

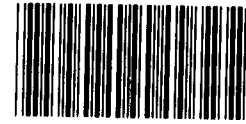
GAO

Report to the Honorable
Bill Alexander, House of Representatives

May 1992

TV MARTI

Costs and Compliance With Broadcast Standards and International Agreements



146597



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RELEASED

**National Security and
International Affairs Division**

B-248284

May 6, 1992

The Honorable Bill Alexander
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Alexander:

As you requested, we determined TV Marti's (1) costs since inception, including the value of support services provided by other agencies; (2) compliance with Voice of America broadcast standards; and (3) compliance with international agreements.

Results in Brief

From fiscal years 1989 to 1992, TV Marti had \$52.6 million available for operations. Of this amount, TV Marti obligated \$35.7 million, including \$7.8 million for services from other government agencies. As of March 1992, TV Marti had expended \$28.7 million of the obligated funds and had \$16.9 million in unobligated funds: \$10.7 million in fiscal year 1992 funds and \$6.2 million in prior year funds.

Two of the three consultants we employed to watch broadcasts and express opinions on program quality and compliance with standards believed that the broadcasts related to Cuba and the Cuban-American community lacked balance and did not meet established Voice of America standards. The other consultant believed that the broadcasts generally met the standards but that improvements were needed. Both of TV Marti's in-house critics also observed that some broadcasts might not meet standards.

The State Department maintains that TV Marti's broadcasts do not violate the International Telecommunications Convention and its associated radio regulations as long as the broadcasts do not harmfully interfere with the Cuban station operating on the same channel. The International Frequency Registration Board, an agency established to implement parts of the Convention, found that the broadcasts harmfully interfered with Cuban broadcasts and did not comply with radio regulation 2666, which it said generally requires countries to broadcast only within their national boundaries in frequencies associated with AM and FM radio and television. It is not clear what TV Marti's ultimate impact on U.S. international commitments will be. TV Marti's recent extension of its daily broadcasts led to further Cuban complaints to the Board, and Cuba counterbroadcasted into the United States on several AM frequencies. The United States responded in turn by filing several complaints with the Cuban

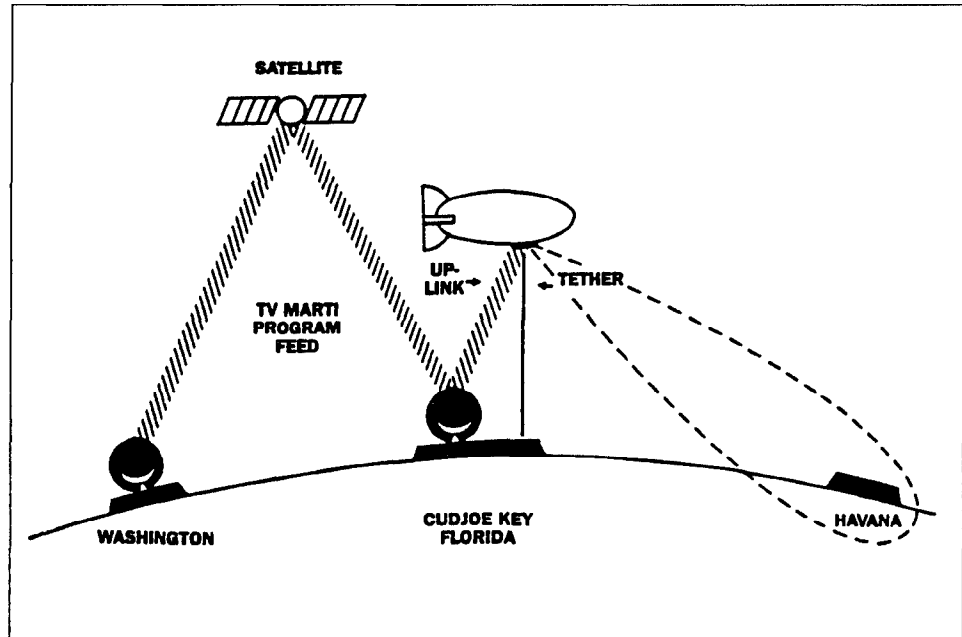
government and the International Frequency Registration Board. The U.S. and Cuban complaints are still pending.

Background

In October 1988, the Congress authorized the establishment of a pilot program for TV Marti. The U.S. Information Agency began testing TV Marti in March 1990. Testing ended in August 1990, when TV Marti began daily broadcasts to Cuba. TV Marti is one of two U.S. government stations that broadcast to Cuba. The other, Radio Marti, began broadcasting in 1985. Both Radio and TV Marti are part of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting within the Bureau of Broadcasting, a section of the U.S. Information Agency. The Voice of America's regular Spanish service broadcasts to Latin America via shortwave radio and satellite.

TV Marti broadcasts on channel 13 and emphasizes news on Cuba and Cuban-American issues. Its mission is to (1) support the right of the people of Cuba to see, receive, and impart information and ideas; (2) further the open communication of information and ideas; (3) serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of accurate, objective, and comprehensive news; (4) broadcast programs with a variety of views; and (5) promote the cause of freedom in Cuba. TV Marti broadcasts originate in Washington D.C., and are transmitted by satellite to Cudjoe Key, Florida, about 110 miles from Havana. The broadcasts are then uplinked to a transmitter housed in an aerostat (a blimp) tethered about 10,000 feet above the key and beamed to the Havana metropolitan area. Figure 1 shows TV Marti's broadcast system.

