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## Update On U.S.-cuba Tv Marti Conflict

by John Neagle

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(See Chronicle 03/29/90 for earlier coverage of US plans and Cuban reactions regarding TV Marti transmissions to Cuba.) March 29: TV Marti attempted to resume broadcasts to Cuba. According to the State Department, the transmission was jammed two minutes after it began. Soviet news agency Tass reported that the TV Marti broadcasts can "rightly be assessed as a large-scale hostile action against a sovereign state,...a gross violation of...the inadmissibility of intervention and interference in the internal affairs of other nations," a principle adopted by adopted the UN General Assembly in 1981. Next, Tass said Washington has chosen to ignore the 1982 international telecommunications convention signed in Nairobi by 130 countries, including the US and Cuba. TV Marti transmissions, noted Tass, are on the same channel as the Havana-based Tele Rebelde station. Cuba is not opposed to the exchange of information, nor to arrangements based on mutual respect of national sovereignty, said Tass. Havana "is prepared to exchange newsreels and television programming with other countries, the US included. "Cuba has more than once expressed readiness to achieve mutually acceptable arrangements with the US. Cuba...has consented to international arbitration which would settle differences between Cuba and the US regarding the TV station. Havana is apparently prepared for a reasonable compromise that would avoid infringement of sovereignty of both countries." March 30: An unidentified source at the US Interest Section in Havana quoted by Notimex told foreign journalists that TV Marti transmissions "are consistent with the US policy of bringing democracy" to other countries. Consequently, he said, Washington rejects the accusation that the transmissions are illegal. Next, the US official said international telecommunications legislation prohibits interference by one country in the telecommunications of another, "but not the free circulation of ideas promoted by the US TV station." He noted that TV Marti broadcasted test signals on Channel 13 between 3:45 and 6:45 a.m., a time slot not used by Cuban TV programming. March 31: Prensa Latina, Cuba's official news agency, reported that TV Marti was not on the air Saturday. The report said, "The Cuban government considers the action as a violation of the Caribbean country's sovereignty and of numerous international regulations to which the United States subscribes." Cuba blocked the signal of what it calls "channel worm" when it began transmitting March 27, and continued to jam broadcasts throughout the week. The Cuban government has lodged protests with the US Federal Communications Commission and international organizations. April 2: At the National Association of Broadcasters annual meeting in Atlanta, Ga., President Bush said "the voice of freedom will not be stilled," and that TV Marti will continue transmitting despite concerns by US broadcasters of Cuban jamming. Bush told the broadcasters: "Look, I do understand the practical concerns some of you have about this. But I also understand that you represent the very principle TV Marti exists to serve the free flow of ideas. So I have come here to ask something of you. I ask you, once again, to stand for TV Marti, to stand for freedom...The voice of freedom will not be stilled as long as there is an America to tell the truth." NAB president Edward O. Fritts said that while US AM radio stations are limited to 50,000 watts, "Castro has the ability to go to 1 million watts." He said the Cubans could theoretically jam radio stations nationwide. In a letter addressed to the foreign ministers of Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay and Peru, Cuban Foreign Minister Isidro Malmierca expressed his government's "great appreciation" for the March 30 Rio Group

statement indicating concern about the TV Marti transmissions. April 3: At Baracoa air base, near Havana, Lt.Col. Thais Martinez told foreign journalists that TV Marti signals are jammed by two tall TV antennas in Havana and by transmitters on-board helicopters sent into the air as soon as possible after TV Marti transmissions begin. April 7: In New York, supporters and opponents of the Cuban government held counter-rallies and marches. According to AFP, more than 1,000 supporters filled Times Square, while about 600 anti-Castro demonstrators staged a protest a block away. The two groups marched along separate routes to the Cuban Mission to the United Nations. At the UN, police said numbers increased to 2,000 Castro supporters and 700 anti-Castro activists. No disturbances or arrests were reported. Police said the principal sponsor of the pro-Castro rally was the Committee Against Intervention in Panama. AFP reported that literature distributed by protesters said the major sponsor was the US Hands Off Cuba Coalition. Also listed were about 50 other organizations, including the African National Congress and Palestine Solidarity Committee. The anti-Castro demonstrations were organized by the Junta Politica Cuba and Cuba Civic Forum. April 8: The anti-Castro Permanent Protest Group said that on April 11 it would "confront" the Cuban Interests Section in the Czechoslovak Embassy to demand "that the government of Cuba suspend its interference against TV-Marti." The Cuban exile group pledged to stage "unending" protests for the "return of democracy" to Cuba. April 10: In Washington, Jorge Mas, president of the Consulting Council on Radio Programming for Cuba, announced that the Council would ask the US Congress to merge Radio Marti and TV Marti into a single administrative body. Mas said that Antonio Navarro would head the new organization, and separate budget administration for two stations would continue, as would US Information Agency control. Radio Marti commenced programming in 1985, and currently employs a staff of 180. Navarro told reporters that the period for TV Marti broadcast tests has not been defined. He said the tests may continue for another 30 days, or 90 days. Jorge Gomez, described as "number two" person on the ideology committee of the Cuban Communist Party central committee, told CNN that problems between the US and Cuba "will not be resolved by the CIA, [but rather]...with Sears." Gomez said that the Cuban government is willing to run the risk of greater exposure to US influence. Unidentified White House sources quoted by Notimex said Gomez's statement was interesting, but that the US would not change its policy toward Cuba until President Fidel Castro's government ends support of the Salvadoran rebels and adopts "democratic reforms." (Basic data from AP, 04/02-04/90; Tass, 03/29/90; Prensa Latina, 03/31/90; Notimex, 03/30/90, 04/02/90, 04/10/90; AFP, 04/08/90)

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