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Handwritten signature and initials OJM

MPY-9009

22 February 1979

[Redacted] Chief
Operations Group, FBIS

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Dear John:

This report will serve a dual purpose. First it is a somewhat belated reply to your note of 8 August 1978 requesting a status report on the Bureau. Secondly, it will serve as my valedictory and hopefully will provide some guidance to [Redacted]

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Before launching into a discussion of Bureau problems and prospects, at the risk of appearing immodest, I should state that I believe the Bureau to be in excellent shape. I foresee no major problems looming on the horizon but, on the other hand, there is always room for improvement.

Below, I will attempt to describe the status of the Bureau, and those projects which I would have pushed were I to have remained here.

1. Coverage

Through initiatives begun by our predecessors and continued principally by Engineer [Redacted] the Bureau's reception capabilities have been improved significantly. The most significant gains have been achieved by the installation at the ANTELCO Receive Site of a rhombic antenna targetted towards Peru and Bolivia. Reception of Bolivian stations has improved 100% and Peruvian stations by about 50%. The relocation of the dipole antenna to the Embassy has improved reception to some degree. We had hoped that the double-ending of ANTELCO's Hamburg rhombic antenna would substantially improve reception of Chilean stations but this has been a disappointment. The rhombic is actually aimed at about 650 miles south of Santiago evidently too far off center to improve the signal. During his tenure here [Redacted] has also experimented with the MLA-2B miniloop, the Highgain 40 meter beam and the Hermes Loop antennas. The miniloop and Highgain antennas were found to be inferior to the dipole whereas the Hermes does appear to have some potential and remains installed at the ANTELCO Receive Site.

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2/...

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-2-

At present, the signals from the ANTELCO Receive Site are being transmitted to the Bureau by the single channel Motorola transeiver. Ed has significantly improved the transeiver and with the antenna selector we are now able to choose from 8 different antennas at the receive site, but we are obviously limited to the use of one antenna at any given moment. The rhombic antenna for example is often tied up with Peruvian casts and cannot be used for Bolivian casts. This problem will be eliminated with the installation of the new microwave system. We are expecting to receive all of the parts for the new microwave system by early May. The installation of the system should be Ed's last major project and I fully expect it to be in operation before he leaves. This system will initially have six channels but could be expanded if need be. Three channels will be placed in monitor booths, two in central radio, and one in the cruising room. This should provide us with the greatest operational flexibility. We do not want the system to depend completely upon the technicians to feed the programs but on the other hand we do want the ability to feed into any one of the ten monitoring booths.

The present antenna system is good but could be better. Reception of Peruvian stations, though improved, is still not satisfactory. Chilean reception still remains variable. Ed feels that the only other conventional antenna which might improve reception of Chilean stations would be a rhombic antenna aimed directly at Santiago. I have included such a proposal in the 1981 budget. In regard to Peru we seem to be at the end of our conventional rope.

Remote systems for Chilean and Peruvian coverage have been discussed in Headquarters from time to time. [] recently installed a radio/telephone plug-in system at the Marine desk in the American Embassy in Santiago. The radio will be turned on and tuned by the Marine guard under telephonic instruction from the Bureau. The system has been tested and the signal is good although totally dependent on the telephone connection. This system admittedly has its limitations especially during periods of real crisis when the Marine guards are apt to be too busy to help us, but for speeches and special events the system should give us much better copy. The system which only requires the support of the Embassy and an AM/FM radio is dirt cheap in comparison to a full remote system (which also is dependent on telephones or on very expensive satellite voice circuits) and can be installed almost immediately. If the Chilean system is the success we expect I suggest that the same setup be extended to Lima. This does not rule out the need to install a true remote system but in the meantime it does give us expanded capabilities.

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3/...

