluated against existing and planned U.S. Government stations and, where possible, operations should be combined.

NEW CONSTRUCTION CONCEPTS SHOULD BE EXPLORED

The VOA engineering staff believes that staff originated proposals for increasing the effectiveness of operations are not given sufficient consideration. In reviewing files, we found a proposal for using new concepts to speed construction of new relay stations which should be given consideration in developing future stations.

Use of rapid deployment stations and standard-designed buildings

In 1981, a two-part proposal was submitted to VOA management by one of the construction project managers concerning the new relay station in Sri Lanka. The first part of the proposal was for the development of a rapid deployment station by using some of the six transmitters VOA already had in storage and pre-fabricated buildings that could be purchased from the General Services Administration. The proposal stated that VOA could be

^{1/}"Delays in Disposing of Former Communication Sites in Alaska--Millions in Property Lost--Public Safety Jeopardized" (PLRD-81-28, May 28, 1981)

broadcasting from Sri Lanka in a year or less. The estimated cost was \$1 million, assuming a dedicated VOA crew was assigned. At the same time VOA was planning for the new station to be operational by 1985.

The second part of the proposal concerned the construction of a permanent facility in Sri Lanka once the rapid deployment station was operational. Specifically, the proposal called for the use of standard-designed buildings employing modular design or concept which allows for future expansion with minimal outlays. According to the proposal, the concept has worldwide application and the following benefits,

- eliminate construction project delays of up to 2 years,
- can be purchased from the General Services Administration as a stock item,
- complies with "Buy America" requirements, and
- is inexpensive, durable, and easily modified to meet specialized requirements.

A VOA relay station manager told us that he fully endorsed the use of standard-designed buildings and felt that the traditional relay station structures took too long to build, were overly costly, and could not be easily modified. The Acting Director of Engineering agreed; however, he added that the different characteristics of relay stations do not permit the use of standard-designed buildings in all locations. Although there is some conflict within VOA over this proposal, we believe it has merit and the use of prefabricated or standard-designed buildings should be considered on a project-by-project basis.

CONCLUSIONS

VOA has many opportunities to improve the operation of its technical facilities. VOA estimates that elimination of shortwave backup transmissions could save \$1 million in annual operating costs and another \$1.5 million could be saved with the closing of the Bethany Relay Station. Also, the colocation of receiver and transmitter plants could produce recurring cost savings, staff savings, and other operational benefits.

Many current and planned facilities of VOA and those of other U.S. Government agencies have possibilities for more efficient use through increased coordination and cooperation. Other U.S. agencies may have significant resources which could be used more effectively if VOA was to consider them in developing its requirements. Additionally, VOA management should give more consideration to staff originated proposals in planning new facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Director of the International Communication Agency require the Associate Director for Broadcasting to,

- eliminate backup shortwave transmissions,
- colocate receiver and transmitter plants at the Liberia Relay Station and plan for future relay station colocations,
- establish a plan on the efficient use of or disposal of the Dixon and Bethany Relay Stations, and
- develop plans to use the concepts of rapid deployment stations and standard-designed buildings in relay station construction and to employ those plans where appropriate.

We further recommend that the Director initiate discussions with other U.S. Government agencies involved in international broadcasting to identify existing and future technical facilities which may be appropriate for joint use.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR EVALUATION

USICA comments noted that restructuring of the engineering organization, and the use of updated management practices and operating procedures are initial steps being taken to correct long-term problems. With reference to specific points of our recommendation, USICA noted that it plans to

- eliminate the full time shortwave backup transmissions within four months,
- consider a technically preferable alternative to colocation which offers similar economic advantages,
- identify available alternatives to improve the effective use of the VOA transmitter network including Dixon and Bethany, and
- incorporate the objectives of employing new constructions designs in long-range planning.

USICA agreed that some economy such as fewer operating and maintenance personnel would result from joint use of facilities with other U.S. Government international broadcasters. USICA noted that while diplomatic considerations may outweigh the economic and technical advantages, VOA will, however, actively investigate joint use possibilities.

We believe the steps outlined in USICA's comments, if fully implemented, would meet the objectives of our recommendations for a more effective engineering and technical operation. These steps should ultimately lead to financial savings.

CHAPTER 5

LONG-RANGE PLANNING NECESSARY

TO ENSURE COMPETITIVENESS

The ability of VOA to remain competitive with other international broadcasters will depend on the establishment and implementation of long-range plans for technical requirements. Although VOA has given little consideration to overall needs, it has embarked on a number of modernization projects that could require an investment of over \$325 million. These efforts are based on piecemeal plans which have been subjected to numerous changes. As a result, VOA has been unable to upgrade its ability to deliver a strong, competitive signal to the listening audience.

MODERNIZATION OF TECHNICAL FACILITIES IS EXTENSIVE

VOA has initiated numerous construction projects to expand and modernize its technical facilities. Some projects are designed to replace existing equipment that is more than 25 years old, while others are designed to establish new facilities to enhance broadcast capabilities. Funding for these projects through 1983 is estimated to be in excess of \$150 million and additional enhancement projects which have been proposed could push the total to more than \$325 million.

Action to modernize and expand VOA facilities began with implementation of the Philippines Augmentation Project. The project provided for the addition of high-powered transmitters and related antenna systems at the Tinang Relay Station to alleviate a transmitter deficiency in the Far East. Brief descriptions, including the estimated costs of construction and technical improvement projects which have been initiated or planned by VOA since 1977, are presented in the following table.

