

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
PANAMA BUREAU
DRAWER 927
APO MIAMI 34004

4 April 1986
MPA-6011

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service
THROUGH : Acting Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Panama Bureau -- March 1986

I. GENERAL

Deputy Bureau Chief [redacted] and chief technician [redacted] performed the semi-annual inspection tour of the Central American remote sites in San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Guatemala City, and Managua. Meetings were held with local embassy officers in the respective capitals to discuss the support necessary for and provided by the local FBIS presence, and with the local FBIS contractors to brief them on current operational and technical requirements. Highlights of the trip included arranging a sampling of videotaped television news programming to be provided by the contractors in San Salvador, Guatemala, and Managua; hiring a new contractor in Tegucigalpa; relocating the FBIS contractor's room in Guatemala City to the ground floor of the chancellery; and installing a NEFAX machine in Managua for use by the press contractor.

Work on the three new 9.2-meter diameter limited-motion ROSET antennas, including acceptance testing, was completed during the month. Two problems were uncovered that the contractor has agreed to correct. First, the antenna control cables for the three dishes, while usable for the time being, were found to have an inordinate number of unusable pairs and will have to be replaced. Second, the antennas' advertised range of ± 55 degrees was found to be inaccurate by some 6-8 degrees. This will not affect the operation of two of the antennas but the antenna oriented toward the western limits of our viewing range will have to be modified to give us the full range of motion we require. Despite these problems, the new antennas are expected to become operational in early April.

On the bureau's 13-meter diameter full-motion ROSET antennas the azimuth and elevation motors were modified by contractors to provide closed loop cooling. Also, the sub-reflector of one of the 13-meter ROSET's was replaced under the warranty. The original sub-reflector developed a large hole in its center probably as a result of corrosion and a flaw in the casting.

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During March, the bureau continued wirefiling to headquarters the SATRAPPED service of TASS in Romanized Russian (Managua TASS in Russian to TASS Moscow) monitored via ROSET. At month's end headquarters discontinued the experiment, which may be resumed when INTERNET becomes operational.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

During the month of March, Panama bureau was involved in covering several fast-breaking situations. On 7 March Ecuadoran Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Frank Vargas flew to his home province of Manta and took control of the Manta Air Base, following a personal dispute with the Defense Minister Luis Pineiro and Army Chief General Manuel Albuja. Closely following the reported rebellion, the bureau instituted an open watch on several Ecuadoran radio stations filing numerous reports on the situation from these sources and monitored press agency reports until Vargas peacefully surrendered on the evening of 11 March. Two days later however, on 13 March, Vargas took control of Quito's Sucre Air Force Base where he had been confined by Ecuadoran President Frebes Cordero pending trial. The Ecuadoran Government responded to this second action by Vargas with a declaration of a state of emergency, to which the bureau responded with a midnight shift for the night of 13 March to maintain an open watch on Ecuadoran radios. Vargas was captured by the government on 14 March, following a brief clash at the Sucre Air Base. Vargas' trial is still pending.

In Colombia, 9 March marked the country's parliamentary elections. Filed Colombian media reports and those from press agencies confirmed the peaceful nature and outcome of the elections: a victory by the Liberal Party.

On 10 March, a nationwide strike in Panama called by the nation's largest union, CONATO, was initiated. The strike, which began slowly but rapidly spread to many businesses and industries including the oil industry, was called to demonstrate opposition to the bills before the Panamanian Legislative Assembly to amend the labor code and current industrial and agricultural measures. The bills were a response to a call for reforms by the IMF. Sporadic violence was reported during the strike yet on 16 March, CONATO formally ended the strike, which had rapidly lost momentum following the passage of the labor bill. Subsequently, the industrial and agricultural bills were also approved by the assembly and signed into law by Panamanian President Eric Arturo Delvalle on 20 March.

In response to a request from the Wire Service on 12 March the bureau filed several monitored Chilean reports at immediate precedence in reaction to a U.S. call for international condemnation of Chile for human rights violations. The wirefiling of these reports from Santiago television and radio via ROSET marked the bureau's first use of ROSET to cover Chilean media. Paraguay and Panama Bureaus were jointly commended by the Chief, Wire Services, for their efforts in quickly responding to this request with the use of the ROSET in meeting Wire needs cited as "especially noteworthy."

