

CLANDESTINE CORNERRADIO AMERICAS TO QUIT....AGAIN!

The National Radio Club recently reprinted this item from the March 18 issue of the Miami News:

Controversial Radio Swan (Ed. note: Though the story refers to Radio Swan, it should read Radio Americas, of course), with studios in South Miami and a transmitter at a Caribbean island 700 miles away, goes off the air May 15. The station is a CIA operation, according to some sources. But officials of Radio Americas, corporate name of the Radio Swan operation, claim it is a strictly commercial private enterprise. Radio Swan is a Spanish-language station which has been on the air since the early 1960's.

Robert Wilkinson, general manager and program director of Radio Americas, scoffs at the CIA tag for the station.

"We sell time to political figures and have income from commercials. Salaries have been paid out of profits, but now there are no profits, so we're going off the air."

But those who claim that Radio Swan is a child of the CIA say that a budget cut for clandestine operations is the real reason behind the silencing of the voice in the Caribbean. The station's location, Swan Island, is a U.S. possession a little more than 100 miles east of Belize, British Honduras and is in a strategic position to cover Cuba, Central America, the northern area of South America and the Caribbean islands with its broadcasts in Spanish. All material, except newscasts from United Press International teletypes at the station transmitter site, originates at studios located at 6123 SW 68th St., South Miami. The tapes are flown to Swan Island by private plane on a twice-weekly schedule. The courier plane also transports food, supplies and relief personnel to the transmitter site. The station has been operating on a split broadcasting schedule going on the air from 5 to 8 a.m., and resuming broadcasts at 5 p.m., signing off at 2 a.m.

President of Radio Americas Inc., is listed as Roosevelt Houser of Coral Gables, a real estate man, bank director and business leader. W.R. Maddux, a Miami real estate man is listed as vice president, and Walter S.C. Rogers, a bond and mortgage executive and son-in-law of Houser, is secretary-treasurer.

A magazine, Electronics Illustrated, suggested last September the possibility that Radio Americas might go off the air and "combine forces with the mysterious station calling itself Radio Libertad, La Voz anti-comunista de America."

Wilkinson said today that he knows nothing about Radio Libertad and added, "all I know is that Radio Americas goes off the air May 15."

And speaking of the "mysterious station calling itself Radio Libertad," has anyone noted this station on the air recently? Spot checks here recently have failed to turn up the station.

It is generally known that Radio Free Cuba, programs produced by Cuban exiles and beamed to that island over a number of medium wave (and earlier, shortwave) stations on which time was purchased, ended its operations last June 30, for lack of funds.

On September 1, an organization based in Chicago, known as the American Security Council, filled the gap with a program called Radio Free Americas. It is transmitted by ten U.S. BCB stations and others in the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay and Brazil (in Portuguese). On shortwave, WNYW and KGEI broadcast the Radio Free Americas program five times weekly.

The ASC quotes Radio Havana as follows: "The failure of other worm radio stations on U.S. territory left a vacuum on the air. Radio (Free) America(s) is trying to fill this vacuum and is doing so with little success."

The only question is, was Havana actually referring to Radio Free Americas or to Swan Island's Radio Americas. The parenthetical additions were made by ASC in a news release. They may have mistakenly assumed Havana's comments referred to their program.