Figure 1: TV Marti's Broadcast System



Source: President's Advisory Board for Cuba Broadcasting

TV Marti-produced news and news-related programs include Telenoticias Marti, a 30-minute newscast aired daily; Enfoque, a 5-minute news report aired four times a week; and two round table discussion programs, Perspectivas and Mesa Redonda. TV Marti's other programs, acquired from commercial sources, include Fame and game shows such as Sabado Gigante. According to TV Marti officials, TV Marti broadcasted a total of 913 hours of programming in fiscal year 1991. News and news-related programming comprised 43 percent of this amount; entertainment programming comprised 28 percent. During the first 4 months of fiscal year 1992, TV Marti broadcasted a total of 345 hours of programming. News and news-related programming increased to 63 percent; entertainment programming decreased to 21 percent.

Cuba blocks signal reception in the central Havana area. In June 1990, a survey conducted by a U.S. Information Agency contractor reported that 28 percent of the households in the metropolitan Havana area have, at least occasionally, been able to receive TV Marti. We previously reported¹ that the survey's methodology was flawed and that the audience estimates

¹Broadcasts to Cuba: TV Marti Surveys Are Flawed (GAO/NSIAD-90-252, Aug. 9, 1990).

differed widely from information reported by the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. Because Cuba is a closed society, it is difficult to develop data on audience and signal reception. The evidence suggests that TV Marti's audience may be limited, since TV Marti broadcasts between 3:30 and 6:00 a.m. EDT and the broadcasts are jammed. In May 1991, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy reported that TV Marti is not cost-effective compared to other public diplomacy programs. In December 1991, the President's Task Force on U.S. Government International Broadcasting recommended ending TV Marti unless broadcast hours could be changed and extended to reach a larger audience.

On April 1, 1992, TV Marti expanded its daily broadcast hours to include a 30-minute to 1-hour program aired during weekdays at various times from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. EDT, when the Cuban station had not been on the air. Cuba responded by filing several complaints with the Federal Communications Commission and the International Frequency Registration Board and by counterbroadcasting into the United States on several AM frequencies. The United States responded in turn by filing several complaints with the Cuban government and the International Frequency Registration Board. On April 8, 1992, Cuba announced that it would begin broadcasting a test pattern from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. starting on April 13, 1992. The U.S. Interests Section in Havana did not see a test pattern until April 14, 1992. That same day TV Marti stopped its daytime broadcasts. Board officials told us on April 28, 1992 that they planned to meet soon to discuss the Cuban and U.S. complaints.

Costs and Value of Support Services

From fiscal years 1989 to 1992, TV Marti had available \$52.6 million for operations. Of this amount, TV Marti obligated \$35.7 million, including \$7.8 million for support services from other government agencies. As of March 1992, TV Marti had expended \$28.7 million of the obligated funds and had \$16.9 million in unobligated funds: \$10.7 million in fiscal year 1992 funds and \$6.2 million from prior fiscal years. Table 1 summarizes these and other financial data.

Table 1: TV Marti's Financial Data

Dollars in millions					
Fiscal year	1989	1990	1991	1992^a	Total
Allocations	\$7.5	10.7 ^b	16.0	18.4	\$52.6
Obligations	\$1.5	9.9 ^c	16.6	7.7	\$35.7
Expenditures	\$1.5	9.5	13.3	4.4	\$28.7
Cumulative unobligated funds	\$6.0	6.8	6.2	16.9	
Cumulative unliquidated obligations	0	\$0.3	3.6	7.0	

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

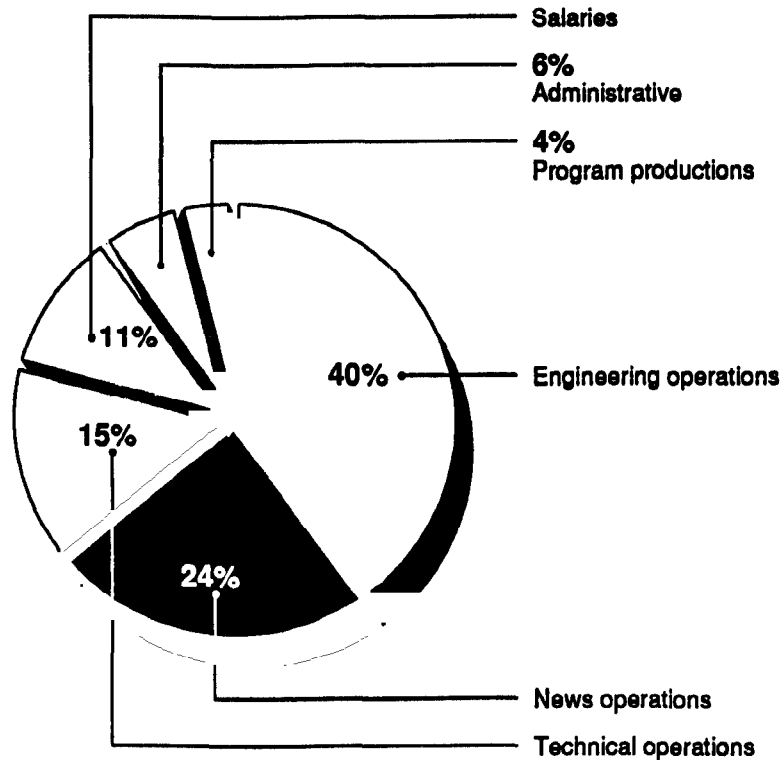
^aData is for October 1991 through March 1992.

