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MINORITY VIEWS  
OF SENATORS PELL, ZORINSKY, TSONGAS, AND CRANSTON

We oppose passage of S. 602. The Administration's Radio Marti proposal is unnecessary, a waste of tax dollars, is unlikely to be heard, and will have disastrous consequences for the U.S. broadcasting industry. Moreover, Radio Marti will end the present prospects for a negotiated settlement to the longstanding radio interference problem between the United States and Cuba as it becomes another major irritant in the strained U.S.-Cuba relationship.

We oppose Radio Marti, but at the same time strongly affirm the right of the Cuban people to information about their own society. We supported an amendment offered by Senator Zorinsky which would have provided programming on and for Cuba through the expansion of the existing broadcasts of the Voice of America. A separate Cuba Service within the VOA would have provided programs consistent with the VOA's high standards for objectivity, accuracy, and reliability. This expanded VOA programming would have achieved the goals of Radio Marti but would cost considerably less, would avoid a full scale radio war, and would be much more likely to be heard. It would also have avoided a confrontational step virtually certain to preclude a negotiated settlement of the existing U.S. Cuba interference problems. Regrettably the amendment, which received support from both sides of the Committee, failed by one vote.

Foreign Policy Considerations

Relations between the United States and Cuba have been in a state of tension for most of the past 25 years. U.S. policy

toward Cuba has included invasions, economic blockade, diplomatic isolation, and assassination attempts on Fidel Castro. Radio Marti represents a continuation of this counter-productive policy.

We are concerned, of course, with Cuba's policies in Africa, Central America, and with its role as a major proponent of communism through the Third World. Cuba's policies reinforce its status as a hostile power ninety miles off our shore. A new Cold War type radio station -- there have been a number of covert and overt predecessors to Radio Marti -- will not serve to modify Cuba's foreign policy. To the contrary, it is likely to enhance Cuba's perception of threat from the United States, strengthen its resolve to conduct anti-U.S. policies, and further cement its relationship with the Soviet Union. Radio Marti is viewed by the Cuban Government as a provocative act. The inevitable escalation of tensions between the United States and Cuba can only be inimical to U.S. foreign policy interests, especially those in the Central American and Caribbean region.

#### Radio War

The Cubans have made it very clear that if Radio Marti becomes a reality, they will respond by counter-broadcasts on a range of frequencies used by U.S. commercial AM broadcasters. Cuba recently constructed two 500-kilowatt transmitters (10 times the power of any used in the United States) as well as other new transmitters of lesser power. A demonstration of Cuba's capability to use that power in a radio war was given on the evening of August 30, 1982 when Havana's "Voice of Cuba" was heard by

millions of Americans. The Cuban broadcasts that evening effectively reduced the listening range of stations such as Des Moines' WHO (1040 kilohertz), Chicago's WMAQ (670 kilohertz), and Salt Lake City's KSL (1160 kilohertz), from a radius of more than 2,000 miles each to a radius of 30-40 miles.

The National Association of Broadcasters, and other representatives of American broadcasting, have stated their categorical opposition to Radio Marti as embodied in S. 602. Before the Foreign Relations Committee, broadcasters testified to the catastrophic consequences of the Cuban counter-broadcasts which will result from the establishment of Radio Marti. The broadcasters pointed out that over 200 AM stations in 34 states could be affected. The inevitable radio war will deny millions of Americans access to vitally important sources of news, information, and entertainment. Counter-broadcasts on WHO's 1040 frequency, for example, would wipe out that station's early morning farm programs which provide vital information to farmers throughout the Midwest.

The broadcasters further pointed out that Radio Marti represents federal government abuse of the AM radio broadcast spectrum which is designed to be exclusively for domestic broadcasting.

One of the most telling arguments of the broadcasters was the fact that Radio Marti will close out the real hope that there can be a negotiated resolution of the 15-year old interference problem between the United States and Cuba. The Cubans have made it known that they are willing to sit down with the United States to negotiate an end to the radio interference problem. At our

last hearing on Radio Marti, we were heartened to hear that the Administration was also interested in negotiating a settlement. We believe, however, along with the broadcasters, that a settlement will not occur if Radio Marti becomes a reality. The Cubans will not come to the table but, to the contrary, a full radio war will result.

The broadcasters also made the point that the compensation provided in the form of an amendment to help stations make technical adjustments to their facilities in order to offset Cuban interference was the bare minimum and in actuality would only be helpful to a small number of stations, principally located in the State of Florida. The vast majority of stations will not be able to make any adjustments at all.

The broadcast industry representatives estimated that the stations would incur millions of dollars in economic damage from the loss of revenues as a result of a radio war. An NAB sample of 17 stations revealed that the loss of revenue could range from \$50,000 per year for one station to \$10 million per year for another. These are minimum figures. We believe that the broadcasters of America should not be made to bear the burden of an unwise, totally unnecessary foreign policy ploy, and therefore we support their efforts to receive compensation for the damages that will most certainly be sustained if Radio Marti goes on the air. The legislation should be altered to provide fair compensation to those broadcasters affected by the implementation of Radio Marti.

