



BILL FRAKES / Miami Herald Staff

John Theimer, engineer in charge at the FCC Miami office, said if the Cuban exiles go through with their plans they will break U.S. law or violate an international treaty.

Feds warn CID against broadcasts

FCC says TV shows from boat would violate law, treaty

By CELIA W. DUGGER 8-2-88-2B
Herald Staff Writer

The Cuban exiles announced their bold plan last week. They would sail from the Florida Keys on Wednesday in a 50-foot fishing boat and begin beaming a pirate television broadcast to Havana.

But Monday the Federal Communications Commission gave the exile group CID, the Spanish acronym for Independent and Democratic Cuba, a warning: Go through with your plan and you will violate federal law or an international treaty.

If the fishing boat that CID plans to use for its broadcasts is registered in the United States, CID would be violating a U.S. law that prohibits such broadcasting without a license. Under that law, the exiles could be fined as much as \$100,000, jailed for up to one year and have their television equipment seized, said John Theimer, engineer in charge at the FCC's Miami office.

The Cuban government could also stop CID's broadcasts from international waters into Cuba under the International Telecommunication Convention, a treaty both the U.S. and Cuba have signed.

CID spokesman Huber Matos Jr. said Theimer hand-delivered a written warning to CID Friday evening.

Matos told Theimer then that CID is fighting for the freedom of Cuba, and Tele CID is its way of bringing the Cuban people information they cannot

get from the government-controlled media of Cuba.

"If you want to be Castro's police, that's another matter," Matos told Theimer.

"Are you aware Castro could attack you?" Theimer asked Matos.

"Of course, I'm aware of that. I wasn't aware I had to hide from the FCC," Matos replied.

Matos refused to tell Theimer whether the boat is registered in the United States or where it is.

Theimer also asked Matos if he was a U.S. citizen — he's not — and suggested the possibility Matos could be deported if he breaks U.S. law. However, Immigration and Naturalization Service District Director Perry Rivkind said deportation would be highly unlikely: Matos would have to be found guilty of a felony and moral turpitude.

This is not the first time CID has had a run-in with the FCC. In 1982, the FCC stopped illegal CID radio broadcasts to Cuba. For a year, CID had moved two shortwave radio transmitters around Dade County. The FCC found them, shut them down and fined CID member Felix Toledo \$1,000 for each transmitter. In that case, CID moved its radio operations "south of the border," Matos said.

This time, Matos said, he is "not in a corner without exit." CID will find a way to go forward with its long-planned television operation, he said.

"How and when we'll do it, we won't say," he said.