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Russ Again Block U.S. Newscast

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For the second night in a row, the Soviet television center yesterday blocked an outgoing American newscast about Soviet dissent, despite a \$281,000 contract to service coverage during President Nixon's visit.

The refusal to transmit a CBS-TV report about the hunger strike of dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov followed an expression of "regret" earlier by a Soviet television official because of seven blocked transmissions of newscasts by all three U.S. networks deemed to be "anti-Soviet."

Last night, Murray Fromson, CBS Moscow correspondent, tried to send his report on Sakharov's situation following the President's departure, but was prevented from doing so when the technicians turned off their equipment and walked out of the studio.

Earlier yesterday, Fedor Kuznetsov, the deputy chief of the Foreign Department of the State Committee for Radio and Television, had said that "hot-headed" technicians were being told not to interrupt further transmissions.

Some American newsmen privately contended that such systematic censorship could only have been a higher-level decision, although Soviet officials have attributed it to a low ranking supervisor.

Such a spontaneous work stoppage by technicians, without orders or encouragement from superiors, is virtually unheard-of in the Soviet system.

Yesterday's explanation by Kuznetsov, which stopped short of an official apology, was made personally to Elliot L. Bernstein, an ABC-TV producer who has supervised the networks' pool for Mr. Nixon's visit.

At a news conference yesterday, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger replied to a question that "I don't know the details of the interference with the television transmission, but we certainly don't approve of it."

The first incidents cast a brief shadow over the summit windup and disrupted what had been a smooth working relationship between American and Soviet television personnel.

Later, CBS-TV had successfully used the Soviet facilities to relay its previously blocked newscast which dealt with the suppression of a seminar planned this week by Jewish scientists barred from emigrating to Israel.

But ABC-TV and NBC-TV, taking no chances, had sent their disrupted footage on Sakharov's hunger strike to Western Europe for transmission.

While the CBS-TV relay attempt last evening may have been refused because Mr. Nixon had technically left, Fromson said that the contract did not run out until midnight.

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