^bThe original appropriation of \$16 million was reduced to \$10.7 million after the Congress sequestered \$109,000 and the U.S. Information Agency reprogrammed \$5.2 million.

^cThis figure excludes \$0.6 million obligated by mistake and deobligated.

In fiscal year 1989, the Congress appropriated \$7.5 million for a pilot program for TV Marti. Of this amount, \$1.5 million was obligated and expended. For fiscal year 1990, TV Marti had \$10.7 million available for operations. TV Marti obligated \$9.9 million during fiscal year 1990 and, as of March 1992, had expended \$9.5 million of this amount. The Congress allocated \$16 million for fiscal year 1991, TV Marti's first full year of operation. TV Marti obligated \$16.6 million including \$0.6 million of prior year funds, and expended \$13.3 million of this amount. About \$6.7 million of the amount obligated was for engineering services, including satellite feeds; \$3.9 million went for news operations, including wire service feeds; and \$2.5 million went for technical operations, including video and audio services. The remaining \$3.5 million paid salary, administrative, and production costs. Figure 2 shows a breakdown of these obligations, by percent.

Figure 2: TV Marti's Obligations for Fiscal Year 1991



For fiscal year 1992, TV Marti had available \$18.4 million, including \$14.5 million allocated by the Congress and \$3.9 million allocated by the Office of Cuba Broadcasting for administrative expenses. As of March 1992, TV Marti had obligated \$7.7 million and expended \$4.4 million of this amount, leaving \$3.4 million unliquidated. TV Marti had \$10.7 million in unobligated fiscal year 1992 funds and \$6.2 million in unobligated prior year funds for a total of \$16.9 million. In its fiscal year 1993 budget request, TV Marti proposed using \$2.1 million of the prior year funds to improve existing facilities, \$2 million to purchase a backup aerostat and other system improvements, \$1.6 million to purchase and install equipment for a small broadcast studio, and \$0.5 million for furniture, equipment, and renovation of additional office space. The \$10.7 million will be used for fiscal year 1992 operating expenses. The executive branch also requested \$15.6 million in new funding for fiscal year 1993 operations.

Agencies providing services to TV Marti include the Air Force, Department of Defense, Federal Communications Commission, Department of

Commerce, U.S. Information Agency, and U.S. Coast Guard. With two exceptions, TV Marti reimbursed these agencies.

The Air Force provided the use of its facilities at Cudjoe Key, Florida, an aerostat, and other goods and services. To reimburse the Air Force, TV Marti obligated a total of \$7.2 million: \$982,000 in fiscal year 1989, \$1.7 million in fiscal year 1990, and \$3.5 million in fiscal year 1991, including \$1.3 million for the purchase of an aerostat and support equipment. As of March 1992, TV Marti had obligated \$1 million to pay the Air Force for fiscal year 1992 operations and maintenance costs.

The Department of Defense's Electromagnetic Capability Analysis Center provided technical advice on broadcast feasibility, costing \$276,450. TV Marti reimbursed the Department and obligated \$140,300 in fiscal year 1990 funds for additional services.

The Federal Communications Commission provided services, such as technical measurements of Cuban television stations and monitoring of TV Marti's signal for possible interference with U.S. broadcasts, which amounted to \$104,645. TV Marti reimbursed the Commission and obligated \$60,000 for future services.

The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration provided services valued at \$41,300. The Administration participated in technical meetings and monitored TV Marti's signal to ensure that the antenna performed properly and that TV Marti did not interfere with U.S. broadcasts. TV Marti reimbursed the Administration.

The U.S. Information Agency has not charged TV Marti for the use of its studios, valued at \$19,000 per year. The U.S. Coast Guard absorbed costs, estimated at approximately \$35,000, for use of a vessel during TV Marti's start-up period and for a helicopter to search for an aerostat that crashed in the Everglades in January 1991.

Compliance With Broadcast Standards

Under the Television Broadcasting to Cuba Act (P.L. 101-246, section 241), TV Marti's broadcasts must conform to all Voice of America standards to ensure its broadcasts are objective, accurate, and balanced and present a variety of views. Voice of America broadcast standards are derived from its charter: to serve as a consistently reliable source of accurate, objective, and comprehensive news; present a balanced and

comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions; and present U.S. policies clearly and effectively along with responsible discussion and opinion on those policies. The Voice of America Handbook expands on these general standards and contains basic journalistic rules and broadcast procedures, such as obtaining balancing material and two sources for news items. TV Marti has additional guidelines that expand on the Voice of America's standards. According to TV Marti officials, personnel must know and follow the standards and guidelines.