VOICE OF AMERICA
CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Major construction projects	Implementation	Description	Estimated cost (in million)
Philippines Relay Station Augmentation	1977	Installation of two additional 250-kilowatt shortwave transmitters and related antenna systems	\$ 5.8
Woofferton Relay Station Augmentation	1977	Installation of four additional 250-kilowatt shortwave transmitters and related equipment	9.7
Liberia Relay Station Augmentation	1977	Modification to existing power plant	2.5
Botswana Medium-wave	1980	Installation of new relay station with one 50-kilowatt medium-wave transmitter	.9
Botswana Shortwave Station Augmentation	Pending	Installation of four 250-kilowatt shortwave transmitters, related antenna systems, and staff housing	29.6
Government of Greece Transmitter/Antennas	1980	Installation of one 250-kilowatt shortwave transmitter, two antennas and associated equipment for the Government of Greece	2.2
Sri Lanka Project	Pending	Replacement of old relay station with four 500-kilowatt and two 250-kilowatt shortwave transmitters related antenna systems, staff housing, and power generating equipment	95.7
Caribbean Project	Pending	Installation of five automated 50-kilowatt medium-wave transmitters and related antenna equipment at two existing sites and three new locations in the Caribbean	11.2
Radio in the American Sector	Pending	Replacement of a 20-kilowatt transmitter with a 100-kilowatt transmitter facility in Berlin	.8
<u>Improvement projects (\$500,000 and over)</u>			
Washington Plant	1977	Install monitoring and recording facilities and master antenna television system	.7
Greenville Relay Station	1979	Installation of curtain antenna to enhance coverage of Latin America	.8
Washington Plant	1979	Modernization of Washington Plant master control facility	1.0
Woofferton Relay Station	1980	Replacement of rectifiers	.7
Washington Plant	Pending	Modernization of 19 studios and central recording facility	5.9
Washington Plant	Pending	Replace and rearrange Washington Plant power distribution system	.5
Domestic Satellite System	Pending	Construct VOA-owned satellite network connecting Caribbean relay stations, domestic relay stations, correspondent bureaus and other VOA units with Washington	.9
TOTAL			<u>\$168.9</u>

In addition to these projects, VOA has made extensive proposals to ultimately replace or enhance all but two or three of its technical facilities. For example, VOA has proposed replacing obsolete transmitters in the Munich Relay Station at an estimated cost of \$45 million. A proposal for the Tangier Relay Station, at an estimated cost of \$115 million, included the procurement and installation of two shortwave transmitters for the Moroccan Government. Modernization options have also been considered for each of the domestic relay stations.

EXCESSIVE CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE
TO CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

The technical modernization program has experienced numerous delays and changes because there is no comprehensive plan for expanding and upgrading the facilities. A 1977 Presidential report on international broadcasting highlighted the need for additional high-powered transmitters, but this requirement has not been satisfied because of changing construction priorities and the absence of a plan for addressing critical concerns in the broadcast network.

The Presidential report identified a deficiency of 17 transmitters for the VOA overseas facilities, recommended acquiring them, and suggested specific locations for all of them. VOA decided not to follow the report's proposals, and only acquired 12 transmitters for 3 sites. Since that time, changes to these projects have delayed some completions until 1987 despite the original expectation of having transmitters installed in 3 to 5 years.

The construction delays have been accompanied by major project changes and reprogramming actions. Our review of construction budget documents disclosed that every major construction project since 1978 has been subject to one or more reprogramming actions. For example, the original plan for augmenting the Tinang Relay Station with 4 shortwave transmitters and 13 antennas was reduced to 2 transmitters and 2 antennas. Originally, the Sri Lanka Project was to provide six new transmitters and associated antenna systems at an estimated cost of \$66.4 million. VOA has changed the plans to provide for more powerful transmitters and added staff housing which has increased the project cost to nearly \$96 million and delayed estimated completion almost 2 years.

The following chart shows changes made to some active construction projects as they appeared in various VOA budget documents.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Appropriations and reprogramming (in millions)</u>	<u>Initial/latest estimated cost (in millions)</u>	<u>Initial/latest estimated completion</u>
Philippines Augmentation		\$15.9/\$5.8	July 1981/July 1983
Appropriations - 1976	\$ 6.8		
Appropriations - 1979	9.6		
Transferred to settle claim - 1977	(.7)		
Transferred to Liberia - 1978	(1.6)		
Transferred to Woofferton - 1978	(1.0)		
Transferred to Woofferton - 1981	(.4)		
Transferred to Botswana - 1981	(4.6)		
Transferred to Sri Lanka - 1981	(1.9)		
Transferred to land rental - 1981	(.3)		
Sri Lanka Expansion		66.4/95.7	Oct. 1985/July 1987
Appropriations - 1982	15.2		
Appropriations request - 1983	79.6		
Transferred from Philippines - 1981	1.9		
Transferred to Radio in the America Sector - 1982	(.8)		
Transferred to research - 1982	(.2)		
(Deduction)			

DIFFICULTIES IN MAINTAINING AND ESTABLISHING
TECHNICAL FACILITIES

Many of the VOA construction projects have been initiated at a time when concerns from within and outside VOA are surfacing on the technical adequacy of its broadcast system. The ability of VOA to effectively manage the construction projects has been questioned. There are also concerns as to whether the VOA overseas facilities are technically adequate and vulnerable to losses.

Concerns surround technical operation

There has been concern about the inability of VOA to effectively manage construction projects. A management study of VOA engineering operations by the Stanford Research Institute in September 1977 reached the following conclusion:

"The most serious questions that are raised in this situation concern the ability to manage the forthcoming expansion. The track record on specification, procurement, and construction has been very poor. Unless these areas are better managed in the future, similar results can be expected."

VOA engineering management has also suffered credibility problems as illustrated in the following excerpt from 1981 option papers concerning the Sri Lanka Project:

"A consideration of high importance in attempting to adopt a wholly new plan is overcoming VOA's already serious credibility problems with OMB, and to a lesser extent, with Congress.

"The hard reality is that VOA in the past 'changed its mind' too often in the opinion of those at OMB and on the Hill who must authorize and provide funds for these projects.

"Each previous change has been accompanied by the 'changed circumstances' argument.

"The argument can be mounted again, but to carry, it will have to be very forceful--at least insofar as OMB, and certain Congressional committees are concerned."

VOA staffers have also made allegations over the mismanagement of design and procurement contracts for VOA construction projects. We reviewed USICA files on the results of the investigation of the allegations and the documentation revealed that no personal corruption or gain was found, although some agency regulations were violated. We did not make any independent review of this matter.

Although the matter is still under review within USICA, several VOA engineering officials have resigned since the allegations were made. According to the Chief of Operations, VOA Engineering, the departure of these and other officials has caused vacancies in six key engineering positions and this is adversely affecting the technical operation. Some of the positions, including the Director and Deputy Manager for Engineering, were vacant for over two years.

Vulnerability of overseas relay stations

Despite uncertainties about vulnerability, VOA continues to expand relay stations on foreign soil, and live with the political whims of some countries. To place stronger signals into target areas, VOA believes it is necessary to locate its relay stations on foreign soil. As a result, VOA has made costly and restrictive concessions to host governments. Since 1979, VOA has operated its relay stations in Greece without an agreement. Negotiations between the United States and Greece on an operating agreement have been concluded but approval by the new Government of Greece is pending.

