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PRIORITY

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937.44/5-752

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1878  
DESP. NO.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

May 7, 1952  
DATE

REF : ---

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| 5<br>For Dept.<br>Use Only<br>mlr | ACTION | DEPT.           |
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|                                   | MAY 10 | COMM FCC        |

SUBJECT: Recent Television Developments In Cuba

The television industry continues to expand and make progress in Cuba. There are already two stations on the air in Habana and four in the rest of the Republic. Construction has started on the third station for Habana and the second for Santa Clara. In addition, licenses have been granted for a number of TV stations throughout Cuba and there are also several pending applications for television channels at different locations throughout the Island.

The two television stations under construction in Habana and Santa Clara are owned by "Radiotelevisión El Mundo, S.A." The owners and directors of this company, which recently purchased the "Union Radio" television station that operates on channel 4 in Habana, are: Angel CAMBO, President; Julian LASTRA, and Miguel HUMARA, RCA distributors in Cuba; Amadeo BARLETTA, President of the newspaper EL MUNDO; A. H. BARLETTA, his son, and Ventura MONTES, Chief Engineer. It is understood that Mr. Barletta is putting up most of the money for this project.

Not to be outdone by its principal competitor, EL MUNDO, another influential newspaper, DIARIO DE LA MARINA, has announced that it will construct its own television station which will operate on channel 7 in Habana. The popular weekly magazine BOHEMIA and Goar MESTRE, President of the CMQ network, are reliably reported to be cooperating with MARINA in the financing of this project.

Habana's fifth television station, which will operate on channel 11, has been assigned to the RHC network, which is now owned by Edmund Chester, Vice President of the Columbia Broadcasting System, and a group of American citizens. Besides Habana, this company has licenses for TV stations at Matanzas, Santa Clara, Ciego de Avila, Camaguey, and Santiago.

According to Goar Mestre, Director of the CMQ network which has a chain of five television stations in operation throughout Cuba, there are 60,000 TV receivers in Cuba. These

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figures are in excess of official import statistics which do not reflect sets brought back by returning travellers to the United States or brought in through unauthorized channels.

Despite this relatively large number of sets in operation, it is not understood how Habana, with a population of only about one million persons, can support the five television transmitters which have been authorized for that city.

There is attached an official list of Cuban television channel assignments and pending applications. It will be noted that Radiotelevision El Mundo has applied for a license to serve the town of Florida, in the Province of Camaguey. From this location the station expects to provide service not only to Camaguey but also to Ciego de Avila.

1/ Another recent development of great importance to the television industry in Cuba was an announcement last week that the CMQ network and Radiotelevision El Mundo have signed contracts with an American manufacturer for the construction of microwave relay circuits from Habana to Santiago de Cuba. This proposed system, which will permit network television broadcasting for the first time in Cuba, is expected to be ready for operation in about eight months.

Each of the microwave relay stations, which will be located about thirty miles apart, will be equipped with an emergency 5 kw gasoline-driven motor generator which will start up automatically in the event of power failure. The Oriental Radio network, with headquarters in Santiago, uses a chain of FM stations to relay its radio programs from Santiago to Habana but as the system is not provided with emergency generators, there are frequent interruptions caused mostly by power failures.

A copy of the press release which appeared in the HAVANA POST on May 2, 1952 regarding the new microwave system, is attached.

For the Ambassador:

*Raymond L. Harrell*  
Raymond L. Harrell  
Attaché

Enclosures:

List of Authorized Television Licenses  
Copy of newspaper excerpt.

1/ Philco Corporation.

**RESTRICTED Appendix**

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It is unfortunate that the three networks could not get together on a single common relay system which would permit its operating expenses to be divided, but it is understood that the personal enmity of Mr. Barletta of EL MUNDO and Mr. Goar MESTRE of CMQ, prevented this. A representative of the Cuban Telephone Company declared that in view of its inability to obtain higher rates for telephone service and with a backlog of about 30,000 pending applications, it was not in a position to provide these facilities at this particular time.