According to TV Marti officials, TV Marti's news director, production staff, Director, and Deputy Director review broadcasts before and after transmission. In addition, TV Marti has an in-house critic to review broadcasts, highlight weaknesses, and suggest improvements. The critic reports directly to TV Marti's Director and therefore does not conduct an independent review. Both the Voice of America and the Board for International Broadcasting have independent groups that periodically review broadcast services; TV Marti has no independent review.

TV Marti's in-house critic has criticized program quality and identified broadcasts that may not meet standards. Between November 1991 and January 1992, the critic commented three separate times on the large amount of coverage given to the Cuban American National Foundation.² The critic and his predecessor have repeatedly expressed concern about editorializing. The first critic, who retired in August 1991, also criticized the amount and type of entertainment programs and identified deficiencies in TV Marti's broadcasts, including a lack of original news coverage. Noting that the Congress decided to place TV Marti within the Voice of America and require it to meet Voice of America broadcast standards, the first critic said that these deficiencies could reflect adversely on the Voice of America and the integrity of the U.S. Information Agency.

In general, the three consultants we employed believed that news on U.S. and world events was objective, accurate, balanced and met the standards. However, news related to Cuba and the Cuban-American community was of lesser quality. Two consultants found these programs lacked balance and did not comply with standards; the other consultant believed that the broadcasts generally met the standards but that improvements were needed to achieve balance. All three consultants expressed concern about the extent of TV Marti's coverage of the Cuban American National Foundation and believed that TV Marti needed to better portray the

²The Cuban American National Foundation is a lobby group for Cuban issues. It is strongly anti-Castro.

diversity of views within the Cuban-American community. The consultants also commented on the small pool of experts featured on round table discussion programs. In addition, the consultants criticized the tone and editorializing of some broadcasts, including the following:

- On August 28, 1991, TV Marti broadcasted an interview with a psychiatrist who analyzed Fidel Castro's behavior and suggested that Castro was cowardly and neurotic. The consultants believed that including this interview in the news segment stretched the rules on reporting hard news.
- On January 8, 1992, TV Marti reported that a Cuban in Angola had committed suicide and that it was rumored that he had committed suicide because he was told he had to return to Cuba. The consultants believed that the rumor should not have been reported. The same day, TV Marti interviewed a former Cuban state security police officer who had defected to the United States. The reporter asked the defector if Castro should be shot. The consultants believed the question was inflammatory and inappropriate for a service of the Voice of America.
- On January 25, 1992, TV Marti reported that an anti-Castro rally would take place in New York City but did not report a scheduled pro-Castro rally. The anti-Castro rally was scheduled in response to the pro-Castro rally. The January 27 broadcast covered both rallies but spent 20 minutes on the anti-Castro rally and 2 minutes on the pro-Castro rally. The day's other news was virtually ignored. The consultants believed that the broadcasts would have been better balanced if TV Marti had devoted less time to the anti-Castro rally.

Because the consultants reviewed selected broadcasts, we cannot determine how frequently broadcasts editorialize or contain segments that may not meet standards. Appendix I contains the consultants' comments.

TV Marti officials explained that a conflict exists between its requirement to be in compliance with the Voice of America's standards and its role as a surrogate broadcaster to compensate for the lack of open media in Cuba. They contended that TV Marti's primary goal is to promote the cause of freedom in Cuba and that, to meet this goal, they must serve as an opposition media to counter Cuba's government-controlled media. They acknowledged that their reporters occasionally make editorial comments that do not conform to standards. However, they believe that some of the criticisms by our consultants and their in-house critics are unfair and out of proportion and that their broadcasts are generally in compliance with the Voice of America's broadcast standards. They stated that they are taking steps to limit editorializing.

The officials defended TV Marti's coverage of the January 25 rallies, saying that it was properly devoted to the anti-Castro rally and that Cuban broadcasts covered only the pro-Castro rally. Regarding coverage of the Cuban American National Foundation, the officials said that they do not seek extensive coverage of the Foundation or any other organization. However, they noted that the Foundation publicizes and promotes its activities to the media to a greater extent than other organizations and that this might account for the amount of coverage. They agreed that round table discussion programs featured a small pool of experts and said that efforts are underway to include individuals from groups that had not appeared on the programs. To accomplish this, TV Marti plans to move production of Perspectivas and Mesa Redonda to Miami.

They also said that they have acted expeditiously on several recommendations made by the in-house critic. They cited, for example, the June 1991 "Castro Countdown." The Countdown was similar to ABC's 1979 "America Held Hostage" series, which each day stated the number of days that U.S. Embassy staff in Iran had been held hostage. The critic considered this countdown "Castro bashing." In response, TV Marti stopped these broadcasts.