Terms of the negotiated agreement call for VOA to permit the Greek Government to use several of VOA transmitters at an estimated cost of \$12 million for the 15-year lease period; give Greece transmitter equipment valued at over \$2 million; and to make payments for land rental totaling over \$7 million for the 15-year lease. A VOA official told us that although the agreement has not been finalized, VOA is proceeding to satisfy "understandings" reached during the negotiations by purchasing equipment and requesting funds for lease payments. He said that VOA will have to make these costly concessions if it wants to maintain the relay station facilities in Greece.

The negotiated agreement between the United States and Sri Lanka for a new relay station contains a clause which gives the Government of Sri Lanka the right to approve VOA program content and schedules. The agreement will also allow the Government of Sri Lanka to request VOA to temporarily cease broadcast operations from the relay station when it is determined to be of supreme national interest. Additionally, title to VOA's facilities will be transferred to Sri Lanka upon termination of the agreement which can be done by either government with a 1-year notice. VOA officials told us they are concerned about relinquishing control over relay station operations but the previous agreement had a similar provision. They could not recall any difficulties under the old agreement. VOA officials have informed us the agreement will have to be renegotiated because of a recent decision to use larger transmitters. As a result, the Government of Sri Lanka has expressed a desire to further strengthen its relay station control provisions before amending the pending agreement to allow use of the larger transmitters.

VOA officials have stated that they intend to decrease the vulnerability problem by geographically dispersing their relay station facilities. According to VOA officials this was the basis for justifying large-scale construction projects in Botswana and Sri Lanka, even though both of these countries have a history of political instability.

In late 1977, VOA and the Department of State discussed the expansion of facilities in Sri Lanka. The U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka was opposed to expansion and believed the nature of politics in that country would compromise a long-term U.S. investment even if the present Government would permit such construction.

The Deputy Director of VOA agreed with the Ambassador's position and in a December 12, 1977, memorandum to the Director of VOA stated that since

"* * * Sri Lanka is not necessarily the optimum location for a VOA relay station for coverage of Asia, we ought to continue to look elsewhere for a politically and technically suitable location."

In 1978, USICA undertook a study of locations for additional VOA transmitters in Asia and reported in January 1979 that they were unable to identify a suitable location. Despite initial reservations, VOA persistence that Sri Lanka was the only suitable location for a new relay station facility persuaded State Department officials to initiate negotiations for an expanded facility.

VOA to reexamine the technical operation

In 1981, VOA reviewed its overall position and concluded that it needed to both increase its competitiveness as an international broadcaster and decrease its vulnerability. As a result, 5 engineering research projects in fiscal year 1982 and 14 engineering research projects in fiscal year 1983 have been proposed. VOA expects the proposed projects, which are estimated to cost about \$700,000, to provide the information and data necessary to make realistic decisions regarding what is needed to achieve increased competitiveness and decrease the vulnerability of its technical broadcast system.

VOA officials stated that these studies will aid in formulating a long-range plan for technical facilities. The long-range plan was in the very early stages of inter-office discussion when we discussed it with VOA officials in early 1982.

CONCLUSION

The changing construction requirements for VOA technical facilities are largely the result of inadequate long-range planning. The changes have delayed many of the projects. The ability

of VOA to effectively carry out an aggressive modernization program has been seriously questioned. This has been done at a time when questions on the technical adequacy and vulnerability of VOA relay stations are beginning to surface. Although VOA is undertaking technical evaluations of its broadcast capabilities, a long-range plan should be formulated before embarking on a major modernization program.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Director of the International Communication Agency require the Associate Director for Broadcasting to develop a comprehensive long-range plan for the effective modernization and expansion of VOA technical facilities and, if necessary, delay current construction projects until the plan is developed. The plan should include, as a minimum, projected program needs, a replacement schedule for obsolete equipment, an assessment of VOA technical capabilities and technical standards, an evaluation of the political vulnerability of the VOA broadcast system, and availability of other U.S. Government-owned radio facilities.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR EVALUATION

USICA agreed there is a vital need for long-range planning and the guidance which is derived from such planning. Significant progress has been made in this area, according to the USICA comments, through a recent National Security Council sponsored study on VOA requirements. USICA noted that VOA will be guided by the thrust of this study while developing a more specific, long-range engineering plan. To do this, however, USICA has stated that VOA needs to hire qualified system engineers and project managers. Furthermore, USICA noted that VOA must ensure that selective near-term improvements are continued, and that long lead-time actions are started on time to meet national security objectives. USICA stated that the newly acquired VOA Director of Engineering and Technical Operations will review all projects to ensure adequate technical control and compliance with long-range planning.

Although we have not evaluated the initial requirements plan identified by USICA, we believe the actions described represent logical steps toward effective planning and management of the engineering and technical operations of VOA.

**International
Communication
Agency**

United States of America

Washington, D. C. 20547

Office of the Director



USICA

June 22, 1982

Dear Mr. Bowsher:

Enclosed are USICA's comments on the draft of the proposed GAO report titled, "Management of the Voice of America Should Address Identified Problems to Insure Continued High Performance."

As our comments point out, we totally support the purposes of the study, and we are in general accord with its conclusions. We differ with your auditors only on some of the details in the draft.

I hope you find our comments useful in preparing the final report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Z. Wick".

Charles Z. Wick
Director

The Honorable
Charles A. Bowsher
Comptroller General of the
United States

USICA Comment on Draft GAO Report

"Management of the Voice of America Should Address Identified Problems to Insure Continued High Performance"

Introduction

The GAO report is timely. The Voice of America is in transition. It faces major opportunities for expansion while it must address lingering managerial deficiencies. The VOA Director, who is the Associate Director of USICA Broadcasting, on May 1 was given responsibility for the Agency's Television and Film Service (TVF). This expands the opportunities for program, technical and management/fiscal coordination and efficiency, but it increases the range of issues which require "close attention of top management."

The comments which follow are keyed to the five specific objectives the draft report's authors describe on page 3. They vary somewhat from the chapter headings in the draft. They are presented this way to underscore USICA's basic concurrence with both the purposes and conclusions of the study. The top management of VOA was being assembled when the report was in preparation. The Director of Engineering and Technical Operations, for example, did not even begin work at VOA until after the draft was issued. The independent assessment of these managers parallels the GAO's.