**RESTRICTED Appendix**

REPUBLIC OF CUBA  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

List of Authorized Television Stations and Pending Applications

Licenses Authorized

| <u>Location</u>          | <u>Channel</u> | <u>Owner</u>                              | <u>Remarks</u>      |
|--------------------------|----------------|---|---------------------|
| Habana                   | 2              | Radiotelevisión, El Mundo, S.A.           | Under construction  |
| "                        | 4              | Union Radio Television                    | In operation        |
| "                        | 6              | Ciruito CMQ, S.A.                         | " "                 |
| "                        | 7              | CMBF, Radiotelevision Diario de la Marina | Officially reserved |
| "                        | 11             | RHC Cadena Azul                           | Officially reserved |
| Matanzas                 | 9              | Circuito CMQ, S.A.                        | In operation        |
| "                        | 13             | RHC Cadena Azul                           | Officially reserved |
| Santa Clara              | 3              | Radiotelevision El Mundo, S.A.            | Officially reserved |
| "                        | 5              | Circuito CMQ, S.A.                        | In operation        |
| "                        | 8              | RHC Cadena Azul                           | Officially reserved |
| Ciego de Avila, Camaguey | 10             | RHC Cadena Azul                           | Officially reserved |
| Camaguey                 | 6              | Circuito CMQ, S.A.                        | In operation        |
| "                        | 7              | Union Radio                               | Reserved            |
| "                        | 12             | RHC Cadena Azul                           | Officially reserved |
| Holguin                  | 4              | Circuito CMQ, S.A.                        | " "                 |
| "                        | 9              | Union Radio                               | " "                 |
| Santiago de Cuba         | 2              | Circuito CMQ, S.A.                        | In operation        |
| "                        | 5              | Cadena Oriental de Radio, S.A.            | Officially reserved |
| "                        | 11             | Union Radio                               | " "                 |
| "                        | 13             | RHC Cadena Azul                           | " "                 |

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Pending Applications

| <u>Location</u>       | <u>Channel Requested</u> | <u>Applicant</u>                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Santiago de Cuba      | 4, 5, or 6               | Radio Television El Mundo, S.A. |
| Florida, (Camaguey)   | 2                        | " " " "                         |
| Matanzas              | 11                       | " " " "                         |
| Holguin (Oriente)     | 11 or 12                 | " " " "                         |
| Sta. Cruz del Norte   | 6                        | Circuito CMQ, S.A.              |
| Pinar del Rio         | 5                        | " " "                           |
| Victoria de las Tunas | 2                        | " " "                           |

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Copy  
Excerpt from THE HAVANA POST, May 2, 1952

### PHILCO SIGNS ACCORDS TO INSTALL TV NETWORKS IN CUBA

Philadelphia, May 1 (A.P.)- Philco Corporation announced yesterday it has signed agreements to equip and install television microwave networks for two Cuban broadcasting facilities.

The agreements were formalized by representatives of the Radio-Television "El Mundo" S.A. of Havana, and Circuito CMQ, which operates the largest radio and TV chain in Cuba.

Ventura Montes, technical director of "El Mundo," signed for that Latin American firm, while Goar Mestre, president of CMQ, represented his network.

James D. McLean, Philco's general sales manager, said plans for "El Mundo" have been approved for a five-station, four-hop television microwave network extending 110 miles from Matanzas to Santa Clara, with intermediate relay stations at Jovellanos, Los Arabos and Manacas. The system has been designed to include one channel for complete television programming, plus an additional channel for general service communications along the network.

For CMQ, McLean said, plans call for a 16 hop microwave system over a 500 miles route from Havana to Santiago de Cuba. Initial installations will be seven stations linking Havana with Santa Clara. Designed to provide for complete television and radio program service. The system also includes three additional channels for general communications use along the network.

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