Compliance With International Agreements

The United States is the largest user in the world of radio and television frequencies. It needs to ensure that domestic stations are free from interference caused by other countries, or satellite communications and radio and television broadcasts will be at risk. The International Telecommunications Convention and accompanying radio regulations are the basic instruments of the International Telecommunications Union, which provides the framework for the orderly conduct of international telecommunications. The Union is a specialized United Nations agency with a membership of over 165 countries. Both the United States and Cuba have ratified the Convention and the radio regulations.³ The International Frequency Registration Board is an administrative agency established by the Convention that records and registers frequencies assigned by different countries and performs related duties concerning the assignment and use of frequencies.

³International telecommunications issues are often handled through bilateral and regional agreements; however, the United States and Cuba do not have a bilateral agreement, and Cuba is not a party to any regional agreement.

The Convention requires each signatory country to ensure that stations, whatever their purpose, are established and operated in a manner that does not harmfully interfere with other nations' broadcasts. The Board generally has to be notified when the use of a frequency can cause harmful interference, a frequency is to be used for international communication, or international recognition of the use of a frequency is desired. The radio regulations authorize the Board to investigate complaints of harmful interference and other alleged violations of the radio regulations at an affected member country's request and make recommendations as deemed appropriate. Under the Convention and the radio regulations, harmful interference is defined as "interference which...seriously degrades, obstructs or repeatedly interrupts a radio communication service operating in accordance with [the radio] regulations."

The United States notified the Board of its intent to use channel 13 for TV Marti on March 27, 1990, the same day TV Marti testing began. Cuba complained to the Board, since it had recorded and registered this channel with the Board 9 months earlier on June 22, 1989, for 24-hour broadcasts.

The State Department's position to the Board was that TV Marti does not violate the Convention and the radio regulations as long as it does not harmfully interfere with the Cuban station operating on channel 13. The Department notes that the U.S. government has taken precautions to ensure TV Marti does not cause harmful interference, including monitoring Cuba's use of channel 13 and directing TV Marti to broadcast only when the Cuban station operating on this channel is off the air. With two exceptions, TV Marti has not actually interfered with Cuban broadcasts. On these occasions, the State Department directed TV Marti to change its hours of broadcasting.

Radio regulation 2666 states that, in principle, nations will broadcast only within their national boundaries on frequencies associated with AM and FM radio and television. The Department views this regulation as only setting forth a principle of general cooperation, which the United States has consistently endorsed, that does not preclude cross-border broadcasts so long as they do not harmfully interfere with the receiving country's broadcasts. The Department further notes that many signatories to the Convention have used and continue to use frequencies identified in regulation 2666 for international broadcasts and that, to the extent the Board or the Convention members have ever addressed alleged broadcasting intrusions, this has been in the context of harmful interference.

The Board did not accept the State Department's position. Rather, it found that TV Marti's broadcasts were harmfully interfering with the Cuban station operating on the same frequency and that they did not comply with radio regulation 2666.

The Board's conclusion was not based on evidence that TV Marti actually interfered with the Cuban station. Rather, its conclusion was that Cuba's prior registered intent to use the frequency 24 hours a day entitled them to the exclusive use of that frequency. Thus, in the Board's view, TV Marti's broadcasts necessarily harmfully interfered with Cuban broadcasts on the same channel.

The Board also found that TV Marti's broadcasts were in contravention of radio regulation 2666. The Board based its view on the station's location, relative power, high antenna, and direction of broadcasts. In response to U.S. government objections, the Board acknowledged that regulation 2666 does permit exceptions but did not think TV Marti could be considered one. The Board was aware of other stations that transmit beyond national borders but noted that, in most cases, the broadcasts were permitted by regional agreements or the consent of the countries concerned.

It is not clear what TV Marti's ultimate impact on U.S. international commitments and future Board rulings will be. The State Department and other executive branch agencies continue to believe that TV Marti complies with U.S. commitments and that the Board's findings are unwarranted. In its December 1991 report, the President's Task Force on U.S. Government International Broadcasting noted that countries are sensitive about television and that there may be efforts in international organizations, especially in the International Telecommunications Union, to limit the ability of one country to freely broadcast to another. TV Marti's recent extension of its daily broadcasts has led to further Cuban complaints to the Board, as well as Cuban counterbroadcasting into the United States on several AM frequencies. Several U.S. radio stations have complained to the Federal Communications Commission about Cuban interference with their broadcasts; the Commission, in turn, has filed several complaints with the Cuban government and the Board about interference caused by Cuban broadcasts. The U.S. and Cuban complaints are still pending.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Director of the U.S. Information Agency direct the Voice of America to institute procedures to ensure that TV Marti's broadcasts meet established Voice of America standards.

Scope and Methodology

To accomplish our objectives, we analyzed financial data and met with officials of the U.S. Information Agency, TV Marti, the Departments of Defense and Commerce, Federal Communications Commission, Voice of America, President's Advisory Board for Cuba Broadcasting, U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, President's Task Force on U.S. Government International Broadcasting, and Board for International Broadcasting. We also met with officials of the National Association of Broadcasters. We reviewed TV Marti's quality control procedures and memorandums written by its in-house critics.