Technical Issues

The first two objectives relate to VOA's technical operations: to determine the adequacy of its long-range planning; and to examine the efficiency of its current operations. General observations will be followed by comment on specific issues raised in the draft report.

The Agency is in basic agreement with the GAO draft report in regard to the observations on changes required in past practices related to engineering planning, execution and technical operations.

A comprehensive internal review and analysis, initiated prior to the GAO examination, has already identified many of the same problem areas. Practical solutions, both short-term and longer range, are now in the process of implementation. Increased professionalism, stability, and in-depth competence in both the technical and management aspects of the engineering operation are mandatory to maintain the present effectiveness of the "Voice". Of at least equal importance is the urgent need to obtain more global broadcast coverage and more assured penetration, in spite of jamming. The necessity of adequate investments in high quality engineering personnel, in replacement of obsolete equipment and antenna farms, and in the selective addition of new sites to carry out these improvements in the "Voice" has been the subject of an intensive inter-Agency study chaired by NSC at the request of the Budget Review Board. Discussions are in process with OMB and will soon be underway with Congress on this subject. The GAO comments have been considered in the initial planning, and we fully expect the final GAO report to be consistent with conclusions of the Executive Branch.

VOA has recently filled the long-vacant senior engineering management position of Director of Engineering and Technical Operations with a highly qualified and experienced technical manager, who is actively pursuing both near

GAO note: Page numbers referred to USICA comments may not correspond to those in the final report.

term and longer range corrective actions. Effective utilization of existing personnel and current physical plant will be obtained by a careful organizational restructuring and through use of updated management practices and standard operating procedures. Procurement and project implementation methods are being more clearly defined, along with increased emphasis on appropriate checks and balances implemented at the most senior management levels within the engineering organization. Although this will achieve an immediate beneficial impact, many of the long-standing difficulties can only be overcome with an evolutionary addition of qualified personnel and new physical plant. VOA is actively involved in an intense continuing effort to move as rapidly as possible in correcting these longer term problems.

Objective I

Determine the adequacy of the justification and long range plans for upgrading the technical facilities and equipment.

Issue: Halt construction until a long-range plan is developed - (pp ii, 44, 54, 55 of report).

Comment: Although we agree with the vital need for long-range planning and the guidance derived therefrom, selective near term improvements must be continued, and long lead-time actions must be started now in order for the Voice to meet its high priority national security objectives. Significant progress has been made in initial long-range planning with the recent NSC sponsored study on international broadcasting.

VOA will be guided by and remain consistent with the thrust of this document, while developing a more specific long-range engineering plan. It should be noted that a necessary precedent of this more detailed and justified plan is the hiring of qualified system engineers and project managers. We are moving in this direction as rapidly as possible but it takes several months to find and recruit competent personnel in this very competitive field. Concurrent with our upgrading of engineering competence, VOA will carefully review, with direct participation of our newly acquired Director of Engineering and Technical Operations, all ongoing projects to ensure they fit within the thrust of the NSC study and that they have adequate technical management and control. Implementation actions that can be postponed without harm to the operational effectiveness of the "Voice" will not be pursued without thorough review and comparison of how they fit within a global master plan. All new work and facilities will be pursued with an objective of meeting not only the immediately identified need, but also of having an inherent ability to accommodate changing global programming objectives.

Issue: Excessive changes in construction planning and charges of mismanagement - (pp 47, 48, 51 of report).

Comment: Although some changes inevitably occur due to changes in requirements and as on-the-job experience occurs, VOA agrees that an explicit global long-range plan, better and more thorough implementation designs; and, most importantly, more professionally trained technical management would have significantly minimized the noted changes in funding requirements and actual construction. This is a key aspect of our ongoing upgrade of management skills and technical competence. The personnel available at that time performed well, taking into consideration lack of management stability, insufficient training, and insufficient quantities of personnel to do an adequate job. We believe the problem was basically ineptness, as contrasted to culpable mismanagement. Filling existing vacancies with seasoned and skilled engineers and establishment of new professional management positions will overcome this legitimate GAO criticism.

Issue: Design and use of rapid deployment stations and standard designed buildings - (pp ii, 42, 43).

Comment: We fully concur in principle and will incorporate such objectives into the long-range plan. Prefabricated buildings will be considered along with any other low cost building designs. Local building practices, to a certain extent will, in the final stages, determine the most practical type of housing.

The worldwide practicality and cost effectiveness of standard modularized or prefabricated construction can only be verified by a careful examination, which will be undertaken as soon as qualified personnel are available.

Issue: Continued vulnerability of relay stations on foreign soil and use of USG sites - (pp 41, 51, 52, 53).

Comment: Maximum effort should be made to find technically suitable locations on U.S. territory and in friendly, stable, cooperating countries. Radio propagation and other factors often require the taking of some risks and extra costs in negotiated agreements with various countries. To date VOA has been quite successful in maintaining and operating relay sites around the world, without harmful restrictions being imposed. The risks and costs have proven to be minimal compared with the benefits. At the present time we need to continue negotiating the best obtainable positions in Greece, Sri Lanka, and other countries since there is no viable alternative. Even so, VOA is working to establish additional options, including the use of direct broadcast satellites as soon as they become technically available and economically feasible.

Even though VOA must locate many stations on foreign soil, due to technical factors, not enough serious attention has been given to possible use of U.S. territorial soil. VOA has considered some U.S. locations in the Caribbean when that project was being developed, but because of the poor geographical locations and the lack of essential technical requirements, none were seriously considered. Puerto Rico was discarded since it was unfavorably located for the Eastern Caribbean targets and would interfere with U.S. broadcasters if used for broadcasts to the central Caribbean.

St. Croix has just recently been looked at as a possible site to replace the temporary one on Antigua and it does not look very promising as it lacks a reliable power system. Land cost is very high. There are also other electronic interests on the island making an interference study likely. By itself the latter would not be reason to reject St. Croix, but in consideration of the other items, Antigua looks like the better bet.

VOA agrees that closer coordination and knowledge needs to exist on what other U.S. agencies are planning, in order to maximize the possible use of U.S. territories for relay sites. Combined operation, or at least co-location, should be considered with other non-sensitive government installations, both on U.S. territory and in other countries. These factors will be included as objectives in future consideration of relay site location.

Issue: Joint use of new facilities with BIB, Radio Marti, etc. - (pp 39, 40).