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Interest in Nicaragua increased during the month with the efforts by the Reagan administration to secure congressional approval of \$100 million in aid for the contras. Nicaraguan reaction to these efforts began on 17 March in response to a 16 March address by President Reagan seeking support for the contra aid and continued through the 20 March House of Representatives vote against the aid request. On the evening of 20 March, news agencies began reporting an alleged Honduran troop buildup along the Nicaraguan border. These reports, which were subsequently denied by Honduran authorities, fueled increased border tension between the two countries. Later, a Nicaraguan incursion into Honduras was reported. The incursion reports, initially confirmed in Washington, were the subject of a Honduran Security Council meeting on the night of 24 March. However, the results of the meeting and a firm Honduran confirmation that an incursion had, in fact, taken place were not reported by Honduras until 25 March. In addition to open speaker watches on Nicaraguan and Honduran media during this period, bureau efforts also included extended hours on the night of 24 March and a full midnight shift on 25 March. Although Managua was consistent in its denial of the border incursion throughout the crisis, reports appearing on 27 March -- which were given further substance by President Daniel Ortega in a live news conference monitored by the bureau on 28 March -- indicated that Nicaragua's interpretation of the border limit was a loose, if not unique, one in international politics. By 28 March the border situation had begun to stabilize and by 31 March Honduras was reporting that it was again in complete control of the area.

On 20 March, a 2-hour-and-42-minute program on the failed launch of a French Ariane rocket was videorecorded off the 24.5W INTELSAT and pouched to headquarters. Coverage included shots of the launch control room and VIP/press room at the European Space Agency facility in Kourou, French Guiana, and closeups of the launch pad and the Ariane launch vehicle. On 28 March the bureau videorecorded and pouched to headquarters a 1-hour-and-51-minute program on the successful launch of a French Ariane rocket. This rocket, which was also launched from Kourou, French Guiana, deployed two onboard satellites. Telemetry signals from one of these satellites, BRAILSAT SBTS A-2, has been located by bureau cruisers.

B. Communications

An Army team from Fort Richie, Maryland, arrived in Panama on 11 March to activate the MUX communications project which involves installing Mode I equipment at the bureau. The army team led by Mr. Nelson Smith visited the bureau off and on beginning 24 March but by month's end they had not yet solved the significant problems they have encountered. In a depressingly honest appraisal of the situation, a team member said the bureau's Mode I circuit may never become operational in its current configuration.

The Granger people submitted a bid for a planned bureau-Ancon Hill-embassy microwave link and a Collins representative promised to submit its bid in April.

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C. Lateral Services

In response to a request from the American Embassy in San Salvador, El Salvador, on 9 March the bureau began monitoring and wirefiling the Sunday homily usually given by San Salvador Archbishop Monsignor Arturo River y Damas.

On 10 March Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish carried the transcript of the statements made by Ambassador-Designate to Panama Arthur Davis before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. At the request of the American Embassy in Panama City, Panama, the Spanish translation of the transcript was filed to Headquarters, the embassy, and the State Department.

At the request of the U. S. Southern Command in Panama, on 27 March the bureau began providing the Southern Command with a summary and audio recording of the 1-and-1/2-hour Sunday "Everything for the Fatherland" program monitored from Panamanian television.

D. Technical

During the month, the following accountable property was procured locally:

One 17-inch Crown color TV, Model G1750, Serial No. KC50901200.
Unit Price: \$235.00.

Two Simplex clocks, Model HA8G, Serial Nos, X45366 AG and X02491 GA. Unit Price: \$640.00.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

Staff editor []	was promoted to GS-11.	STAT
Teletypist []	received a PSI from FBN 4/1 to FBN	STAT
4/2.		
Spanish monitor []	retired on 14 March after 20	STAT
years of service.		
Staff editor []	was married to [] in Panama on	STAT
10 March.		STAT

IV. VISITS

Deputy Chief []	and chief technician []	STAT
[]	conducted a semi-annual inspection tour of the Central American	STAT
	remote sites 2-15 March.	

