

*opm-11*

**ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET**



SUBJECT: (Optional)

Monthly Report -- Panama Bureau

FROM:

Chief, Operations Group

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

October 1988

STAT

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED      FORWARDED

1.	C/Ops		28 Nov	<i>[Signature]</i>
2.				
3.	C/E&PS		11/28	<i>[Signature]</i>
4.	<del>DD/FBIS</del>			
5.	<del>AD/FBIS</del>		28 Nov	<i>[Signature]</i>
6.				
7.	PO/RA		11/29	<i>[Signature]</i>
8.	SA/CD		11/30	<i>[Signature]</i>
9.	<del>DD/FBIS</del>			
10.	C/AS			<i>[Signature]</i>
11.	<del>DC/AS</del>		12/2	<i>[Signature]</i>
	C/B&F/AS			<i>[Signature]</i>
12.				
13.				
14.	C/AG		12/12	<i>[Signature]</i>
15.	Exec. Reg.			

**FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE**

**PANAMA BUREAU**

DRAWER 927  
APO MIAMI 34004

2 November 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service  
THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group  
SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Panama Bureau -- October 1988

I. GENERAL

A. Although Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams appeared to wash the administration's hands of Panama in a 30 October statement to U.S. media, U.S. sanctions continued to indirectly affect employees of U.S. companies and former Canal Zone offices. In response to prohibitions against paying those taxes U.S. companies and government offices withdraw from employees' salaries, the Panamanian regime has threatened to seize property of employees whose taxes are not being paid.

B. To add to its woes, Panama was sideswiped by Hurricane Joan in an extremely rare appearance by such a storm (the first this century). In fact, bureau employees anxiously awaited the storm's crossing from the Atlantic to the Pacific in order to witness the birth of the world's first hurriphoon, or tycane. However, although northwestern Panama was severely affected by the storm, warranting a state of emergency, Panama City experienced little more than 8 straight days of heavy rain as Joan veered north, unleashing the worst of its destruction on Nicaragua.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. Despite Hurricane Joan and the continuing quagmires in Nicaragua and Panama, a noticeable increase in civil unrest and rebel activity in El Salvador and Colombia brought about a slight shift in editorial/monitorial focus. An FMLN diplomatic offensive was reflected through rebel leader visits to several regional heads of state. At the same time, however, the rebels were not neglecting the military option as several guerrilla attacks were recorded in San Salvador, including one on the USAID building. In Colombia, drug-related violence and political dissent appeared to be on the rise. A nationwide strike on 27 October required a substantial Defense Ministry effort to contain rebel activity.

2. After a hiatus of several years, the bureau resumed coverage of the Ecuadoran newspapers EL COMERCIO and EL UNIVERSAL.

B. Cruising

Significant cruising results were recorded on both HF and satellite. Discoveries included the apparent reemergence of the Salvadoran rebel clandestine radio, Farabundo Marti, and a new Colombian clandestine station, Radio Patria Libre. In addition, a new Venezuelan satellite television channel and a regular television feed from Spain to Latin America were also first observed during October.

C. Communications

On 24 October, Panama became the first FBIS bureau to successfully convert its DTS communications from Baudot to full ASCII. The only consumer to experience problems with our switchover was the Department of State, but the line incompatibility problem between the Department and the switching center was apparently resolved within 24 hours.

III. ADMINISTRATION

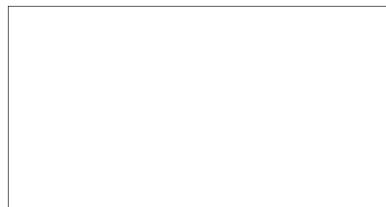
A. Building and Grounds

1. In responding to our call concerning a drop in the bureau's water pressure, army engineers discovered that about 50 feet of the bureau's water pipe had been stolen (again) near our antenna field. The army replaced the pipe, and we again alerted the military police to the possibility of continued theft attempts.

2. Utility desks have been built in the bureau library and communications room to facilitate newspaper and communications logging, respectively.

IV. VISITS

Newly arrived embassy Political Counselor Michael Polt visited the bureau on 21 October for a briefing and tour.



Chief, Panama Bureau

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