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Welcome to program 85 of VOA Radiogram from the Voice of America.

I'm Kim Andrew Elliott in Washington.

Here is the lineup for today's program (all MFSK32 except where indicated):

1:45 Program preview (now)
2:52 Solar eclipse and European power grids*
7:53 Human settlements and animal extinction*
11:45 Interfacing human brains via Internet*
16:05 Sesame Street TV show marks 45 years*
19:45 Russian media news*
26:37 Closing announcements with MFSK64 logo
28:05 Surprise mode of the week

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<EOT>

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March Solar Eclipse to Challenge European Power Grids

Reuters via voanews.com

November 07, 2014

PARIS - A solar eclipse in March next year will be an unprecedented test of European electricity grids because of the massive increase in solar power production on the continent, French power grid RTE said on Friday.

On the morning of March 20, 2015, an almost total solar eclipse will block direct sunlight over Norway and northern Europe for about one hour and a half and will also be visible in other parts of Europe, North Africa and Russia.

Europe's solar power capacity has significantly increased since the last major eclipse in August 1999, and, depending on the weather that day, the eclipse could cause rapid swings in output that will require adjustments by the grids.

"The passage of this shadow will considerably reduce photovoltaic power production," Dominique Maillard, the head of France's power grid operator RTE, owned by EDF, told reporters during its winter outlook presentation.

"According to our calculations, the impact could be a drop in production of as much as 30,000 megawatts across Europe, it's the equivalent of a six degrees Celsius drop in temperatures in half an hour," Maillard said.

That is also the capacity equivalent of 30 nuclear reactors.

Maillard said RTE had started talks with other European grid operators to co-ordinate their response and prepare back-up power capacity.

"If it's a cloudy day, it will go almost unnoticed. We will only know almost at the last minute, but that doesn't prevent us from getting our contingency plans ready," he said.

Germany is Europe's leading country in terms of solar power capacity, with nearly 37,000 MW of installed solar capacity meeting 28.5 percent of its domestic power demand in the first half of 2014.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-march-solar-eclipse-to-challenge-european-power-grids-/2511796.html>

<EOT>

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<EOT>

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<EOT>

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Small Numbers of Humans Can Cause Big Creatures to go Extinct

VOA News

November 07, 2014

It did not take a large human population to quickly hunt New Zealand's largest bird species to extinction.

A new study suggests there were less than 2,500 Polynesian settlers in New Zealand by the time the moa disappeared in the early 15th century. Archeological evidence indicates human settlements on the islands were established in the early 14th century.

Researchers Richard Holdaway and Chris Jacomb analyzed moa eggshell pieces excavated from early settlements to determine when moa hunting began. Dating moa remains from non-archeological sites indicate they were exterminated in much of the island only 70 to 80 years after hunting began.

Writing in the journal Nature Communications, researchers say their findings show population size can not be used to absolve humans of involvement in other extinctions.

They note it has been suggested that people could not have caused

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the extinctions of North American mammoths or giant Australian marsupials because the human population at the time was too small.

The researchers also estimate during the time of the moa's extinction, New Zealand had one of the lowest population densities of any pre-industrial society, one person per 100 square kilometers.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/small-numbers-of-humans-can-cause-big-creatures-to-go-extinct/2512381.html>

<EOT>
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Image: Restoration of an upland moa, now extinct ...

<EOT>
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<EOT>
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Perhaps a new mode for amateur radio ...

Scientists Interface Human Brains Over Internet

VOA News
November 06, 2014

Telepathy is usually the stuff of science fiction. But transmitting signals from one person's brain to another may someday become a reality, say researchers at the University of Washington.

In a test repeated from a year ago, subjects were able to control hand motions of other people by thinking about the movement, while their brain signals were transmitted over the Internet.

The three pairs of participants were located in different buildings on the university campus, without any possibility of verbal or visual communication.

The sender, wearing a skull cap with electrodes, watched a computer game that involved shooting at a pirate ship, and thought about moving a hand to fire rockets.

Those brain signals were picked up by the electrodes, and sent over the Internet to the receiver's cap, which had an electromagnetic coil positioned over the part of brain that

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controls hand movements. The receiver could not see the game.

When the interface was successful, the receiver's hand would twitch, and press a touchpad that would actually fire the rocket. The researchers report a range of accuracy, from 25 to 83 percent.