We hired three consultants, selected for their language fluency, and knowledge of Latin America and Cuba and accepted journalistic practices, to watch about 60 hours of news and news-related broadcasts and express opinions on program quality and compliance with standards. We asked each to identify and view 20 hours of broadcasts aired by TV Marti between October 1990 and January 1992, analyze the broadcasts for compliance with Voice of America standards, attend a full-day workshop to summarize what each had found, and submit a written opinion on program quality and compliance with standards. We provided the consultants with background information on TV Marti, and copies of the TV Marti and Voice of America guidelines.

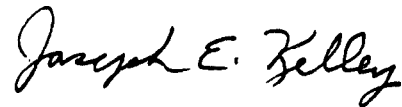
We reviewed and analyzed legal materials, including the Convention and its associated radio regulations, and talked with officials of the International Frequency Registration Board. We also met with legal staff from the State Department and the U.S. Information Agency, as well as independent academic scholars.

We conducted our review from September 1991 to April 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. As requested, we did not obtain agency comments on this report. However, we discussed its contents with officials from TV Marti, the U.S. Information Agency, and the State Department and incorporated their comments where appropriate.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we do not plan to further distribute this report until 30 days from its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Director of the U.S. Information Agency, the Secretary of State, and interested congressional committees. We will also make copies available to others on request.

Please contact me at (202) 275-4128 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix II.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph E. Kelley".

Joseph E. Kelley
Director, Security and International
Relations Issues

Comments From Consultants

Note: Information about the consultants appears at the end of this appendix.

February 24, 1992

Mr. Joseph E. Kelley
Director
National Security and International Relations Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Room 5148
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Kelley:

For a better understanding of this limited assessment on TV Martí, I have made a brief analysis of each of the news programs reviewed and will conclude with a general commentary about TV Martí's programming

TELENOTICIAS MARTI:

World-wide information and news about United States were balanced and consistent with VOA standards, but the in-house made news (about Cuba and Cuban related happenings in Miami) need to be improved drastically to achieve the VOA guidelines of "accuracy, objectivity and comprehensiveness."

With more information from inside Cuba—readily available from sources like Reuters, France Press and other European news agencies—and more diversity of opinions from the Cuban-American community in the U.S.A., Telenoticias Martí could reach the balance it is now lacking.

Somehow after watching Telenoticias Martí I was left with the sensation that only certain portions of the Cuban-Americans were voicing their opinions and the news had been written with them as the target audience and not the Cubans in Cuba.

Telenoticias Martí also needs to have more coverage of Latin-American and economics issues. Language is another problem. Verbs that do not exist (Campeonó), grammatical mistakes (una rincón, disidentes) were common in the news programs which I reviewed.

The technical quality of Telenoticias Martí is excellent; and there is good ethnical, gender and age variety in the reporters and anchors.

ENFOQUE:

Although this is a segment of Telenoticias Martí, I assessed it separately because the issues were generally about Cuba and the different reporters handled this section with leading questions and conjectures which were more editorial than informative. The persons interviewed or the issues scrutinized could have been reported with practically the same results, without special inducement or slant.

PERSPECTIVAS:

The main problem with Perspectivas was the composition of the panel. They were generally the same people, voicing very similar opinions. The past and future of Cuba and the repercussion that dramatic happenings around the world will have over the island and its people can be better analyzed with more divergence of opinions. The name and intent of the program would then have true meaning.

**Appendix I
Comments From Consultants**

MESA REDONDA:

The moderator for this program was a familiar face from "Perspectivas" and although I saw only one "Mesa Redonda", I had been furnished with a list of topics and guests for various programs, and can safely surmise "Mesa Redonda" experiences the same problem as "Perspectivas": a lack of diversity of opinions & guests which would represent the full spectrum of ideas about Cuba.

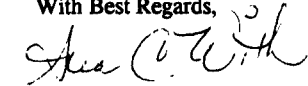
ENTRE CUBANAS:

Ineffective and trivial.

PROGRAMMING:

The New Lassie, Star Trek, Qué Pasa USA among others and primarily Sábado Gigante have no social value or reason to be in TV Marti's programming, especially when the broadcasting time is so limited and erratic because of technical problems with the balloon.

With Best Regards,



Ana C. With

Appendix I
Comments From Consultants



February 24, 1992

Mr. Joseph E. Kelley
Director
Security and International Relations Group
General Accounting Office
Room 5148
Washington, DC 20548

Re: Order No. PC9200754

Dear Mr. Kelley:

In accordance with the terms of the order referenced above, I have reviewed tapes from Television Marti. This review included 14 news programs (Noticias), five commentary programs (Perspectivas) and three special programs (2-Semanas, 1- Programa Especial).

In general, I found a great deal of variation in the objectivity, accuracy and comprehensiveness of the programs. Those news stories that focused on international events, especially relating to Europe, tended to reflect higher production values and more objective reporting. Those stories that addressed issues relating to Cuba and/or the Cuban American community showed great disparities in objectivity, accuracy and comprehensiveness. A great deal of attention was given to the events in Haiti, including the coup against Aristide and the subsequent OAS-imposed embargo. Some of this coverage showed sensitivity and balance. However, the coverage of the embargo itself seemed to uncritically accept the policy premise of the embargo--perhaps subtly sending the message that embargos were legitimate and successful policy instruments, which is highly debatable.