Comment: Some economy would be obtainable if VOA co-located with RFE/RL and Radio Marti and fewer total operating and maintenance personnel would be required. From that standpoint co-located or joint sites would be desirable. However, the diplomatic considerations must also be weighed, and in some cases they could outweigh the technical and economic advantages.

In addition to sharing facilities, VOA foresees considerable advantage in joint ventures related to engineering design and resolutions of common technical problems. This could be especially true in major development efforts such as with a direct broadcast satellite. VOA will actively investigate this joint engineering possibility.

Objective II

Examine operation of the technical facilities with emphasis on their adequacy of justification for broadcasts.

Issue: Elimination of shortwave back-up recommended - (pp ii, 31, 32).

Comment: Shortwave back-up for satellite feeds, in its present form, should be eliminated. However, some form of effective immediate alternate feed must be available in case the primary satellite feed fails. VOA has occasionally experienced prolonged outages. A recent interruption of 25 hours occurred on all five circuits in Greece due to equipment failure in the terrestrial end of the satellite network.

If the same kind of transmitters were used for broadcasting and for the high frequency feeds, the spare capacity we maintain as part of our regular service and repair schedule could be used. The transmitters could be turned on only as required to protect the assigned back-up feed frequency from "pirating" by other broadcasters.

This will require some modification in current procedures. We will expedite resolution of this problem, and hope to be able to eliminate the full time shortwave back-up within four months.

Issue: Future of Bethany and Dixon needs to be established - (pp ii, 34).

Comment: A complete answer will not be available until a global system analysis can be conducted. Some help in this regard is expected shortly from a study contracted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which is making a preliminary examination to determine what alternatives are available to improve the effective use of the VOA transmitter network.

However, so long as VOA stations in Liberia and Botswana depend on high frequency feeds from the U.S. for other programs, Bethany should be kept on the air, as frequently Bethany's signals are superior to those from Greenville. South America, coverage of which is of major and growing importance, is also a major target of Bethany transmissions. Satellite circuits to Liberia are not expected to be available before mid 1983 or later.

With interest in Latin America receiving greater attention lately, the need for increased shortwave transmitting capability to Mexico, Central and Northern South America has been emphasized. The Dixon station, which has been in caretaker status since mid 1979 has three 250 KW transmitters and four antennas favoring transmissions into those Latin American areas. A limited reactivation of the Dixon facility has been under consideration by VOA and would return to service the three 250 KW transmitters on a modest five and one-half hour daily schedule. The cost for this limited activity will be approximately \$550,000 annually; roughly \$370,000 more than the annual cost for the non-productive caretaker status costs. The station has a small but meaningful allocation of federal power which helps to keep cost for such an operation at a minimum. Cost for reactivation of the idle Dixon plant was estimated in the GAO report to cost about \$1.5 million. This is too high and, as a matter of fact, two of the three transmitters have been readied and low power tested at virtually zero cost. No problems are expected with the third; but, in any event, the cost shouldn't exceed \$200,000. Less than 30 days were required to restore the first two transmitters to operation.

Another point worth mentioning here is that the Dixon station is an ideal location in which antenna design verification and automated station design and operation can be conducted. Sufficient land exists on which a large experimental high gain antenna can be erected. The merit of such a useful and convenient test bed should not be overlooked.

Issue: Co-location of receiver and transmitter sites - (pp ii, 35, 36, 37).

Comment: Co-location, as the name suggests, is the locating of transmitting and receiving equipment at the same site. Receivers and transmitters are traditionally separated ten miles or so to eliminate the possibility of the receiver overloading and picking up extraneous transmitted signals which abound in close proximity to high power transmitting installations.

Several years ago personnel at the Liberia Relay Station investigated the possibilities of co-location and discovered that it was feasible there. Feasibility at other stations, to date, has been a matter of negative speculation and little enthusiasm. There was a pretty good basis for the feeling since, while the tests conducted at Liberia were successful, paths to other relay stations are inferior.

Literal co-location would inevitably result in reduced reception capability. Fortunately, there is a way other than co-location that can provide most of the economic advantages of co-location and at the same time provide a no-compromise receiving capability for back-up feed or emergency reception: remotely tuned receivers. They can be installed within the present receiver plants and controlled by circuits via the microwave links that presently exist. In this way antennas and a reduced staff can provide the same high quality reception capability as before. Staff reductions, and their resulting savings, would be about the same as possible with true co-location. At the time the Liberia tests were conducted, reliable, high quality remotely controlled and tuned receivers were not readily available. There are now several such receivers available. The BBC uses Plessey receivers in their Ascension relay facility, for example.

New stations should be designed with separated receiver/transmitter capabilities but include state-of-the-art receiving equipment of remote controlled design. A typical staff then would be around five technicians for the receiver function as compared to the 20-25 typically found today.

Issue: Unused transmitter time - (pp 37, 38, 39).

Comment: The number of hours various broadcasting organizations operate their transmission facilities obviously depends on their program requirements and the facilities available.

The worldwide network of transmission facilities has evolved by installing relay stations at locations which provide optimum broadcasting coverage to satisfy specific program requirements.

In contrast, the absence of a network of relay stations or the lack of appropriate broadcasting facilities forces other broadcasters "to attempt to cover the world" from a few heavily utilized transmitters. Furthermore, the shortage of facilities may require some broadcasts to be scheduled during non-prime time hours. As an example, the eight transmitters at the Deutsch Welle Wertachtal Station are scheduled for 166 hours and 24 minutes in the 1982 summer season, an average of

20.8 hours a day per transmitter. Due to the lack of more suitable relay facilities, 83 hours or one-half of this total usage is intended for targets in the Americas, the Far East, and South Asia. The signal levels provided over such long circuits would not satisfy VOA standards. Deutsche Welle is planning a new relay station in Sri Lanka.

A similar situation prevails at the Deutsche Welle Station at Kigali where 25% of the broadcasts are intended for non-African targets in the Americas and Asia.

Policies about reserving time for equipment maintenance varies between broadcasters. In general, VOA reserves up to four hours per day for this purpose.

Programming Issues

Objective III

Determine the adequacy of justification for broadcast targets, program mixes, and hours.

Issue: Despite recommendations by earlier technical studies that no VOA program should be shorter than 30-minutes in length, VOA is broadcasting 15-minute programs daily in eleven languages.

Comment: Given current transmitter capacity and program staff levels, VOA does not have the resources to increase the length of these programs.

