

to: bernard diderich
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from: lionel martin (havana)

TIME
MAY 21, 1985
Cuban Reaction to Radio Marti Broadcasts
WR 304

211350: bernard. here's reply to yr morning telex. by the way, a newsy telex card is valid til november 1985 (i finally got it) si biso no problem. here's some info:

there have been no media editoriales as yes beyond the original official declaration which was printed and broadcast far and wide. what we do have this morning in granma, and also last night in the youth newspaper +juventud rebelde+ are interviews with cubans supporting the government stand and also photos of meetings in support.

bernardo cardoso, a construction workers is quoted as saying: +our young people are ideologically strong andn nothing can turn them away from unity with the revolution, its government, its party abd fudand fidel+

annia ortega, secondary school (junior high) student: +its anothr attempt at penetrating our youth and people ideologically but we are very clear about the objectives of the revolution.+

alicia alonso, cuba's world famous battlerina said: +the united states government is wrong wonce again in evaluating our people. the ideological maturity, firmness of our principles have been forged during many years of struggle...radio marti is destined to fail.+ alonso also showed anger at the use of the name marti for a u.s. propaganda statement, a point of view common to many others i talked too. alonso said: +we view the use of the name for this shamefull enterprise with indignation. marti is a name which in itself becomes the most powerful critique tht at radio marti might have. i hope the american people become conscious of this fact.+

most observers here believe that the main target of the cuban actions (cutoff of immigration and visits) is the cuban community. the cuban government calculates that thee end to visits by cuban exiles to their native island, that is an end to the family reunification that came about as a result of a dialogue between fidel and the cuban overseas community in 1979, will encourage opposition to radio marti within the cuban community. the cubans also bank on their drastic move dramatizing their opposition to radio marti (they call it +subversive+) and will bring about supporters in congress and other sectors of american life.

a minority in cuba welcomed radio marti broadcasts but even some who are critics of the cuban revolution are not happy with the results. for example, eduardo reyes, one of those who received his entry permission from the united states to emigrate said (he was interviewed outside the office where they sell tickets to miami) +radio marti is just plain stupid and the reaction of our government seems as bad+. he was distraught since he was on the verge of leaving cuba under the agreement made last december. an elderly woman on the same airline ticket line said +why should be we be the ones to suffer+

a cuban tourists o official told me that cuba itself will be hurt financially by the cutoff in cuba exile travel although he defended the governments move as +the only honorable road.+ some quarter of a million cuban exiles have visited the island since the ban was lifted by havana in 1979. this has brought in a sizable income of sorely needed hard currency. it has also been responsible in part for the fact that so many cubans have miami bought clothing and appliances that their pesos cannot buy here. one cuban said: +well, there go the lee jeans.+ he was referring to the fact that the visiting +rich+ cousins from miami either brought in all kinds of goods not available here or bought them at special dollars stores whose clientele will now virtually dry up.

many cubanbans listened to radio marti from what i can gather during its 14 hours of broadcast. the 1180 am frequency is surrounded by a strong high pitch signal but one can hear the station by fine tuning and facing the antenna the right way. outside havana, presumably, the station is heard even more clearly.

the well know photographer, osvaldo salas, told me he thought the format and programs of radio marti were +mierda+. he said they put on several shows that were not even liked before the revolution and that right now are just plain silly. +they think time stood still during these twenty five years, + he said. +they feed us with what they remember was popular in cuba but our tastes have changed and our own singers and television and radio shows are fifty times better than radio marti came up with on its first day.+s.+

one disaffected radio repairman (he would love to leave cuba) thinks the young people will be attracted by radio marti. but he also comments that +of course, the kids have been listening to rymusic on am and fm stations from miami for years. go to any beach and you can see they have florida stations tuned in. as a matter of fact, they can listen to american stingers and music on cuban radio and television.+ he was referring to the fact that for the past seven or eight years cuban media has been playing american video and music with the idea of defusing the situation (previous) where american culture was verboten.

on a bpolitical level, the cuban government accuses the reagan administration for trying to +create tensions and conflicts+.

a foreign official told me: +it seemed like we were making some progress in lessening the distance between us. the immigration agreement of last december was a step in the right direction. but reagan insists on putting on radio marti and we are back to square number one.+

another cuban official said that one of the main reasons for cutting off the visits of cuban exiles is +that it was obvious that radio marti would use them as a major source of information about the goings on within cuba.+ +so,+ he added, +we cut off their water.+

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It is this need of radio marti for +all the dirt it can dig
ypup about whats happening inside cuba+ that has some diplomats
speculating that the next casuality might be the relatively
easy to get telephone calls between cuban exiles and their relatives
in cuba. this, they argue, is a prime source of info for radio marti.
but, they said, the cuban govt knows this too and might very well
minitroduce some measures (lieke that or requiring that all calls
from cuba be paid for in dollars and also that all calls from there
be channeled into a central telephone station-- this is pure
speculation) that would reduce telephone cntontact between cubans
there and here but without violating the present accord on
telephone communications between the two nations.

most diplomats here think that the consequences and fall out
of radio marti and the cuban response will be in the medium to long
term. the cubans have little faith in a change in heart by the
reagan administration and they hope democrats, who hardly get easy
votes in maimiami in senatorial and presidential campaigns will
take up the radio marti issue. one cuban said that +an honorable
out for them would be to end radio marti and let the voice of
america do the job which it has been doing for years.+ cubans will
tell you they learned to live with coa voa even its broadcast on
the same am band now used by radio marti. when castro was asked
by sean kelly, the voa correspondent a few years ago about radio
marti, seanfidel ansswered: +i prefer the voice of america.+

r rg that's it. i hope some of the ninsights help. cheers and
albest/lionel

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