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LETTERS TO THE TIMES

U.S. Can't Afford to Let Radio Free Europe Die

I would like to reinforce the statements you made in an editorial (Feb. 24) on Radio Free Europe. I am very familiar with that organization as in 1963 I took a two-year leave of absence from my company to work in Munich as deputy to the director of RFE and later extended the leave two more years because of the tremendous value of what they are doing.

I am deeply shocked by the attempt of Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) to kill both RFE and Radio Liberty. They are indeed, as he says, "relics of the cold war" but this implies that other relics of the cold war—particularly the denial of basic

spective on (a) what is happening in their own country, (b) what is happening in the rest of the world.

The statement made so often that the Voice of America and the BBC can give them news of the world is true. No other group, however, can interpret internal bloc developments as quickly and responsibly as can RFE. They peg the lies, distortions and party fulminations as soon as they erupt, this because over the years they have assembled the most extensive library on Communist countries existing anywhere.

A letter writer to your paper (March 7) describes these operations as "self righteous meddling." On that basis we are also "meddling" in Peking, the Middle East, Africa, South America and Asia. As are the Russians. And the Chinese. Operating in this very real world, we had better continue to "meddle."

GORDON DAVIS
Los Angeles

oslovakia, it hardly needs to be repeated that the peoples of Eastern Europe do not presently enjoy this right. RFE provides an ersatz domestic communications medium for societal forces in Eastern Europe seeking evolutionary political liberalization, national affirmation, and in time relaxation (not abolishment) of Soviet control over the area and supersession of the artificial partition of Europe.

Professor Neal depicts RFE as broadcasting cold war propaganda which has no impact on the East European populations. This is to overlook overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Continued jamming is perhaps the best indication that, for the East European Communist leaderships, more is at stake than false hopes of anti-Communists and curiosity about rock music. I know the Polish case best; I have yet to meet a foreigner who has resided in Poland—government official, journalist, or student—who has not testified to the impact of RFE in Poland and the esteem in which its broadcasts are generally held.

A. ROSS JOHNSON
Santa Monica

The writer was assistant for Polish affairs at RFE from 1966-1969
—Ed.



Totalitarianism's Little Helper

freedoms to the people of Eastern Europe—no longer exist. And that is patently untrue. It also implies that these two radio groups operate within cold war concepts. Also quite untrue.

The fact is that for many years both organizations have had to fight the charge of simplistic Americans that they have "sold out" to liberal forces within their ranks because they have not engaged in cold war tactics. Instead of name-calling and finger-pointing (I suspect most Americans are convinced this still goes on) their task for many years has been to combat the lies and propaganda spread within the régimes and give their listeners a true per-

If there is one thing that is likely to reduce the threat to us in Western Europe and ultimately to you Americans it is change within the Soviet Union and increased internal pressure on the Russian leaders to change their policies. Since World War II both Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe have been broadcasting across the Iron Curtain with just this aim in mind.

I understand that Radio Liberty alone has an estimated audience of 31 million in Russia, but now the work that they are doing is threatened with extinction.

The cost of running a radio station is but a small fraction of the cost of maintaining a modern army, but the benefits can be much greater.

JOHN HARVEY
Swansea, England

The objections to The Times' editorial position on Radio Free Europe voiced by George Holmes and Fred Warner Neal (Letters, March 7) are, in my view, unfounded. In response to the former, RFE aims precisely (of others) to live their own way, good or bad." Less than four years after the occupation of Czech-