



Press Statement

Robert Wood, Deputy Spokesman

Washington, DC

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Azerbaijan Proposal to Discontinue Local Broadcast of International Media

The United States is deeply concerned by reports that Azerbaijan's National Television and Radio Council may discontinue local radio broadcasts of international media, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), the Voice of America (VOA) and the BBC.

The Chairman of Azerbaijan's National Television and Radio Council (NTRC) said on October 31, that foreign broadcasts on frequencies controlled by the government of Azerbaijan may cease in 2009. There was no advance communication with the affected broadcasters, nor with the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which provides oversight for all U.S. international broadcasting.

The United States believes that international broadcasters such as Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the BBC have enriched public debate in Azerbaijan and contribute to Azerbaijan's democratic development. Discontinuing such broadcasts would send a disturbing message. We are seeking clarification from the Government of Azerbaijan.
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