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CASTRO'S PLOY—AMERICA'S DILEMMA

THE 1980 CUBAN BOATLIFT

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APR

Cover design is based on a Coast Guard photograph of a Coast Guard motor surf boat bringing emergency medical technicians to assist Cuban refugees on board the Motor Vessel *RED DIAMOND*, during the 1980 Cuban Boatlift from Mariel, Cuba

Cover design and artwork by Laszlo L. Bodrogi

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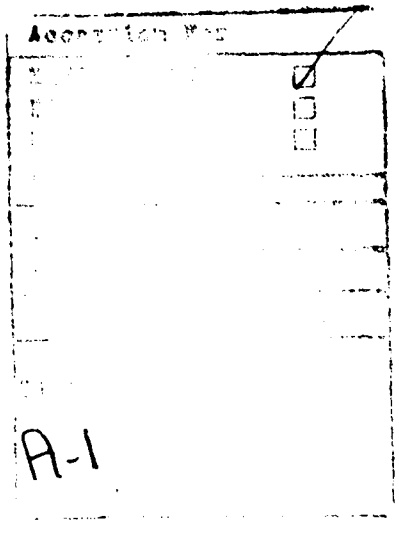

"What will become of us?"

US Navy Photo

CASTRO'S PLOY—AMERICA'S DILEMMA:

THE 1980 CUBAN BOATLIFT

ALEX LARZELERE

1988

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To my wife Sallie,

Who was all ways there

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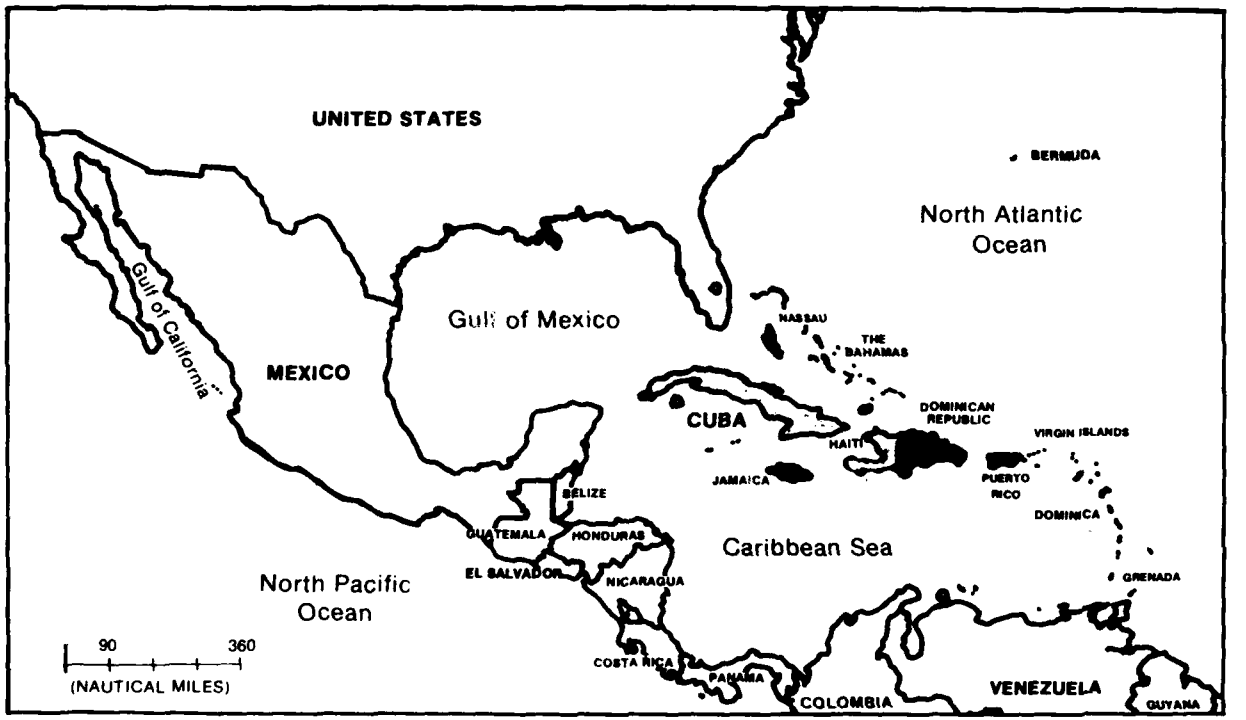
Foreword

In the summer of 1980, more than 125,000 Cubans abandoned their homes and possessions and emigrated to the United States. When what began as a stream of dissidents became a torrent of refugees, the United States was caught short. Cuban Premier Fidel Castro was able to use the 1980 exodus for his own political objectives and, in the process, overwhelmed US immigration capacity.