On 6 March, two Headquarters security officers visited the bureau to inspect the physical plant and to review security procedures.

ESG's []	and a contractor arrived on 17 March to install	STAT
	interface equipment for the new ROSET antennas. They departed on 23	
	March.	

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ESG's [redacted] visited Panama 19-28 March for the acceptance testing of the new ROSET's.

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On 24 March, the following U.S. Southern Command personnel received a briefing and tour of the bureau: Col. Pat H. Corbett, USAF, deputy chief of staff for Treaty Affairs; Lt Col. D. L. Sponberg, USA, assistant deputy chief of staff for Treaty Affairs; 2d Lt. Angel A. Rodriguez, treaty plans officer; and Mrs. Julieta Morris, interpreter, SOUTHCOM Treaty Affairs.

An Army team lead by Nelson Smith visited the bureau periodically beginning 24 March to continue the installation and testing of the bureau's upgraded 150-baud Mode I MUX communications circuit.

TDY editor [redacted] completed his 3-month editorial TDY on 27 March and departed Panama on 28 March.

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[redacted]

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Acting Chief, Panama Bureau
FBIS

Attachment
production report

Panama Bureau Production Report for March 1986

I. TOTALS FROM ALL SOURCES:

TOTAL PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH:	574880
TOTAL NON-PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH:	25310
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLISHABLE ITEMS FILED DURING MONTH:	1508

	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
II. INPUT OF REGULAR COVERAGE: (minutes or issues per week)	11045.00 min.	42150.00 min.	212.00 issues

III. OUTPUT FROM ALL SOURCES:
(publishable words per month)

ARGENTINA

Buenos Aires REUTER in Spanish		3420	
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CHILE

Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish	470		
Santiago Television Service in Spanish	720		

CLANDESTINES

Clandestine Radio Farabundo Marti in Spanish to El Salvador	5030		
Clandestine Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador	21270		

COLOMBIA

Bogota Cadena Radial Super in Spanish	1630		
Bogota Domestic Service in Spanish	0		
Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish	1250		
Bogota Radio Sutatenza Network in Spanish	3110		
Bogota Television Service in Spanish	9760		
Bogota REUTER in Spanish		420	
Bogota EL SIGLO in Spanish			5560

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	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish			6420
COSTA RICA			
San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish	2250		
San Jose Radio Reloj in Spanish	9590		
San Jose LA NACION in Spanish			1560
San Jose LA PRENSA LIBRE in Spanish			3290
San Jose LA REPUBLICA in Spanish			3410
San Jose LIBERTAD REVOLUCIONARIA in Spanish			0
San Jose LIBERTAD in Spanish			2480
San Jose RUMBO CENTROAMERICANO in Spanish			500
CUBA			
Havana International Service in Quechua	410		
Havana International Service in Spanish	51770		
Havana PRENSA LATINA in English		4010	
Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish		9040	
ECUADOR			
Quito Domestic Service in Spanish	6670		
Quito Radio Quito in Spanish	22580		
Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish	5140		
Quito REUTER in Spanish		670	
EL SALVADOR			
San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish	1580		
San Salvador Channel 2 Television in Spanish	4260		

	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
San Salvador Domestic Service in Spanish	0		
San Salvador La Voz Panamericana in Spanish	1720		
San Salvador Radio Cadena Libertad in Spanish	530		
San Salvador Radio Cadena Sonora in Spanish	1780		
San Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL in Spanish	5130		
San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish	8170		
San Salvador Television Educativa in Spanish	2670		
San Salvador DIARIO LATINO in Spanish			550
San Salvador EL DIARIO DE HOY in Spanish			990
San Salvador EL MUNDO in Spanish			3500
San Salvador EL TIEMPO in Spanish			0
San Salvador LA PRENSA GRAFICA in Spanish			2800
San Salvador PROCESO in Spanish			0
San Salvador THE NEWS GAZETTE in English			0
FRANCE			
Paris AFP in English		480	
Paris AFP in Spanish		31100	
GERMANY			
Hamburg DPA in Spanish		12610	
GUATEMALA			
Guatemala City Cadena de Emisoras Unidas in Spanish	4750		
Guatemala City Domestic Service in Spanish	4900		
Guatemala City Radio Nuevo Mundo in Spanish	220		