As part of the aforementioned inter-Agency study chaired by the NSC, VOA has identified the staff and technical enhancements needed to support the 30-minute minimum broadcast time standard.

In the interim, however, VOA believes it should continue the existing 15-minute programs. All eleven programs are broadcast to communist countries. Evidence from listener mail, comments by travelers, etc. indicates there are substantial audiences for these morning broadcasts. The quarter hour format provides time for a 10-minute newscast followed by a VOA editorial.

Issue: Need for written procedures for guidelines for VOA Services.

Comment: While recognizing that it may be difficult, if not impossible, to devise a style book or a series of guidelines for preparing non-news material for broadcast in forty languages, VOA is aware of the need to develop a manual which prescribes suggested program mixes, content standards, and production techniques. Work on this manual has begun under the aegis of the VOA Program Planning Committee which is assembling material and plans publication by the end of this calendar year.

In addition, individual, more specific manuals are foreseen for the various divisions of VOA, but planning for these awaits any reorganization which may take place in the next few months.

Issue: Need for improvement in practices for estimating audience size and handling listener mail.

Comment: This issue has been a source of concern and consideration in the USICA Office of Research and at VOA. The comment in the GAO report that VOA audience estimates use research studies conducted in the last decade is accurate but incomplete. The report notes that 76 percent of the listed studies were fielded in 1977 or before. However, VOA makes use of studies conducted by other reliable organizations which do not appear on the list. Taking these studies into account, 54% of the studies date from 1977 or before. Furthermore, the Office of Research now undertakes a wide variety of studies. Since January 1981, for example, some 40 research reports were issued covering VOA audience surveys, listener reactions, listener program preferences, discussion panels on VOA programs and radio-related media habits.

The GAO report correctly notes that presently there is no systematic analysis of letters to VOA. To help alleviate this situation, the Office of Research is initiating this summer the first mail listener panel in the Arab world. A similar mail listener survey is planned for China in August. Last year the Office of Research conducted interviews or group discussions with VOA listeners and with listeners from areas where surveys are not possible.

A major initiative to correct deficiencies in audience data was approved by Director Wick June 4, 1982. A VOA audience relations program will soon be established under a Director of Audience Relations, reporting to the Associate Director for Broadcasting. Prominent among the functions of this office will be a centrally coordinated listener mail service responsible for replying to listener mail, analysis of listener response, and in coordination with PGM/R, use of this analysis in research effort.

Issue: Inadequate use of studies in programming and scheduling.

Comment: There has been a definite increase in the utilization of research by VOA management. For example, the Advisor on Communication, Office of Research, attends VOA's weekly management meetings to brief on research issues and research specialists routinely attend and contribute to all VOA program reviews. VOA staff are personally briefed on the findings of important studies. Research studies are developed in close consultation with VOA programmers.

Within the last year, VOA management has requested several studies to aid important program decisions. For example, a major study to estimate the size of the potential elite audience in West Europe to an all-news English language program was completed in April. A study, now in progress, seeks to estimate worldwide access to various bands, and will provide guidelines to long-term technical planning and frequency allocation decisions. Moreover, current VOA management plans call for an expanded use of research to assist in future program development.

Objective IV

Examine program content, policy guidance and internal evaluations.

Issue: Need for improved VOA program reviews - (pp 16, 24).

Comment: VOA acknowledges the need to reform the Program Review process by providing clearer guidance (based upon more sharply defined broadcasting objectives) during the Reviews themselves and by following up on the recommendations to insure full and timely implementation.

As noted earlier, the new VOA Director of Programs and his Deputy for Program Development are examining more closely than has ever been done before broadcasting at the service and branch level. A major realignment - designed to eliminate duplication and to improve programming - is planned for the News and Current Affairs Divisions, the Worldwide English Division, and several language elements. All of these initiatives, combined with the work of VOA's new "in-house" Program Planning Committee and the planned publication of VOA Broadcasting Manual, promise to meet the need for clearer guidance.

Since March 1982, each program review identifies specific steps to be taken by the service to improve its programming and sets deadlines for accomplishing these directives. To assure compliance, the Deputy Program Director for Program Development, conducts "post program review" critiques within two weeks after the review. So far, VOA Russian, Chinese, Spanish, Persian, Khmer, and Portuguese-to-Africa, have been evaluated under this new system.

The Director of Programs is also adding the News and Current Affairs Divisions to the list of elements to be examined during the Program Review process.

Issue: Duplication of program materials between centrally-produced and service-originated scripts - (p 19).

Comment: VOA Management is aware of this problem and is moving to address it. The recent review of programming operations noted in the GAO draft report, has proposed a reorganization plan that would eliminate duplication between the news functions of VOA English and the central Newsroom; between the feature-writing activities of VOA English and those of the central Current Affairs Division; and

between the Portuguese-to-Europe and Portuguese-to-Africa services. The proposal is now being discussed with all affected elements and it is anticipated that it, or a somewhat modified plan, will be implemented by the end of FY-1982. In the meantime, VOA is raising the level of communications and cooperation between and among the various language elements and the central services. A transcription service is being set up in VOA English to make available texts of features of potential use to other services. The Special Events' daily "menu" that lists interviews and other program activities planned by the various services has been redesigned to encourage more 'cross-sharing' of the material developed through Special Events. VOA is also instituting regular meetings between the broadcast services and the central specialists who write on science, Americana, the arts, etc. These meetings should lead the central services to prepare material more suitable to the needs of the language elements, thereby reducing the need for services to re-write or re-create centrally-produced scripts.

Issue: Inconsistencies among language services in program proportions.

Comment: Since June, 1982, VOA has been producing at least one editorial daily reflecting an official United States policy position. All services are required to broadcast these editorials. On June 4th, VOA inaugurated a weekly 15-minute program, American Viewpoints, that presents a sampling of opinions expressed on commercial American radio and television stations across the nation. These programs, together with the long established roundups of newspaper editorial opinion, should improve our projection of America from a political and geographic standpoint.

On the broader issue of program proportions, it is generally true that the more airtime a broadcast service has, the greater the variety of its programming. The shorter broadcasts are viewed primarily as news programs, with a modest amount of feature content. In addition to telling a listener what has been happening in the world and in the United States since we last broadcast in that language we include those news-connected materials that illuminate, analyze, or comment on the news. A one-hour program offers greater flexibility and the opportunity for more variety.

