

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
PANAMA BUREAU
DRAWER 927
APO MIAMI 34004

6 April 1981
MPA #1011

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

I. GENERAL

A visiting State administrative management assistance team (AMAT), in Panama to determine the future real estate requirements of the embassy, has concluded that a new chancery is sorely needed, and as soon as possible. It will make this recommendation, adding that the new chancery should include sufficient space for all area U.S. agencies affiliated with the embassy. This includes FBIS. Even if the AMAT recommendations are acted upon right away, the new chancery is not expected to be completed and ready for occupancy for a long time, probably 10 years or so. The bureau expects to remain at the Chiva Chiva site at least until the new chancery is ready.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial:

1. Stepped-up terrorism in Central America and Cuba's relations with countries of the area were the main subjects of interest in March. A terrorist attack on U.S. Embassy Marine guards in Costa Rica, heretofore the most secure country in the region, and a series of incidents in Honduras, including a bomb attack inside the Legislative Palace and the hijacking of a Honduran airliner to Nicaragua, prompted a significant amount of high-precedence copy, as did the terrorist murder of a U.S. religious organization worker in Colombia.

2. The status of Cuba's relations with Panama, Colombia, and Ecuador was another subject occupying the bureau's attention. A statement by an unnamed "senior official" of Panama amounting to an attack on Cuba's support for insurgent activities in the region drew a good deal of reaction and prompted much interest on the part of local consumers. Colombia suspended diplomatic relations with Cuba during the month, and Costa Rica withdrew its consular personnel from Havana. Ecuador's relations with Cuba are apparently downgraded at charge d'affaires level following the return of the Ecuadorean ambassador to Quito.

B. Services:

At AG's request, the bureau began weekly pouching of program summaries of all regularly covered Managua international service, Radio Sandino, and Sandinist Television Network casts.

C. Coverage:

The leftist "Radio Noticias del Continente" of San Jose, closed down by the Costa Rican Government, has not been heard since the evening of 6 March and reports from Costa Rica indicate that the station's equipment has been dismantled and taken to Nicaragua. However, a 30-minute program purportedly prepared by "the staff" of the defunct station is now being heard late at night carried by Managua Radio Sandino. Despite earlier announcements by Radio Noticias del Continente that a number of stations in the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe would carry this programming in a "solidarity network," Radio Sandino is the only broadcaster heard so far to participate.

D. Training:

Headquarters editor [redacted] arrived on 8 March to participate in the field editorial training program. STAT

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel:

1. Former bureau administrative assistant [redacted] resigned effective 5 March. She had been on 90 days leave without pay. STAT

2. Senior monitor [redacted] was awarded a quality step increase at a special ceremony on 12 March. STAT

B. Building and Grounds:

The newly arrived 30-channel Magnasync/Moviola recorder/reproducer was installed by the technical section and placed in operation.

IV. VISITS

Capt Buz Hoever, USN, Naval Communications Station, Ft Amador, on 24 March.

[redacted] STAT
Acting Chief, Panama Bureau, FBIS

Attachments:

Monthly Production Report
Operations Attachment
Engineering Attachment

cc: Chief, Paraguay Bureau
Chief, Key West Bureau