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ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

-3-

Newspapers continue to be a principal staple of Paraguay Bureau's coverage. Newspapers from Argentina, Brazil and of course Paraguay arrive the same day and Bolivian papers with the lag of a day or two. Peruvian papers are covered by Panama Bureau. The only papers not received on a regular basis are Uruguayan and Chilean papers. We have made occasional efforts to secure Uruguayan papers but without success. The loss of these papers is not great since they are heavily censored and contain little reportable news. The lack of Chilean publications, particularly the daily El Mercurio, is of greater concern. We are continuing our efforts both with the American Embassy in Santiago and with the Chilean Embassy and newspaper distributors in Asunción in the hope of establishing a reliable system.

During my tenure several changes in press agency coverage were made. LATIN had been covered by the Bureau when it was being transmitted via HF but when they switched to landline the Bureau lost out. The Bureau was recently included under Panama's contract and once again is covering it. The Bureau switched from AFP Portuguese to AFP Spanish when the latter was found to be far more productive. No Brazilian Press Agency is on Bureau coverage and this I consider a lack. To our knowledge none uses HF transmissions nor landlines into Asunción. We are still awaiting a reply from the Brazilian Embassy to our query about the various press agencies. I also intend to send a query to the PAO in Brasilia.

In a few weeks the Bureau will receive its first television set and rotary antenna. This has been secured largely for experimental purposes. We are confident that the Argentine and Paraguayan channels can be heard but we are also hopeful that Brazilian TV can be picked up from the Foz de Iguacu. Paraguay television carries a news program at 2000 which may be added to coverage. Initially the Bureau will concentrate on recording the audio portion but if the video looks promising a request for recording equipment will be in order.

In response to a request from Headquarters I had previously submitted a suggestion concerning the transfer of coverage from Panama to Paraguay Bureau. In effect I proposed the transfer of all Moscow casts in Spanish; AFP in French; and possibly other press services such as some PRELA circuits. I still believe it is a suggestion that should be studied very closely.

4/...

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-4-

One of the problems in assuming this coverage is the fact that the Paraguay Bureau is only open for 11 shifts per week and some of these casts have to be covered every day of the week. When [redacted] is replaced by an editor in July 1979 it is possible that the Bureau hours could be expanded. At that time I would strongly consider adding a second shift on Saturdays and very likely one shift on Sundays. Although the Spanish speaking countries in our coverage area have practically no significant newscasts on Sunday, Brazil does and they might be well worth covering. I believe the Bureau has sufficient monitors (ten) to cover the added shifts (but not if any coverage were transferred from Panama). However, three technicians would be insufficient. More on this subject below. The expansion of Bureau hours is a topic which I feel deserves careful study by Dauris.

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2. Personnel

One of the most pleasant surprises I encountered here was the very high caliber of the Bureau Employees. During my tenure I have continued to be impressed by the dedication, loyalty, and professionalism of the entire staff. I feel truly proud to have had the opportunity to be associated with such a group.

Prior to the move to the new building a number of the personnel expressed misgivings about the new quarters, citing the loss of the swimming pool and the stiff formality of the Embassy as their major complaints. Since the move these misgivings have all but evaporated and morale seems even higher than before. The new office is contributing to greater efficiency and is a very pleasant place in which to work. Moreover, each monitor has his or her separate monitoring booth and no longer has to share with others. Because the building is separate from the chancery FBIS personnel are under no compulsion to mix with Embassy personnel and can continue follow an informal dress code.

I believe that in general, the monitors have made considerable strides during the past 18 months. They appear to have a good grasp of the FBIS mission and are responsive to our needs. The quality of their translations has also improved substantially. There is always room for improvement in both sectors and I believe that Joe [redacted] should concentrate on developing a systematic review and feedback of the monitors' program summaries and translations. This is exceedingly difficult to accomplish as long as Joe has to pull a shift five times a week but once the third editor arrives he will have time to devote to this essential task. Most of the monitors have been with FBIS roughly five years. At this juncture in their careers they have a good grasp of the job essentials but could all use polishing. In addition, it is now essential to train the more promising monitors as shift supervisors and one as an eventual chief monitor. If the monitors are not given in-depth training and assistance at this very critical period in their careers they are very apt to develop ingrained sloppy habits.

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5/...

