

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
PANAMA BUREAU
DRAWER 927
APO MIAMI 34004

6 January 1982
MPA #0001

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS
THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Panama Bureau -- December 1981

1. GENERAL

Advertisements in two local newspapers for a 3-day period have drawn over 50 responses from interested monitor candidates thus far with more letters being received daily. Chief Monitor [redacted] STAT and Deputy Chief [redacted] are carefully reviewing all applications STAT. Appointments for testing the most promising candidates will be set up in the next couple of weeks.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. The month opened with the entire bureau being involved in 24-hour coverage of the hijacking of three Venezuelan airliners, ultimately to Cuba, by persons unknown whose motives are still baffling. The 3-day odyssey found us covering first Venezuela, then Honduras and Guatemala, Panama and lastly Cuba. The remote circuits again proved their usefulness, with live reports from local airports being broadcast by radios in Tegucigalpa and Guatemala City.

2. The clandestine Radio Venceremos returned to the air and to coverage late in the month after being forced to close for about 3 weeks by a government campaign in Morazan Department.

3. Meanwhile, reception of the clandestine Radio 15 September, aimed at Nicaragua, continued to improve as did the radio's scheduling and news content, presumably as its network of informants expands. Put back on coverage early in the month when reception improved, it has carried significant items on the anti-Sandinist opposition and events in eastern Nicaragua.

[redacted] STAT ✓

- 2 -

5. Following a quick trip to Tegucigalpa by the Bureau Chief and Bureau Chief Technician [redacted] to complete installation of remote monitoring equipment in the American Embassy there, the bureau was able to terminate its contract with the Embassy spouse who was serving as contract monitor providing phone feeds of recorded radio and television programming. Another, more flexible contract with a Spanish-speaking ICA employee -- similar to those we have in Nicaragua and El Salvador -- is in the works. The new arrangement should provide not only radio and TV programming, but some press scrutiny as well.

6. The Bureau Chief, accompanied by Chief Monitor [redacted] paid a visit to the REUTER/LATIN Panama representative on 16 December to register an official complaint regarding the deteriorating service on the LATIN circuit experienced by the Paraguay Bureau since September. Panama represents both bureaus in the contract with REUTER/LATIN. The LATIN representative, Mr Julio Zamora, promised to look into the situation. The bureau has also sent a letter of complaint to the REUTER/LATIN head office in Mexico City.

B. Communications

The bureau's Autovon line, 287-4001, was finally returned to service during the month after having been out since early November. The line still suffers from considerable noise, however. Efforts are continuing to return it to fully operational condition.

C. Technical

[redacted] Chief FEB/ED, and newly appointed regional engineer [redacted] visited the bureau from 3 to 8 December. The visit proved to be most useful, with a number of topics discussed in depth, including problems with the new Delta multicouplers, upcoming installation of Mode I communications at the bureau, the bureau's antiquated air conditioning system, the status of the projected satellite monitoring terminal, expansion of the remote monitoring network, proposed interior renovations to the bureau operations building, the ramifications of the planned Panama Pacific Coast Highway and a forthcoming transequatorial propagation experiment in which the bureau has been asked to assist.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

1. Editor [redacted] departed Panama 23 December after successful completion of her 12-week training TDY.

- 3 -

2. Personnel receiving PSIs during the month included [redacted] STAT
[redacted] to NM 10/4; [redacted] to NM 9/6; and [redacted] tSTAT
NM 8/6.

3. Monitor Supervisor [redacted] began 30 days Leave With STAT
out Pay 22 December.

B. Buildings and Grounds

1. Contractor Issac Cattan Gonzalez completed the first mowing
of the bureau antenna field.

2. Separate breaks in the bureau's water and power lines were
repaired by Defense Facilities Engineers during the month. The power
line break required operation on the bureau's emergency generator for al-
most 24 hours.

C. Other

A new contract to provide transportation services for the bu-
reau for FY82 was signed during the month.

IV. VISITS

1. To the bureau: Chief, FEB/ED [redacted] and Regional ESTAT
gineer [redacted] 3-8 December for orientation and technical discussions STAT
Mr Leonard Kings, Executive Vice President of Household Data Services,
7 December for discussion on transequatorial propagation experiment.

2. From the bureau: Bureau Chief and Chief Technician to Teguci-
galpa, Honduras, 1-3 December. Bureau Chief to Panama Canal Commission
8 December for technical briefing. Bureau Chief and Chief Monitor to
REUTER/LATIN representative 16 December.

3. The annual Christmas party, planned and sponsored by the Bu-
reau Social Activities Committee from funds collected from various ac-
tivities during the year, was held at the AltaVista Room of the Panama
Hilton Hotel on 19 December. As expected, it was a smashing success.
Even the bureau chief enjoyed his monthly salsa lesson.

4. Teletypist [redacted] made his annual Christmas visit STAT
to a nearby orphanage on 21 December accompanied by a number of bureau
employees to distribute toys and other goodies to the children. Each

- 4 -

year "Ceasar" selects an orphanage in the area and bureau employees "adopt" one or more children for whom they provide a gift. Candy, soda, ice cream and other treats are also contributed and a good time is had by all.

STA

Chief, Panama Bureau, FBIS

Attachments:

Monthly Production Report
Operations Attachment
Engineering Attachment