

April 22, 1980

CONCURRING STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO  
IN RE: COMSAT STUDY

While I support the Commission's decision to submit this report to Congress, I want to stress the tentative nature of our conclusions and to point out that the title, "Final Report," is somewhat misleading. I do not share the assurance of some of my colleagues, for example, that a government representative on the Comsat delegations to INTELSAT and INMARSAT is necessary or even desirable. Nor am I convinced that the stringent degree of separation between Comsat Global and Comsat Labs is required.

The Final Report concludes that a government representative on the Comsat delegations is necessary to assure public interest representation to "protect" Comsat from unjustified charges of self-dealing in its relationships with foreign entities. I have some trouble understanding how Comsat's role in INTELSAT over the past eighteen years justifies this new-found concern about its service or its protection. INTELSAT is a success by virtually any standard and a rousing success measured by the standards enunciated in the Communications Satellite Act. It is paradoxical that Comsat which has performed its role so well, now requires the active participation of one or more government bureaucrats who with encyclopedic knowledge of international affairs and purity of heart will somehow deliver Comsat from any temptation to which it may succumb. I'm somewhat concerned that this government participation will fundamentally alter the character of Comsat's relationship with its foreign counterparts in a system which has served the country very well.

I want to emphasize that any consideration of the need for a government representative on Comsat delegations should be strictly limited to Comsat through the legislation which brought it into being. Comsat is, indeed, a unique organization and may require unique treatment with regard to government representation. I would oppose any such governmental involvement in the foreign dealings of other private business firms.

I recognize that we are entering a new era in international communications and that some adjustments may be needed. Indeed, I have some enthusiasm in approving most of the structural changes the staff has proposed and the Commission has adopted. I continue to question the degree of separation we have proposed between Comsat Global and Comsat Labs. My concern is somewhat relieved by verbal assurances of the tentative nature of our proposals stated during our open meeting.

Thus, despite certain misgivings, I support the Commission's position and urge the Congress to give careful consideration to our proposals. I do so with the belief that any of our proposals which require legislation will receive intense scrutiny by our elected representatives before final action is taken.

Therefore, I concur.

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