After receiving an additional \$1 million grant, researchers say their goal is to develop a technology for transferring more complex knowledge directly from one brain to another.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/scientists-interface-human-brains-over-internet/2510930.html>

<EOT>

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<EOT>

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Iconic US Children's TV Show Turns 45

VOA News

November 11, 2014

A television show that features a 249-centimeter tall bright yellow bird, aided by multi-colored furry "animals" who interact with humans on a fictional New York City street reached a historic milestone this week.

Sesame Street, the popular U.S. children's educational show, turned 45 years old on Monday. The show has been a hit among pre-school children -- and their parents -- since its debut on November 10, 1969 on public television, and is now considered a U.S. cultural institution.

Millions of children across the U.S. tune in to Sesame Street every day to receive standard educational fare in reading, spelling and math from the now-iconic "Muppet" characters created by the late puppeteer Jim Henson: Kermit the Frog, Big Bird, Oscar the Grouch, Cookie Monster, Bert and Ernie, and squeaky-voiced Elmo. The show has received acclaim for its racially diverse human cast, and willingness to discuss a variety of real-life subjects, including death and physical disability.

Sesame Street has been shown in more than 150 countries since its debut, and its brand can be found on scores of toys, games and videos.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/iconic-american-tv-showsesame-street-turns-45/2515819.html>

<EOT>

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<EOT>
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From Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty:

Russia Says CNN Not Prevented From Broadcasting

By RFE/RL
November 11, 2014

The Russian government says CNN is not legally prohibited from broadcasting in the country after the international broadcaster announced it would cease appearing on Russian airwaves.

The Communications and Mass Media Ministry said on November 11 that CNN officials could consult with the ministry on ways to get the proper licenses needed to continue broadcasting on Russian cable and satellite networks.

CNN said on November 10 that it was suspending its broadcasts in Russia as of January 1 due to "recent changes in Russian media legislation," a reference to a law that limits foreign ownership of a media organization to 20 percent.

The broadcaster said it hoped to reenter the market "in due course" and added that its Moscow news bureau would continue to operate normally.

Mikhail Fedotov, the head of the Russian presidential Human Rights Council, said CNN's decision was "bad news" and would "very seriously deplete" Russia's "information picture."

Fedotov said he wanted to fully understand the reasons behind CNN's decision so it can "shed light on what is happening in the media sector of Russia and the whole world."

He praised CNN for its long coverage of important Russian and world events.

Vadim Ampelonsky, a spokesman for Russia's telecommunications watchdog Roskomnadzor, said his agency had nothing to do with CNN's decision.

Sputnik Launched

CNN's decision came the same day that Russia launched a new media organization, Sputnik, in a bid to counter the western media.

Dmitry Kiselyov, head of the state-owned media organization Rossiya Segodnya (Russia Today), said on November 10 that Sputnik was created to compete with what he called the "aggressive propaganda" western media outlets are "feeding the world."

Kiselyov, speaking in Moscow, said Sputnik will "provide an alternative interpretation of the world."

VOAradiogram 85.txt

Kiselyov said Sputnik will have hundreds of reporters working in news bureaus in 30 cities including Washington, London, Paris, Berlin, Rio de Janeiro, Beijing, Cairo, and several capitals in former Soviet republics.

He said it would broadcast in radio in 34 countries in 30 languages by the end of 2015 and will have an interactive website, a robust presence on social media, and offer SMS information services and newswire content.

It will operate as part of the RIA Novosti news agency.

RT Warned In U.K.

The announcement came on the same day that Britain's broadcast regulator, Ofcom, warned Russian state-funded RT about biased reporting and threatened it with sanctions.

Ofcom officials cited four different reports by RT that it said were guilty of violating broadcasting regulations on impartiality in covering the crisis in Ukraine.

Ofcom said it understood RT wants to present news with a Russian perspective but that it must be impartial when reporting stories "of major political controversy."

It said further violations could lead to a fine or even the withdrawal of RT's broadcasting license.

With reporting by Interfax, Reuters, The New York Times, and The Guardian.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-cnn-close-sputnik-launch/26685714.html>

<EOT>
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Image: Sputnik news organization logo ...

<EOT>
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<EOT>
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Thanks to colleagues at the Edward R. Murrow shortwave transmitting station in North Carolina.

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I'm Kim Elliott. Please join us for the next VOA Radiogram.
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<EOT>