In this definitive study of what happened during those six months of 1980, Captain Alex Larzelere (US Coast Guard, Retired) shows how Castro controlled the initiative, forcing the United States into a reactive position. Among the refugees he allowed to leave Cuba, Castro included significant numbers of criminals, spies, and political prisoners, thereby showing disregard for international rules regarding emigration. The Carter administration's plan to deal with the crisis, as the author points out, came too late to be effective. Anticipating that the United States may face a similar mass influx, Larzelere argues for a new Migration Plan. He offers a plan with four major points: (1) rapid executive decisionmaking at levels *lower* than the White House; (2) constructive direction from Washington to Federal agencies on the scene; (3) a working immigration agreement with Cuba; and (4) a controlled flow of refugees.

Larzelere's proposals are worth noting. Castro *could* do it again, the author warns: Millions of Cubans would like to leave the island, and approximately 200,000 already have Cuban government approval for emigration. Armed with a comprehensive plan, as suggested here, the United States can remain a haven for freedom-loving people while at the same time ensuring control of immigration.

Bradley C. Hosmer
Lieutenant General, US Air Force
President, National Defense
University



Cuba in the Caribbean Sea

Preface

During the morning calm, the sailing ship *EAGLE* entered the Port of Havana under power. I was among the cadets in white uniforms manning the rail as the three-masted bark slowly cruised under the long silent cannons of the Spanish fort guarding the entrance to the harbor. It was the summer of 1956 and the ships of the Coast Guard Academy's Practice Squadron, on maneuvers in Caribbean waters, were making an official port call in the Cuban capital. It was an exciting time for a young second class cadet—sightseeing, shopping, beach parties, and a reception at the American Embassy. Ernest Hemingway, a guest at the reception, regaled his young admirers with tales of his many adventures. Some 30 years later, memories of my visit to Havana were stirred while I researched the complexities of the 1980 Cuban Boatlift, in which I was heavily engaged.

Over the years, I had a number of dealings with Cuba while assigned to Coast Guard units in Florida. Upon commissioning in 1958, I was stationed aboard the cutter *ANDROSCOGGIN*, homeported in Miami. I watched in January 1959 as Americans applauded Castro's overthrow of the dictator Fulgencio Batista; the Cuban-American community in Miami was elated. I remember the large billboard at the entrance to MacArthur Causeway, declaring in huge letters that Cuba was finally free. As the months passed, I saw the joy and excitement turn first to skepticism and then to disbelief and anger as the government of Fidel Castro moved deeper and deeper into the communist fold.

When the Bay of Pigs invasion took place in 1961, I was in command of the 95-foot patrol cutter, *CAPE SHOALWATER* (CG-95324). Operating out of Mayport,

Florida, I was ordered to sail immediately for Key West at "best possible speed." Before reaching Key West, my cutter was called into Miami for a special mission. We were to stop a ship, loaded with ammunition for the invaders, from leaving Miami Harbor; the United States was attempting to distance itself from the failed invasion attempt. I was ordered to "use whatever force is necessary to prevent the ship from leaving Miami." The vessel did not attempt to leave and later was seized by Federal agents at its mooring, releasing us to return to Mayport.

A few months later, *CAPE SHOALWATER* again was urgently deployed to Miami for a special operation. The United States had received intelligence that the Cuban Navy was going to defect en masse; the larger ships were to sail to South America and the smaller vessels were to attempt to reach Florida. My assignment was to help the smaller vessels reach the United States. When I inquired about the loyalty of the Cuban Air Force, I was told not to worry—they would never fire on a US ship. After five days of slowly cruising in the Florida Straits, while waiting for the coded signal indicating the defection had occurred, I learned that the Cuban Army had taken over all Cuban naval facilities and made massive arrests.