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ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

-5-

During my tenure the Bureau organized beginning and advanced language classes in both French and Portuguese. As a result, our Panama backstopping capability in French is much improved and the bureau's Portuguese capability has nearly doubled. A beginning Portuguese class was recently begun for the three remaining monitors and it is expected that within a few months every monitor will at least be able to translate Portuguese newspaper items.

A number of personnel shifts have occurred recently. [redacted] STAT
 [redacted] LWOP has been extended another year and the Bureau has been given approval to grant a temporary promotion to [redacted] STAT
 who has been switched fulltime to the Administrative Assistant position from her former position as teletype operator. We will hire a contract teletype operator to replace [redacted] STAT
 For over a year the Bureau had on duty eleven monitors, one over 10. This number was brought into line when Inocencia Wehrle resigned. The most difficult personnel decision was the demotion of [redacted] STAT
 from monitor to teletype operator. The switch was made about one month ago and [redacted] is making excellent progress in her new position. The monitor position vacated by [redacted] will be filled at least on a STAT
 trial basis by [redacted] When [redacted] first applied to STAT
 FBIS, about four years ago, she took the monitoring test and just barely failed but was hired as a teletypist. A few months ago she again took the test and passed with high grades. In fact she easily surpassed all of the applicants the bureau has tested in recent months. Therefore, as soon as Nena is working completely independently we plan to try out [redacted] as a monitor. We do not plan to hire the contract teletypist until we have given [redacted] a fair trial STAT
 and are convinced she will make the grade. SIAI

The visit of [redacted] last year helped cruising monitor [redacted] STAT
 considerably. Unfortunately [redacted] very able assistance STAT
 was blurred by an unfortunate final report which contained several misstatements and was at odds with the detailed reports (both written and oral) he gave me when he left. We have been trying to integrate [redacted] more effectively into Bureau operations and he appears STAT
 to be responding. Nevertheless, I believe that he will require intensive systematic guidance which can be better provided when the third editor arrives and Joe has more time available.

The technicians have made admirable progress under [redacted] STAT
 patient tutelage and are ready to continue alone once Ed leaves in July. One of the three technicians will be named acting technical supervisor very shortly, but I advise that he not be promoted until he has had sufficient experience probably six months after Ed leaves. When Ed and I came on the scene the assumption was that [redacted] STAT
 would fill this position but as time passed it became evident that [redacted] is very likely the better choice. Both Ed and I STAT

6/...

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ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

-6-

independently arrived at the same conclusion even though all three are excellent, dedicated technicians. Due to the greatly increased demands in Paraguay for such skilled technicians and to the expertise they have accumulated on the job, I think that considerable thought should be given to upgrading the technicians and technician supervisor positions to FSN-7 and FSN-8 respectively. In addition, if the Bureau is to expand the number of shifts per week from 11 to 13 or 14 it is very likely that a fourth technician will be necessary. I have endorsed this concept in the enhanced package of the 1981 Program plan.

3. Communications

Bureau Communications appear to be in excellent shape. The STAT system which has been in operation since April 1977 is very reliable and has been down for extended periods only twice during my tenure. With the move to the Embassy the ANTELCO landline between the old building and the Chancery was replaced by a short direct line between the two buildings, thereby eliminating another cause for occasional breakdowns. The Telex altroute has also improved since ANTELCO went to Satellite communications. Very shortly ANTELCO will add a Western Union International channel to its telex satellite system which should eliminate the occasional transmission delays we now experience.

4. Relations with other Mission Components.

Relations between the Bureau and the rest of the mission have been excellent since the beginning and continue to be so. Pertinent material from the file is provided on a daily basis to the Political Section, Defense Attache, DEA, and the Military Aid Component. We also provide special assistance when needed. For instance, at the Ambassador's request, the Bureau recently translated into Spanish the State Department Report to Congress on the Paraguayan Human Rights Situation. The Bureau's technicians have extensively repaired the teletype equipment in ICA and the Communications and Records unit of the Embassy as well as the movie projectors of the Military Aid unit.

