

# TOP RIVALS AGREE ON UNIFIED SYSTEM FOR ADVANCED TV

DEBUT IN U.S. IS HASTENED

Bright and Clear Digital Picture  
Would Enhance Viewing and  
Interactive Technologies

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WASHINGTON, May 24 — The three top rivals for the right to develop the next generation of television technology in the United States agreed today to join forces on a single approach, hastening the biggest change in broadcasting since the advent of color.

The agreement to collaborate on high-definition television, a move strongly supported by top Federal officials, eliminates the likelihood of protracted disputes and litigation, which could have delayed the introduction of the technology for years. With today's agreement, HDTV — offering wide-screen pictures nearly as bright and clear as movies and sound approaching the crispness of digital compact disks — could be available as early as 1995.

The agreement to collaborate also represents a broad technical consensus that the next generation of television sets will be much more than boxes to amuse couch potatoes. Instead, the industry has paved the way for television's rapid convergence with the interactive world of computers and high-speed two-way communications.

## Not Just 'Pretty Pictures'

The new HDTV system will be digital, meaning the signals will be transmitted in pulses that replicate the ones and zeroes of computer code, instead of the traditional, less precise, technique of transmitting television signals in electromagnetic waves.

"This is not just about pretty pictures," said Richard E. Wiley, chairman of the Federal advisory committee for HDTV. "We are looking for interoperability — not only between broadcasting and cable, but also with computers. This has applications in factory automation, medical imaging and even defense."

The alliance effectively ends a remarkable competition begun nearly five years ago when the Federal Communications Commission announced its intention to choose a standard for advanced television and invited companies from around the world to propose systems.

## Process Began in 1991

The three groups that joined forces today were the sole survivors of a rigorous testing process that began in 1991 and ended this February. One of the three is a team consisting of the General Instrument Corporation and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A second team is Zenith Electronics and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. The third group is a consortium formed by Philips Electronics of the Netherlands, Thomson Consumer Electronics of France, NBC