

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

E. MESSAGE CENTER
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937.40/5-950

From: HABANA 1049, May 9, 1950

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Subject: OPERATION OF CUBAN BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION STATIONS

There is attached a copy of the latest list of Cuban standard-wave broadcasting stations. According to the Cuban Director of Radio, Jose J. SENTMANAT, who made this list available to the Embassy, with only one exception it accurately represents the present operation of Cuban stations. The exception is power -- the list shows authorized power rather than the present actual operating power. In several cases small power increases have recently been authorized but have not yet been put into operation; in these cases the list will show higher power than the present radiation. If the Department or any other agency is interested in the actual power or other operating information about any particular station, the Embassy will gladly attempt to obtain the required data.

In this list of broadcasting stations it will be observed that there are 104 station assignments in Cuba, divided by provinces as follows:

<u>Province</u>	<u>No. of Stations</u>
Pinar del Rio	7
Habana	31
Matanzas	6
Las Villas	16
Camaguey	18
Oriente	26

At present there are only 28 stations actually on the air at any one time in Habana.

According to the official list, four Habana stations -- CMCM, CMOA, CMOX and CMCA -- share time on two frequencies. Stations CMOA and CMCA which were ordered closed by the Government a few years ago for technical deficiencies won

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their case recently in the Supreme Court and are making preparations to go back on the air. Station CMBH, 1560 KC, was also suspended for the same reason but its appeal has not yet been decided by the courts and it still remains off the air. There are unofficial reports that instead of sharing time with CMOX on 1490 KC, CMCA will operate full time on 1560 KC with a 10-kilowatt transmitter recently purchased from CMBC, Radio Progreso. Station CMBC expects to put its new 50-KW Westinghouse transmitter on the air within the next couple of weeks. Station CMCA is understood to be owned by Antonio PRIO, strong contender in the forthcoming election for mayor of Habana, and brother of President Carlos PRIO.

According to the Inspector General of Radio, Guillermo MORALES, the use of directional antenna in Cuba is still optional -- the station decides for itself whether or not to use it. In practice it is understood that a station uses a directional antenna only when it is to its advantage to do so.

There has been practically no comment lately in the press or on the air of the recent failure of Cuban and United States representatives to reach an understanding on a new broadcasting agreement. A short article in the prominent Habana daily, Diario de la Marina, on April 9, declares that while no agreement was reached during the recent discussions, Cuba is renouncing its rights to make any assignments it sees fit and will maintain the present status quo until a just and equitable agreement is finally reached. Last week the Cuban Association of Broadcasters gave a luncheon for ambassador designate to Washington, Luis MACHADO. During the lunch, Eduard Hector ALONSO, President of the Association, spoke against the provisional agreement that was reached last February 22, while Ramon BONACHEA, CMQ lawyer, supported it. Dr. Machado thanked the Association for giving him its views on the matter.

TELEVISION

Construction permits for television stations have been authorized in Habana for the following companies on the channels indicated:

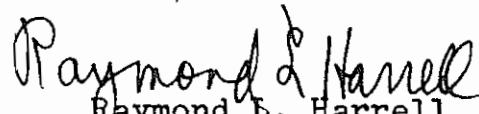
<u>Company</u>	<u>Channel No.</u>
Television del Caribe S.A.	3
Union Radio	4
CMQ network	6

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No definite dates have been announced for the opening of this service but it is believed that it will not start before November or December of this year. Present plans call for the use of equipment manufactured in the United States. 1/

With the exception of a few demonstration models, there are at present no television receivers in Cuba. In order to stimulate this new service, the Government has under consideration a plan to permit the duty-free importation of television receivers for a limited time.

The stations that will occupy channels 4 and 6 are owned by existing broadcasting networks, each of which is anxious to claim the honor to having the first TV station on the air. Another prominent radio company, the RHC network, has announced its intention to keep out of television. The station that is planned for channel 3 is reportedly owned by Luis MENESES, a banker and M. D. AUTRAN, Westinghouse distributor in Habana. 2/ Antonio DE LOS SANTOS, Chief Engineer of the RHC network, is also understood to have an interest in this company which is lagging behind the other two in the race to have the first station on the air.


Raymond B. Harrell
Attaché

Enclosure:
List of Cuban
broadcasting stations.

1/ General Electric and RCA.

2/ It is rumored that an American, George Storer of the Fort Industries, may have an interest in this project.