In addition to news-related material, there is time for a broader treatment of science, cultural, and other features in a changing mix. Even a bit of music may be appropriate.

Whenever possible, services are encouraged to seek out people within American society with appropriate linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to talk about aspects of U.S. life in terms, and in a language, understandable to the target audience.

Services have also been encouraged to use longer features such as "Close-up" and "Perspective" as weekend fare. The decision to use such "long" features in a 'short' program is made in the context of the overall output for that week, the particular appeal and interest the feature's subject has for the given audience, and the feature's importance relative to the other program material available to the service.

The variety of factors affecting individual language programs, makes it impractical to mandate across-the-house program proportions, or ratios.

Tighter program review procedures; greater involvement of the Program Director's staff in program direction and evaluation; and wider discussion of programming goals and practices are all designed to help each service achieve a program "mix" that suits its particular needs.

Issue: Need of a specific timetable for corrective action in programming.

Comment: VOA is engaged in a house-wide discussion of a reorganization proposal that addresses several of the above issues. VOA expects to make a decision, regarding the proposal, by July 31st and to begin implementation of the decision by September 1st.

Personnel and Administrative Issues

Objective V

Examine the efficiency of personnel and administrative support services.

Issue: Status of Personnel Office - (pp 7, 8).

Comment: Over the past six months, the new Office of Personnel has taken a programmatic approach in attempting to resolve long standing problems, some of which are mentioned in the draft report. Specific accomplishments and planned actions are outlined below:

The Recruitment and Placement Division:

- is working closely with VOA managers to establish recruiting programs tailored to the needs of each division.

- is developing college recruitment programs to provide a cadre of promising broadcast and engineering talent from which to make selections.

- has improved VOA's testing capability and reduced processing time by increasing the number of weekly testing sessions and the number of candidates at each session.

- has expedited overseas and out-of-town testing.

— has reduced the total of approximately 260 vacancies which existed at the time the office was established to 184 vacancies today, of which 110 selections have already been made. This includes the staffing of such key positions as Director of Programs, Director of Engineering and Technical Operations, Deputy for News and Current Affairs, and Deputy for Operations, Deputy for Program Development.

— and has had some success expediting the security clearance process.

The Position and Pay Management Division: It has completed its position management reviews in all elements of VOA and has scheduled reviews for the newly acquired area, the Television and Film Service. In addition to identifying weaknesses in current organizational structure and position allocation during the reviews, alternative functional alignments have been developed and the options proposed to top management. They are intended to strengthen VOA's planning capability in the engineering and technical arena, increase accountability and management control, and reduce duplication of functions between the centralized news staff and the broadcasting services. Several proposals are now being discussed by affected organizations. The position management reviews have been completed in addition to regular classification workload.

Training and Development Division: An integral part of rebuilding VOA is enhancing the managerial and technical skills of its workforce. That task now is the responsibility of the Training and Development Division. This Division, working with the USDA Graduate School, has designed a series of intensive Management Workshops that will improve the skills, attitudes and sensitivities of all line supervisors at VOA and the Television and Film Service.

The workshops started with a "pilot group" on May 17, 1982, and now are "up and running" with eleven projected study groups of 20 persons each.

The Training and Development Division also appointed a Task Force, drawn from the Language Services themselves, which identified those training courses deemed most urgently needed to help VOA's Foreign Language Broadcasters do their jobs more effectively. Implementation of the Task Force's recommendations is currently underway. The Training and Development Division is developing additional training courses for international radio broadcasters to improve office communications. In addition, training courses on international political relations will be offered. The overall effort is designed to raise morale, improve employee-management relationships, and increase employee awareness of the international political environment in which they work.

Issue: Need for more physical space (p 8)

Comment: A total of 55,000 square feet of additional space is being made available to VOA in the HHS-North Building (39,000 square feet) and in the HHS-South Building (16,000 square feet). This will contribute significantly toward resolving VOA's major physical space and security problems. Specifically:

VOA finally will be able to relieve serious overcrowded employee working conditions. The amount of working space available to each VOA employee will increase from an average of about 90 square feet per employee to an average of about 125 square feet per employee -- an allowance that is consistent with existing GSA standards.

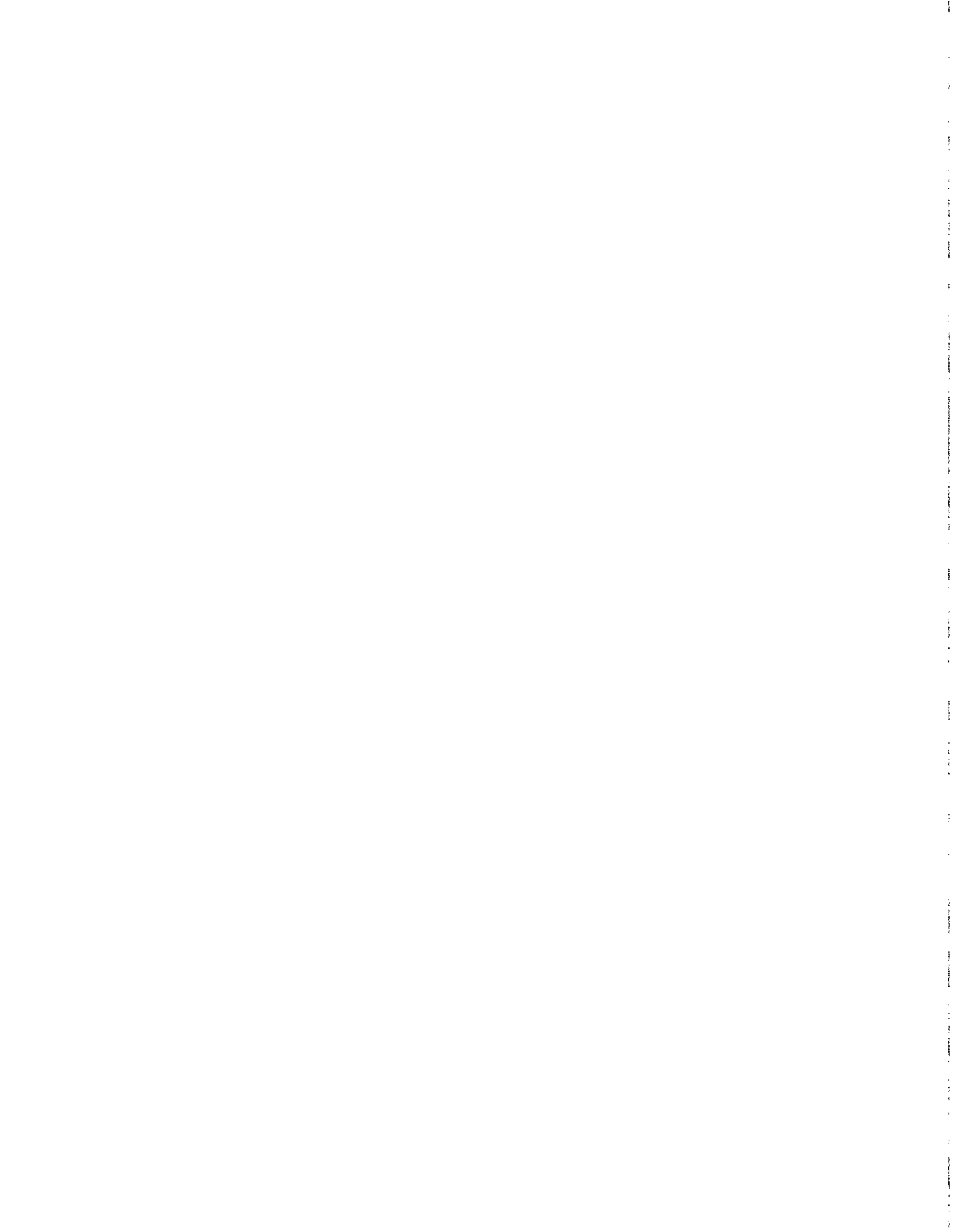
VOA will be able to consolidate all of its broadcast programming operations together on two floors instead of being fragmented among four floors of the HHS-North Building.