In 1979, I took part in constructive negotiations with a delegation from the Cuban Border Guard. The week-long meeting in Washington, DC, resulted in agreements to cooperate in search-and-rescue and law-enforcement efforts, and to establish direct TELEX communications between Border Guard headquarters in Havana and Coast Guard headquarters in Miami. The Cubans further agreed to permit Coast Guard rescue aircraft to fly across Cuba. The 1980 Boatlift, however, brought an end to such cooperative efforts. My first involvement was as Chief of Search and Rescue for the Coast Guard in Miami, when the refugees began arriving in April 1980, then as Commodore of the squadron of Coast Guard cutters operating in the Florida Straits between Cuba and Florida.

Since the 1980 Cuban Boatlift, no major study of the Exodus has appeared, only scattered articles analyzing specific events in Cuba or sociological surveys of refugees in Florida. Most articles take a theoretical approach to the causes for the events of the spring and summer of 1980. I felt it was important to comprehensively review and draw together as many of the diverse historical, political, diplomatic, domestic, and operational issues involved in the Boatlift as possible, interrelating them in a single work.

Personal interviews provided the greatest insights into what happened and, more important, why it happened. (The 46 individuals interviewed and their roles during the Cuban Boatlift are listed at page 517.) Officials directly involved in decisionmaking at the highest levels were most cooperative, encouraging, and candid in their discussions. Talks with Federal workers who served both at sea and ashore in South Florida during the episode revealed vivid memories of long days and nights of intense activity. Their recall of the events of those hectic days was undiminished by the passage of time. Most called the Cuban Operation the most emotional experience of their careers.

I am especially grateful to the refugees who openly discussed their turbulent experiences during the Cuban Exodus. I acknowledge that in these sessions with the refugees, I received only the views of those Cubans who left the country. The views of those who stayed in Cuba, however, are clearly stated in the pages of *GRANMA*, the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party.

I would like to acknowledge the support and camaraderie of Dr. Fred Kiley and his splendid staff at the National Defense University Press. I sincerely admire their professionalism and appreciate their interest and willing support. A special note of thanks to Ed Seneff, a good friend and a good editor, for whom I have the highest regard. Finally, I thank the US Coast Guard for giving me the opportunity to undertake this project. I sincerely hope that the book has captured faithfully the exceptional accomplishments of the Coast Guard and all

the Federal agencies that reacted so well to a most difficult situation.

The Cuban Boatlift was an event of unprecedented proportions—an episode of immense human drama leading to direct confrontation between two nations that stopped just short of military conflict. It was a difficult period, during which the United States was viewed as unable to gain control over its own border or protect its national interests. Understanding not only what happened but why it happened is of critical importance for the United States. We must consider how to deal with another massive migration by sea—for I have little doubt that this nation will face such an event again sometime in the future.

Chronology of Castro's Cuba

January 1959-March 1980

1959

1-2 January	General Fulgencio Batista, President of Cuba, flees to the Dominican Republic, and Castro's victorious revolutionary troops enter Havana.
16 February	Fidel Castro becomes Cuban Prime Minister.
April	Castro delays general elections in Cuba for at least four years to "solve our problems" and "create conditions for free elections." Visiting the United States, he denies any cause for American concern for communism in Cuba.
17 May	Under a new Agrarian Reform Law, Cuban government expropriates 8.3 million acres of estate and plantation farm land.
17 July	Manuel Urritia resigns as Cuban President, accusing Castro of plotting a communist takeover of Cuba. Castro installs Osvaldo Dorticos as President.

1960

March	French munitions ship blows up in Havana Harbor while off-loading Belgian arms and ammunition. Castro blames the United States for the explosion and the deaths of 70 people.
1 May	At May Day rally, Castro ends free elections in Cuba and announces nationalization of all private schools.

7 May	Cuba joins Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay in establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.
11 May	Cuba's last independent daily newspaper, *Dario de la Marina*, is closed after publishing editorial critical of Castro government.
18 June	Cuba signs trade agreement with the USSR.
29 June	Cuba expropriates Texaco, ESSO, and Shell refineries.
6 July	President Eisenhower halts imports of Cuban sugar.
7 August	Castro expropriates all companies owned by US firms including 36 US-owned sugar mills—estimated value is more than $500 million.
28 September	Cuban government organizes neighborhood Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) to monitor the activities of all Cubans.
19 October	United States embargoes exports to Cuba.
20 December	Castro begins purge of Cuban judicial system.

1961

3 January	United States breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba after the Cuban government orders US Embassy staff reduced to 11 persons.
17 April	US-supported Cuban-exile invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs fails after three days; 1,180 of the 1,500 invasion force are captured and imprisoned.
7 December	Castro declares himself a "Marxist-Leninist until the last day of my life." He says he has been a communist since the beginning of the revolution.