The news on Cuba tended to accept the notion that Castro's government is repressive and a failure economically. While news reports from field correspondents themselves tended to be objective and accurate, the news anchor's approach and attitude at times suggested little objectivity. Often, sources for information would be obscure. Other times, generalizations were made that were not warranted. In the news programs that I viewed, there was little effort to portray any Cuban American political groups other than the Cuban American National Foundation, which at times seemed to receive special coverage, as if they were the only organization in the US with concerns about Cuba. Use of expert analysis on the news programs tended to follow the same patterns as the selections of commentators for the *Perspectivas* program. There was little diversity and balance in the use of guest analysts. At times interviews with those who had recently defected were given greater prominence than breaking world news. The interjection of interviews with prominent US-based Cuban personalities often had little relevance to the news reports of the day. Like in the major media of the country, international business and economics reporting was weak, and at times, non-existent. Surprisingly, there was little news of and about Latin America and the Caribbean.

The commentary program (*Perspectivas*) normally demonstrated a high level of analysis and thoughtfulness. Use of commentators from other countries (Mexico, Honduras, Russia among others) provided a useful contrast to experts from the Washington and Miami area. The commentary programs tended to reflect a center-conservative view-point. American participants tended to reflect the foreign and domestic policy views of the Republican Party and the government in power. No women participated in any of the

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Comments From Consultants**

Joseph E. Kelley
February 24, 1992
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commentary programs that I viewed. No dissident voices from the US policy or public affairs community, particularly those related to the debate over Cuban and Cuban American affairs were included in the programs. There was no attention to the generational diversity and richness of the Cuban-American community.

In short, particularly on matters related to Cuba and Cuban American affairs, Television Marti does not practice the pluralism that it preaches.

If there is any other information that I may provide, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,



Mark B. Rosenberg
Director & Professor
of Political Science

Appendix I
Comments From Consultants

Washington, DC.
February 23, 1992

Mr. Joseph E. Kelley
Director Security and International Relations
Issues, National Security and
International Affairs Division
General Accounting Office(GAO)
Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. Kelley:

Here for your information is a summary of my analysis of TV Marti's broadcasts, based upon the review of 20 hours of program material. I would like to emphasize that the 20-hour sample I covered might have been limited, due to its size relative to the total body of TV Marti programming. But, that said, here are my impressions.

Overall Compliance with VOA Standards

The programs are generally of high technical quality, and meet the standards. However, I believe that there is room for improvement in objectivity, accuracy and balance. TV Marti regularly presented diverse and contrasting opinions in the general programming we reviewed, but there seems to be little debate offered or opposing views presented in the programs on Cuba.

In the review sample, I felt that the TV Marti programs were lacking in coverage of the variety of opinion in today's Cuban-American community. The programs we reviewed reflected a consistent and well-defined conservative line, but one must ask if the programs on Cuba placed too much emphasis on the views of the Cuban-American National Foundation. From the extensive coverage this group receives on TV Marti, and the relative lack of information about other Cuban-American organizations, I suspect that the Cuban viewer may be receiving an incomplete picture of the Cuban community in this country.

Perception and Reality

The general thinking within the Cuban-American community is that TV Marti is a vehicle to combat Castro's regime. Castro's jamming of the TV Marti broadcasts further solidifies this view in the community. The cold war is winding down elsewhere in the world, but it is seen by Castro and his opponents as very much alive, and coming to a very critical moment in history.

I agree with the VOA standards and norms as expressed in the VOA Charter, and believe that these guidelines have served that organization and the United States well for the past 50 years. However, in discussing an appropriate role for TV Marti, we should also take into account the tense and conflict-ridden situation in Cuba today.

**Appendix I
Comments From Consultants**

In future discussions of the role of broadcast services to Cuba, I would suggest that policymakers examine the possibility of placing TV Marti under a different umbrella and in a less restrictive environment. Perhaps an arrangement under the auspices of the Board for International Broadcasting similar to that of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe would conform better to current US Government policy goals toward Cuba.

General Recommendations

From the review sample, I believe there is a need to improve the language used in TV Marti. In some shows we reviewed, the impact and the quality of an otherwise fine program was diminished by the use of words that do not exist in the Spanish language.

I believe that it is imperative to target the young audience with incisive and attractive programs on TV Marti. Women and Afro-Cubans are another important target audience for programs from the United States, and the diverse culture of the US, even with all its conflict and contradictions, is of prime interest to these groups.

As I noticed above, the relative lack of debate and scant presentation of different points of view from the Cuban-American community (as seen in our review sample) diminish the feeling of credibility I believe the audience expects from a US-based information service. Cubans know that the US society thrives on argument, and that policy decisions arise after often-intensive conflict between interest groups. TV Marti should not be afraid to present arguments and opposing views in its own programming. If TV Marti can present a broader picture of the range of views on Cuba, both in the Cuban-American community and the society in general, the service will enhance its own credibility and generate more audience interest.