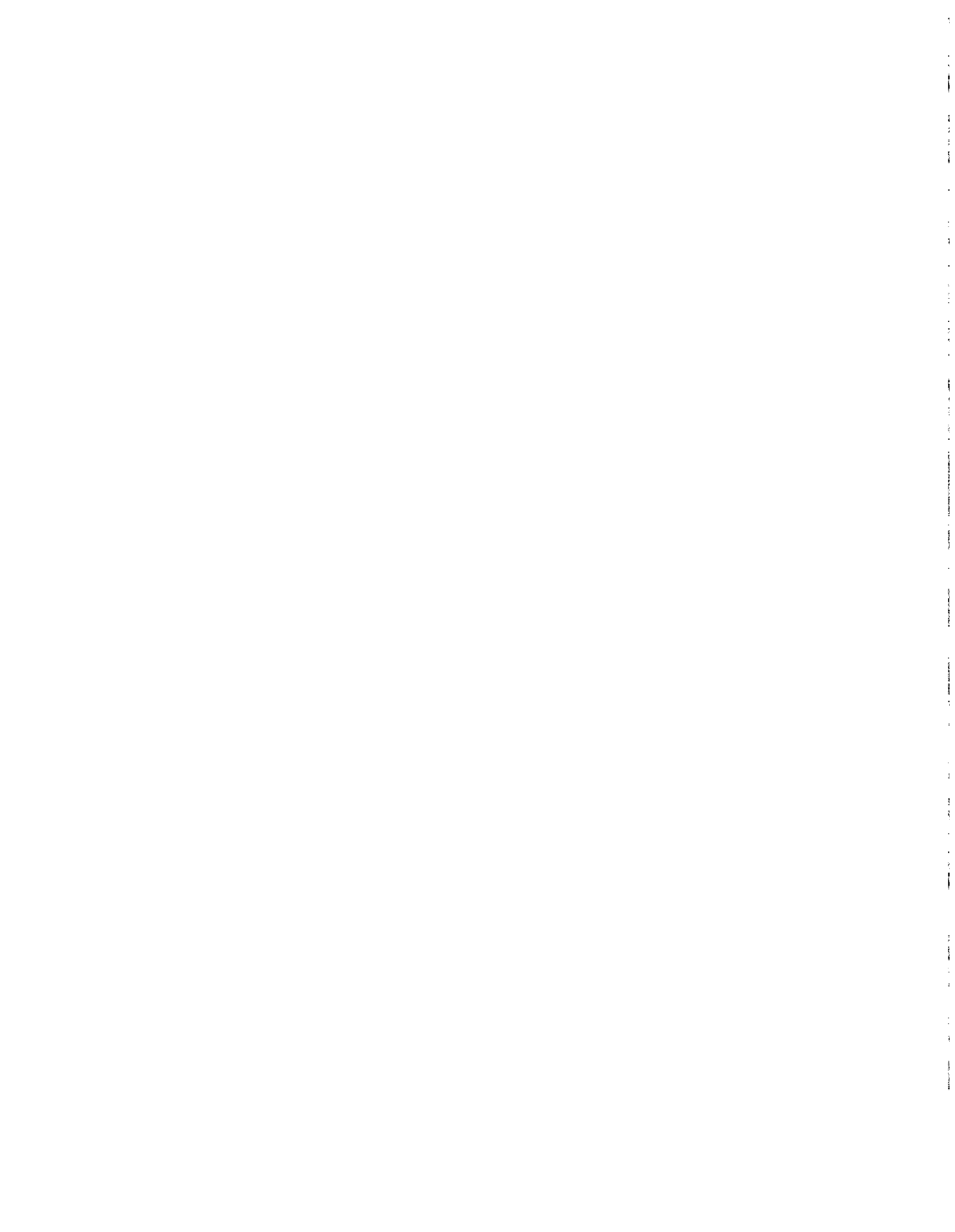
VOA will be able to consolidate its engineering operations -- currently located 6 blocks away from the main VOA operations -- into the HHS-Buildings complex. This will significantly improve the VOA management oversight and general operations of that important VOA element.

Issue: Inadequate and ineffective security in the Health and Human Services Building (pp 8, 9).

Comment: A properly implemented physical security program will, for the first time, be possible since this additional space will permit VOA to consolidate all of its programming and technical broadcast operations on two entire floors of the HHS-North Building. VOA and the Agency's Office of Security are working together to incorporate into our physical space renovation plans a physical security program that is appropriate for an international radio broadcasting organization.

This enhanced space allocation, along with improved physical security, should result in more efficient operations and have a definite positive impact on employee morale and productivity.





AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

**UNITED STATES
GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548**

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300**

**POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U. S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE**



THIRD CLASS