1962

January	Organization of American States (OAS) cancels Cuba's membership.
19 March	Food rationing begins in Cuba.

14 October	Aerial photographs reveal Soviet missiles in Cuba. President Kennedy orders naval and air quarantine of island. Fourteen days later, USSR Secretary General Khrushchev orders missiles removed. United States agrees not to invade Cuba.
23 December	United States ransoms Bay of Pigs prisoners for $56 million in food, medicine, and farm machinery.

1965

10 October	Cuban port of Camarioca is opened to boats of "Cuban Exiles" who wish to return to pick up relatives.
1 December	"Freedom Flights" begin.

1967

9 October	Argentine revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara killed while attempting to foment a Cuban-sponsored revolution in Bolivia.

1968

March	Cuban government confiscates remaining 55,600 small businesses in Cuba, including peddler trade.

1970

26 July	Castro accepts responsibility for failure of the 10-million-ton sugar harvest and offers to resign. He remains in office by popular demand. Cuba becomes more dependent on USSR for economic assistance.

1973

15 February	United States and Cuba sign antihijacking agreement. Both countries are required to return hijackers or bring them to trial.

6 April	"Freedom Flights" are halted after bringing 260,561 Cuban refugees to the United States.

1975

29 July	United States and 15 other nations vote to end Organization of American States sanctions against Cuba.
12 October	Cuba sends troops to fight in Angola.

1976

15 February	National referendum approves new Cuban constitution guaranteeing freedoms of expression, religion, and association (if they do not conflict with the government and the principles of the revolution). The Constitution recognizes the Communist Party and declares Cuba a socialist state.
3 December	Castro takes office as President of the Council of State; his brother Raul becomes Vice President.

1977

18 March	United States authorizes travel to Cuba.
1 September	United States and Cuba exchange diplomats and open Interests Sections in Havana and Washington.

1978	Cuba enacts the *de peligrosidad* (potentially dangerous) law empowering the Cuban government to arrest and imprison anyone for up to four years as a potential threat to society.
November	Cuba sends 17,000 troops to support the leftist government in Ethiopia.
20 November	Cuban government begins releasing political prisoners for emigration to the United States. Castro establishes a dialogue with the Cuban-American "Committee of 75."

1979

1 July	First airline flights since 1961 resume between Cuba and the United States. More than 100,000 exiles return to visit Cuba in 1979.
30 August	Presence of Soviet ground combat troops in Cuba disclosed. President Carter demands their removal.
1 October	Surveillance of Cuba increases, military exercises at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base are scheduled, and a new military command for the Caribbean is established at Key West.
11 October	At the United Nations in New York, Castro criticizes US economic embargo and its presence at Guantanamo Bay.
3 November	Political prisoner release program ends after 3,900 prisoners are released.

1980

January	Cubans forcefully hijack three vessels to reach the United States—the Cuban government dredge *FIFTH OF DECEMBER*, the Liberian freighter *LISSETTE*, and the Cuban fishing boat *LUCERO*—and force the crews to sail to the United States where the hijackers request asylum.
31 January	Cuban Analytic Center of the Central Intelligence Agency forecasts the possibility of another large-scale Cuban emigration.
21 February	State Department learns about discussions within Cuban government concerning reopening the Port of Camarioca.
8 March	Castro, in a speech to the Third Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women, warns that if the hijackings do not stop, Cuba may be forced to open another "Camarioca."

Chronology of the Mariel Boatlift

April-November 1980

1980

1 April	Struck by ricocheting bullet, Cuban guard dies in incident at Peruvian Embassy in Havana, when six Cubans crash bus through gates to seek asylum. US Refugee Act of 1980 becomes effective.
3 April	Federal interagency group addresses possibility of another Camarioca-style boatlift.
4 April	Cuban guards removed from Peruvian Embassy and gates left open. Havana Radio broadcasts within Cuba that the Peruvian Embassy is open.
6 April	Cuban government returns guards to Peruvian Embassy after 10,856 Cubans crowd onto the grounds in 38 hours, requesting asylum. Barricades are erected to seal off streets leading to Embassy.
9 April	Andean Pact Foreign Ministers, in emergency session in Peru, address refugee problem and appeal to other countries for assistance in resettling refugees.
14 April	President Carter announces United States will accept up to 3,500 Cubans from Peruvian Embassy under the 1980 Refugee Act. United States offers $4,250,000 to assist refugees.
16 April	Refugee evacuation flights to San Jose, Costa Rica, begin at invitation of Costa Rica's President, Rodrigo Carazo. Cuban government halts flights after two days.