On the other hand the Embassy has been very cooperative and generous with FBIS. With the move to the compound, we are now much more dependent on the Embassy for goods and services and the support has been excellent. There is no question that relations with other mission components have become much closer since the move, now that we are accessible to all.

5. Relations with ANTELCO

Our relations with ANTELCO continue to be excellent. This, in no small measure, is due to our technicians and cruising monitor STAT

7/...

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-7-

[redacted] who continue to work part time at ANTELCO. ANTELCO has very generously allowed the Bureau to use free of charge the existing antennas at its receiver site and to erect others. The Bureau has donated the site some excess electronic equipment, but it hardly compensates for the continued use of the property. ANTELCO has converted to satellite for the bulk of its communications links but intends to retain the site as a backup. ANTELCO recently erected a 45-meter antenna tower at the site and has given us permission to mount our new microwave antenna on it.

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6. Buildings and Grounds

The certificate of final completion for the new building has not yet been signed because we are still awaiting installation of the air conditioning grills and the repair of roof leaks in the kitchen area and some leaky windows. A major roof leak around the air conditioner has been repaired and held well during a recent heavy rainstorm. As soon as these items and a few other minor items are corrected the GSO will sign the final papers and pay the 15 percent we have been withholding. The only other major item is the installation of the new phone system. We have been awaiting delivery of the phones since 23 May 1978 when they were shipped. The phones were finally located in Buenos Aires, have now arrived in Asuncion, and are due to be delivered to the Embassy warehouse today. (This illustrates why we continually insist on Military Air shipment rather than sea.) We hope to have the new system installed with a few weeks. Another project on the docket is the enclosing and air conditioning of the storeroom below the FBIS workshop so that all our paper can be stored on premises under lock and key rather than in the Embassy warehouse where we suffered some recent loss.

Getting rid of the old Bureau building has been far more of a problem than I bargained for. The landowner, a lawyer known throughout Asuncion for his tightfisted landlord policies, has been trying to squeeze the Embassy as hard as possible. First, he refused to accept the house unless it was completely restored to its original condition. Only last week did he finally agree to accept the house. He still wants additional rent but the Embassy is holding firm. I believe that he will soon give up in disgust despite his earlier threat to write Secretary Vance.

7. Postscript

Recently, I heard that there is some resistance to replacing [redacted] with an editor in July 1979. Therefore, I feel it is advisable to restate my reasons for urging the assignment of another editor to Paraguay Bureau.

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8/...

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-8-

a) The monitors and cruising monitor need systematic training at this critical juncture in their careers. Such guidance cannot be adequately provided if the Chief Editor must work the desk every single workday.

b) The junior editor also needs more systematic guidance from the Chief Editor than is now possible with only one hour overlap.

c) With an added editor, extension of the Bureau's workhours would be feasible.

d) With only two editors the Bureau will be short handed 11 weeks out of the year due to annual leaves. This, of course, does not take into account sick leaves, military leaves, emergency leaves and TDY's.

e) A number of non-technical duties now handled by STAT such as cashier, property officer, safety officer etc must be assigned to other staff personnel. Assigning them to the three remaining individuals will of course increase their already sizable burdens.

f) The Bureau now has 4 U.S. MODE positions. If we give up one of these positions, it undoubtedly will be very difficult to retrieve it in the future, should we change our minds.

Evidently, some have proposed that an associate editor slot for Paraguay Bureau is the answer. A review of the above stated reasons will indicate that an associate editor will not be much help unless Headquarters is willing to allow an associate editor to routinely handle full shifts without any U.S. staff presence. Even so, it is very likely that such a position would probably have to be filled by a TNC either from Rio or Buenos Aires. During my tenure here I have run into no local whom I would feel is qualified for the job.

My main concern is that the local personnel receive the in-depth assistance and guidance they need to polish their performances. The Bureau possesses an excellent cadre of young dedicated monitors but they need additional training. The Bureau also needs to develop the leadership potential within this group. It is very possible that once the Bureau's local staff is more experienced only three American personnel will be needed but at this stage I believe we are only cheating ourselves.

Chief, FBIS Paraguay Bureau

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