	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
Guatemala City Radio Television Guatemala in Spanish	3870		
Guatemala City EL GRAFICO in Spanish			1130
Guatemala City PRENSA LIBRE in Spanish			1400
HONDURAS			
Tegucigalpa Cadena Audio Video in Spanish	11430		
Tegucigalpa Domestic Service in Spanish	0		
Tegucigalpa Radio America in Spanish	9000		
Tegucigalpa Televisora Hondurena in Spanish	4110		
Tegucigalpa Voz de Honduras Network in Spanish	13410		
San Pedro Sula LA PRENSA in Spanish			810
San Pedro Sula TIEMPO in Spanish			3600
Tegucigalpa EL HERALDO in Spanish			2860
Tegucigalpa LA TRIBUNA in Spanish			1560
MEXICO			
Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish	2030		
Mexico City XHDF Television Network in Spanish	4490		
Mexico City CERIGUA in Spanish		1830	
Mexico City REUTER in English		2980	
Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish			1580
Mexico City EL NACIONAL in Spanish			1150
Mexico City EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish			0
Mexico City EXCELSIOR in Spanish			2750
Mexico City THE NEWS in English			900

	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
Mexico City UNOMASUNO in Spanish			970
NICARAGUA			
Managua International Service in Spanish	4640		
Managua Domestic Service in Spanish	9870		
Managua Radio Noticias in Spanish	610		
Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish	38010		
Managua Sistema Sandinista Television Network in Spanish	3580		
Managua ANN in Spanish		12050	
Managua PRENSA LATINA in Spanish		2940	
Managua BARRICADA in Spanish			14500
Managua EL NUEVO DIARIO in Spanish			3820
Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish			1160
PANAMA			
Panama City Circuito RPC Television in Spanish	11140		
Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish	5900		
Panama City Radio Mundial in Spanish	550		
Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish	8880		
Panama City ACAN in Spanish		27010	
Panama City CRITICA in Spanish			3450
Panama City DIALOGO SOCIAL in Spanish			0
Panama City EL SIGLO in Spanish			1230
Panama City EXTRA in Spanish			2530
Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish			3500

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	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish			15690
Panama City LA REPUBLICA DOMINICAL in Spanish			0
Panama City LA REPUBLICA in Spanish			9560
Panama City MATUTINO in Spanish			4230
Panama City QUIUBO GRAFICO in Spanish			0
Panama City STAR AND HERALD in English			2110
Panama City THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC in English			0
PERU			
Lima REUTER in English		370	
SPAIN			
Madrid EFE in Spanish		30520	
USSR			
Moscow APN in Spanish		1640	
VENEZUELA			
Caracas Television Service in Spanish	5980		
Caracas REUTER in English		1960	
Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish			3510
Caracas EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish			1910

PANAMA BUREAU PRODUCTION REPORT FOR MARCH 1986 -- ANNEX

TOTALS FROM ROSET SOURCES:

CHILE

Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish	470
Santiago Television Service in Spanish	720

COLOMBIA

Bogota Television Service in Spanish	9,760
Bogota REUTER in Spanish	420

CUBA

Havana PRENSA LATINA in Spanish	9,040
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ECUADOR

Quito REUTER in Spanish	670
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MEXICO

Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish	2,030
Mexico City XHDF Television Network in Spanish	4,490
Mexico City CERIGUA in Spanish	1,830
Mexico City REUTER in Spanish	2,980

NICARAGUA

Managua ANN in Spanish	12,050
Managua PRENSA LATINA in Spanish	2,940

PERU

Lima REUTER in English	370
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SPAIN

Madrid EFE in Spanish	2,710
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USSR

Moscow APN in Spanish	1,640
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VENEZUELA	
Caracas Television Service in	
Spanish	5,980
Caracas REUTER in	
English	1,960
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TOTAL FOR MARCH 1986	60,060