19 April — One million Cubans parade in "March of the Fighting People" past Peruvian Embassy, demonstrating support for Castro's regime. Costa Rican government recalls its General Consul from Havana. Napolean Vilaboa of the "Committee of 75" organizes flotilla of 42 boats and sails from Miami to bring back refugees.

21 April — Fishing boats *DOS HERMANOS* and *BLANCHE III* arrive in Key West with 48 Cuban refugees.

23 April — National Security Council staff begins meetings with agencies to respond to refugee arrivals. US State Department warns boaters that bringing illegal aliens into United States is a felony, punishable by heavy penalties. Warnings are transmitted by Coast Guard as Urgent Marine Information Broadcasts in English and Spanish.

24 April — US Coast Guard commences surveillance flights over waters between Mariel and Key West and deploys rescue cutters to the area.

25 April — Some 300 to 400 boats reach Mariel Harbor and wait to pick up refugees.

26 April — Vice President Mondale holds interagency meeting at White House to address Cuban refugee situation.
State Department requests the support of Cuban-American community leaders in stopping the uncontrolled boatlift at a meeting in Washington.

27 April — Fierce storm rips through Straits of Florida and wreaks havoc with flotilla of boats going to Mariel for refugees. US Coast Guard Cutter *DALLAS* arrives on scene and takes command of at-sea operations. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated to coordinate on-scene Federal response to the Cuban refugee emergency.

28 April	US Customs Service begins seizing returning boats for bringing in illegal aliens. FEMA suspends seizures after two days as mood on waterfront of Key West becomes tense.
2 May	Influx of Cuban refugees becomes more of a domestic crisis than a diplomatic problem. Task of coordinating White House response to situation transferred from National Security Adviser to President's Assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs. In Havana, former political prisoners and their families, gathered outside US Interests Section, are attacked by mob of 300 club-wielding Cuban men brought to the area in government buses.
3 May	The first of four processing centers and resettlement camps opens at Eglin Air Force Base in northwestern Florida for arriving refugees.
5 May	Navy Amphibious Assault Ship USS *SAIPAN* and Tank Landing Ship USS *BOULDER* arrive on scene to assist the six Coast Guard cutters with refugee relief and rescue work. Navy P-3 aircraft from Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville augment Coast Guard surveillance flights.
6 May	President declares an emergency for State of Florida, authorizes $10 million in refugee emergency funds. President's emergency declaration, under Public Law 93-288, authorizes funds for FEMA to respond to refugee crisis.
8 May	Representatives of 22 nations and 7 international organizations meet at conference in San Jose, Costa Rica, to address Cuban refugee situation.
11 May	Two Cuban jet aircraft attack and sink Royal Bahamian Defense Force patrol boat 400 miles east of Mariel.

14 May — President Carter announces Five-Point Program to end Boatlift, including plans for alternate transportation for refugees and a resolve to punish boaters who violate the order. Coast Guard begins transmitting Urgent Marine Information Broadcasts advising all US boats in Mariel and enroute to Cuba to return to the United States. Broadcasts report that US Government will make other arrangements to safely transport refugees from Mariel.

16 May — Coast Guard establishes barrier at sea to prevent boats from going to Cuba. United States formally protests Cuba's actions in sending overloaded vessels to sea from Port of Mariel to the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization of the United Nations.

17 May — The 35-foot pleasure craft *OLO YUMI*, overloaded with 52 refugees, sinks north of Mariel, killing 14. Coast Guard Cutter *COURAGEOUS* and its helicopter rescue 38.

