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## China Again Cuts Off TV News Transmission

By JEREMY GERARD MAY 25, 1989

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In their second reversal in as many days, Chinese officials yesterday abruptly halted the transmission of foreign television news reports from Beijing. They also barred foreign broadcasters from recording and transmitting news reports by China's state-run network.

Some television news transmissions continued to be available to American viewers yesterday as network news organizations skirted the Chinese decrees by sending videotape reports to Hong Kong for transmission. The networks were also picking up reports from the Chinese state network, Central China Television, in Hong Kong, and sending them to the United States from there. Reversals and Power Struggle

Network executives said they were perplexed by the repeated reversals regarding television news coverage. The successive policy reversals may mirror continuing shifts in power between competing factions of China's leadership.

Television coverage of the protests in and around Tiananmen Square was first halted on Saturday (Friday evening in the United States) as the Government said it was imposing martial law in parts of Beijing. But the ban was lifted without explanation on Tuesday evening in Beijing.

Foreign news organizations in China, including the three major American

broadcast networks and the Cable News Network, were allowed to resume transmitting reports, but only through the satellite of CCTV, the state-run network. The American television news organizations resumed sending reports on Tuesday. Last night in Beijing, however, the networks were told by CCTV officials that their access to the CCTV satellite would be halted at midnight, or 11 A.M. Eastern time yesterday. They were also forbidden to rebroadcast the CCTV reports. CBS Shows Last Live Report

Network officials said they were given no reason for the reversal, and they could not determine the source of the order. The ban may have been resumed for political reasons, they said, or it may simply have been that the request for satellite time by more than 100 foreign news organizations had overwhelmed the modest CCTV staff.

CBS News interrupted its regular programming yesterday morning with its chief anchorman, Dan Rather, in New York, introducing the network's last live report from Beijing. The report, filed by John Sheahan, a CBS correspondent in Beijing, concluded at about three minutes past 11 A.M., as a Chinese technician was shown pulling the plug on the transmission.

Executives at other networks accused CBS News of overdramatizing the situation because the news organizations had learned of the ban several hours earlier. But Lane Venardos, the executive producer of special events for CBS News, defended the report. "It was an accurate representation of what was happening in Beijing," he said.

The television news organizations have not been prevented from videotaping the events in Beijing, and the networks are continuing to do so. 'Unbelievable Nightmare'

The television correspondents in Beijing have also been broadcasting audio reports by telephone. But television executives, dependent on live video images, are increasingly frustrated by the lack of pictures. All of the American networks have devoted major resources to covering the events unfolding in China. ABC News, NBC News and CNN each have about 30 employees in Beijing, including correspondents, producers, cameramen and technicians. CBS News has more, though it would not say how many.

"It's an unbelievable nightmare," said Eason Jordan, the acting international editor of CNN. "The fate of China is being decided, and we're caught in the middle just trying to report the story."

