

# Upheaval in China; China Allows Foreign Broadcasters to Resume News Transmission

By JEREMY GERARD MAY 24, 1989

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China resumed satellite transmission of television news reports from Beijing yesterday for the first time since the declaration of martial law on Saturday.

News organizations from around the world, however, are still prevented from using their own satellite installations to transmit reports from China. So they scrambled yesterday to reserve transmission time on the satellite operated by the Chinese television network, CCTV.

Broadcast network news executives in the United States said the inability to use their own equipment created a bottleneck of information at the CCTV headquarters, which, in turn, limited the television news reports that could be transmitted from Beijing. No Notice on Decision

Elise Adde, a spokeswoman for ABC News, said that news of the Chinese decision came without warning and required some immediate decisions at the network's headquarters in New York.

"We got a call at 5 A.M. Eastern time from a representative of CCTV, a master control engineer, who called Bill Thomas, our correspondent in Beijing," Ms. Adde said. "He said, 'If you would like to use the satellite again, you may.' Bill asked, 'Right now?' and he said yes."

The first ABC News report was viewed at 7:25 A.M. It was the second network to resume broadcasting.

CBS News, which was the last American network to be shut down on Friday night, was the first to resume video coverage, with a report from Barry Petersen at 7:01 A.M. ABC, NBC and CNN followed with their own reports. Lane Venardos, the executive producer of special events for CBS News, said yesterday that because the networks cannot use their own transmission equipment, the reports are a mixture of videotaped reports edited by the network and live reporting from positions near the CCTV headquarters.

" 'Live' is deceptive when applied to CCTV," Mr. Venardos said. "We deliver edited pieces and then show a correspondent in front of a backdrop."

"They may not be exercising editorial control," Mr. Venardos said of the Chinese officials, "but the fact that you have to go to them for the feed, you don't end up sending what you aren't sure will be used. Still, it's infinitely better than what we had 24 hours ago." 'Dramatic and Surprising'

As American viewers watched on Friday night, correspondents of CNN and CBS News signed off in dramatic confrontations with Chinese officials who told them that their purpose in Beijing - coverage of the Chinese-Soviet summit meeting - was at an end and that satellite transmissions were being halted. CBS News then showed a technician pulling the plug as the screen went blank.

The decision by the Chinese to permit television coverage to resume caught news executives and correspondents particularly off guard, because television broadcasts appear to violate Government restrictions that have been in effect under martial law.

Eason Jordan, the acting international editor of the Cable News Network, called the lifting of restrictions "a dramatic and surprising reversal." He added, "The thing that is so odd is that the decree prohibits the transmission of any pictures, but at the same time, CCTV is airing their own pictures so they're now sanctioning the violation of martial law."

Mr. Jordan and other American network news executives said yesterday that the decision to allow the telecasts could not have been made unilaterally by the officials running CCTV. "Apparently, it's coming from the Communist Party chiefs," Mr. Jordan said. "Our feeling is that it means that the moderates in the party are winning the battle at the moment."

At a news conference in New York yesterday morning, Susan Spencer, a

correspondent for CBS News in Beijing, said that the lifting of the ban was one of a number of developments that had reinforced the belief of journalists on the scene that the declaration of martial law has had little impact on the events in Chinese capital.

"Martial law has been a joke," she told reporters by telephone. "It seems as if everything is proceeding as if nothing had happened at all."

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