I would also suggest that TV Marti expand its pool of experts on Cuba-related issues to broaden the range of viewpoints presented to its audience.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to participate in the GAO review, but I recognize fully the limitations of a sampling approach. I believe that the operation of a news service is a very difficult task, but is, nevertheless, an important and effective way to support US government policy. We have only to ask Eastern Europeans or former soviet citizens for their views on overseas broadcasts to get an idea about the true importance of this task. Cuba has its own unique aspects, but I am certain that TV Marti plays a critical role today in support of US policy aims.

Sincerely


Marcelo Fernandez-Zayas

Information About the Consultants

Ana C. With served for 10 years as anchorwoman, producer, and moderator in four television stations in Panama and Costa Rica. She was part of a field team that evaluated the Central American Journalism Program for the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Democratic Initiatives. She currently serves on the governing board for Florida International University's Central American Journalism Program.

Mark B. Rosenberg is the director of Florida International University's Latin American and Caribbean Center. He is a member of the Consultative Working Group on Democratic Development and Administration of Justice for the U.S. Agency for International Development. He has published numerous articles and studies on Latin America.

Marcelo Fernandez-Zayas is the director of the District of Columbia Public Schools' Office for Bilingual Multicultural Education. He has served as senior analyst and written on sociopolitical and economics issues for several news organizations, including National Public Radio, UNIVISION, and Fox Television.

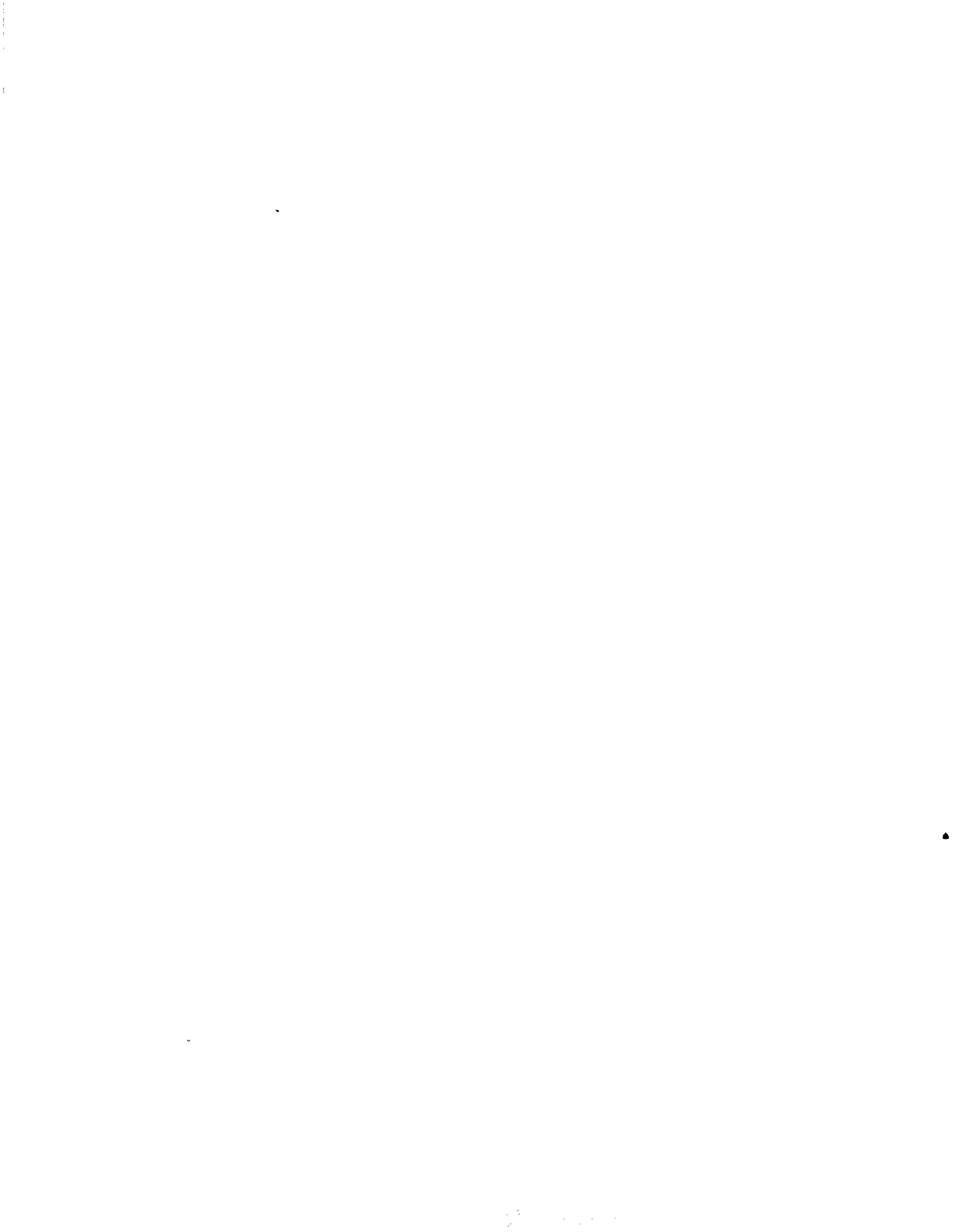
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