

C.B.S. Cancels Order Barring 'Instant Analysis' of Speeches

By LES BROWN

The Columbia Broadcasting System has done away with its short-lived policy prohibiting its news correspondents from commenting on, or analyzing, Presidential addresses immediately after they are delivered.

William S. Paley, chairman of the board of C.B.S., who had announced the policy June 6, yesterday made the disclosure of its discontinuance, saying that the journalistic innovation had been a given a "fair trial."

Mr. Paley said the original decision had been made in the belief that additional time for reflection and research would enhance the analyses of Presidential speeches. For the last five months C.B.S. correspondents have had to withhold their comments until the next scheduled network newscast.

Newsworthy Events

But, said Mr. Paley, the rapid series of exceptionally newsworthy events "has made it clear that postponing news analysis under all circumstances may impair a journalistic service of far greater value to the public than we had realized."

The company's new position does not mean that it will necessarily require "instant analysis" after all speeches by a President or other persons of public importance but rather that the ban has been lifted.

Whether there is a post-address summation and commentary after a President speaks will depend on news judgment, the desirability of such a service at the time and the feasibility of adequate preparation for it, Mr. Paley said.

The original decision to do away with instant analysis was unpopular with many journalists at C.B.S. and outside the company largely because it had the appearance of a concession to the Nixon Administration.

It was former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew who had coined the term "instant analysis" in his Des Moines speech on Nov. 13, 1969, the first hot blast at the news media by the Nixon Administration. In that speech, Mr. Agnew was especially critical of the networks for their practice of following a televised Presidential address with a post-mortem by newsmen and outside experts dissecting the President's remarks even when they did not have advance access to the text.

Many had pointed out after Mr. Agnew's attack on the electronic press that print journalists also write their commentaries on Presidential speeches immediately afterward but they don't appear to be "instant" because they are published the next day.

Criticism Bore Fruit

Nevertheless, the criticism bore fruit last summer when C.B.S. issued its new policy. The ban on instant post-mortems had accompanied an announcement that C.B.S. would schedule special programs to offset the President whenever his broadcast concerned matters of major policy over which there was significant national disagreement.

The network committed itself to provide time for opposing views by qualified spokesmen from government as soon after the President's broadcasts as practicable.

That commitment will continue and is unaffected by the company's reversal on post-address news discussions.