The Cost Effectiveness of Radio Marti

While S. 602 does not contain a funding authorization for Radio Marti, the Administration has estimated the FY 84 costs at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and FY 85 at \_\_\_\_\_. According to the proponents this will buy 14 hours of programming -- two-thirds of which will be sports, soap operas and other entertainment -- and a 50 kilowatt transmitter to be located on the Florida Keys. The transmitter will reach only Western Cuba. An additional transmitter -- not included in this bill -- is required to reach the more populous Eastern Cuba and would cost \$2 million.

Section \_\_\_\_\_ of the bill authorizes \$5,000,000 in payments to radio stations making technical adjustments to mitigate the effects of Cuban interference. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the full cost to broadcasters for technical adjustments will be at least \$40,000,000.

Technical adjustments are only a part of the cost broadcasters will have to pay for Radio Marti. Lost advertising revenue as a result of retaliatory Cuban interference could cost broadcasters more than \$100,000,000.

We believe it would be grossly unfair for the broadcasters to bear costs imposed on them by the Administration's foreign policy agenda and therefore supported a proposal introduced last year by Senator Tsongas and this year by Senator Biden to provide full compensation to broadcasters for economic loss resulting from Radio Marti. Although the compensation amendment failed on a 7 to 7 vote, we believe these enormous sums will eventually have to be paid by the taxpayers.

The enormous expenditures will buy a radio station which will not be heard. Cuba clearly has the ability and the will to block indefinitely Radio Marti's signal.

Even if Radio Marti were heard, the proposed facility would only reach the Western half of the island. This area is already served by Spanish language radio and television broadcasts from Southern Florida. Many feel the advertisements on these broadcasts more effectively point up the contrast between our economic and political systems than a radio station which would be widely viewed in Cuba as a propaganda exercise.

An Alternative -- Expanded Voice of America Programming

Instead of creating the separate entity of Radio Marti, we supported a proposal initially introduced by Senator Pell and modified by Senator Zorinsky which would have expanded existing VOA programming to Cuba from the present 5 1/2 hours to 14 hours daily. The additional programming would have been devoted to news about Cuba and to programs specially designed for Cuban audiences.

We supported Senator Zorinsky's modification of Senator Pell's original VOA option, which he offered as a compromise as a way to accomplish the objectives of the Radio Marti supporters while still protecting the vital interests of the U.S. broadcasters. Under this compromise, the additional programming would be implemented by an entirely separate "Cuba Service" of the VOA. The Cuba Service would be administered separately from other VOA functions and the Director of the Cuba Service would report directly to the Director of the VOA. The compromise amendment

would create a presidentially appointed Board for Radio Broadcasting to Cuba. The Board would advise the Director of the VOA and the Director of the Cuba Service on the programs, broadcasts, and other activities of the Cuba Service. The Board would consist of 15 members, and like the BIB, there would be a requirement of bipartisanship. It would be intended that the Board include substantial representation from the Cuban community.

Expanded VOA programming under the compromise amendment has enormous advantages over the Radio Marti proposal while accomplishing the substance of it. The cost, according to estimates prepared by VOA, would be less than \$4 million. Furthermore, the Voice of America has tremendous credibility in Cuba. The additional programming would meet the VOA's high standards for objectivity, accuracy, and reliability. In contrast Radio Marti would be considered to be a continuation of earlier U.S. propaganda stations.

One key advantage of expanded VOA programming over the Radio Marti proposal is that such broadcasts will be heard. VOA broadcasts to Cuba are easily heard on the island and have a large listenership, including many high Cuban officials. The VOA has been broadcasting to Cuba for more than twenty years, with no more than minimal jamming, and according to testimony from Wayne Smith, former head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, the Cubans would neither jam nor retaliate against expanded VOA programming. This is also confirmed by the comments of Cuban officials. In short, Cuba considers the VOA to be a legitimate instrument of international broadcasting.

Most importantly, expanded VOA broadcasts would avert a radio war. The Cubans will not be provoked to retaliate and in fact the way would be open to negotiate an end to the troublesome radio interference problem. The National Association of Broadcasters for this reason, strongly supported the compromise amendment to provide broadcasting to Cuba through expanded VOA programming. Unlike Radio Marti, the impact of the VOA option will be on the Cuban listener and not on the U.S. broadcasters and listeners.

#### Conclusion

The Radio Marti proposal as embodied in S. 602 is a badly flawed foreign policy tool that will create havoc on the U.S. airwaves, and will unnecessarily exacerbate the already strained U.S.-Cuba relationship. The cost to the American taxpayer of Radio Marti will be more than twice that of the VOA plan, not counting of course, the millions of dollars in damages incurred by private U.S. radio stations.

There are effective ways to provide reliable information to the Cuban people but Radio Marti clearly is not one of them. For these reasons we oppose S. 602.

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