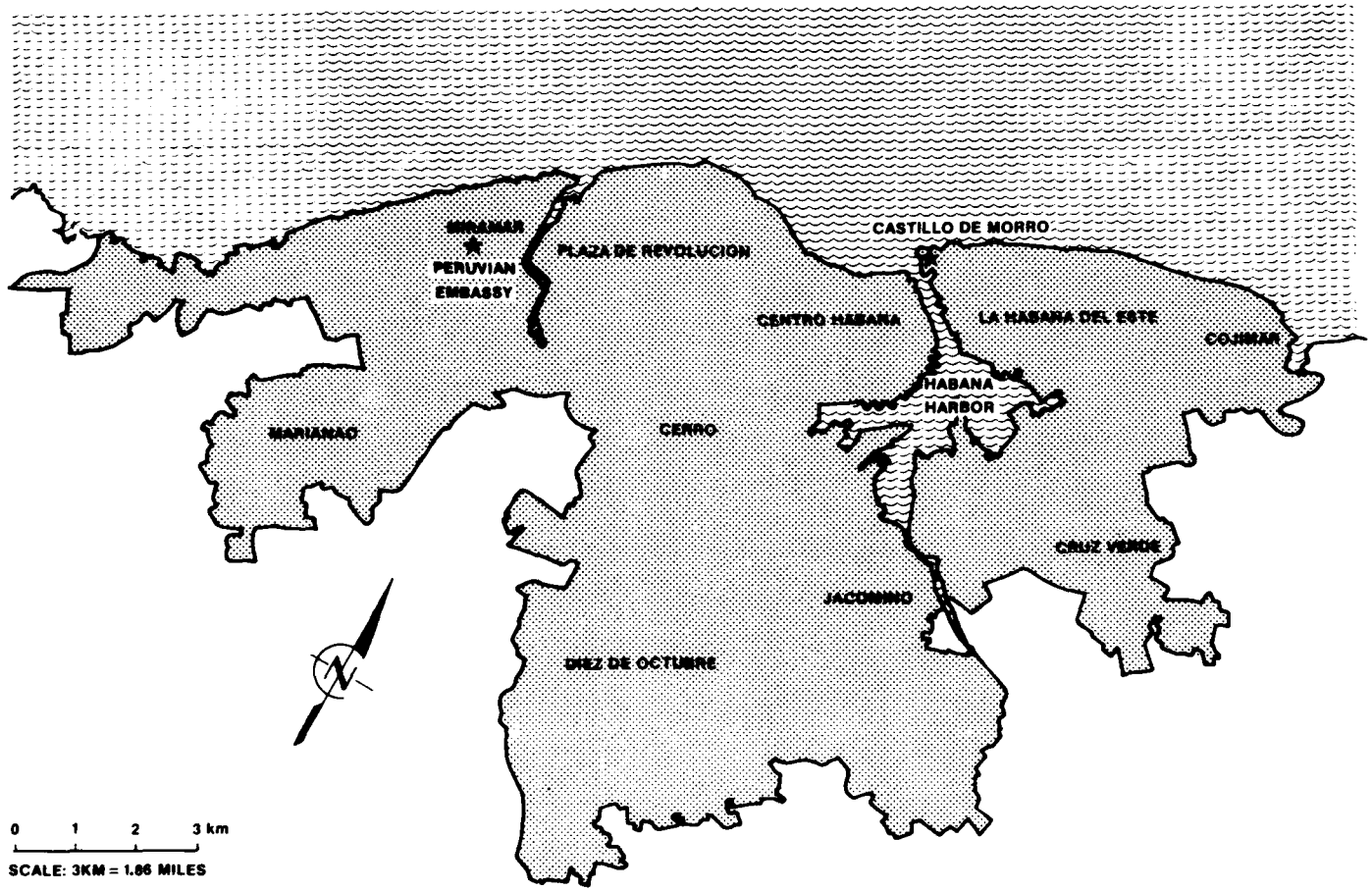
20 May — White House announces arriving Cubans will not be treated as refugees, under Refugee Act of 1980, but rather as applicants for asylum. Coast Guard Aviation Detachment Key West established at NAS Key West.

27 May — Coast Guard Auxiliary initiates "Operation Keyring" to assist regular Coast Guard Forces with rescue work in Florida Keys during the Cuban influx.

2 June — President Carter approves involuntary call-up of 900 Coast Guard Reservists to assist during Cuban refugee relief operations.

3 June — Panamanian Motor Vessel *RED DIAMOND* arrives in Key West with 731 refugees on board. United States arrests master and Panama cancels vessel's registration. Number of Cuban arrivals exceeds 100,000.

4 June	Congressional hearings address problem of criminals and undesirables arriving in Boatlift.
7 June	White House denounces Cuba's exportation of "hardened criminals from Cuban jails," calling it "cynical, inhuman, and a serious violation of international law."
10 June	Navy ships depart Cuban Operations as flow of refugees decreases.
20 June	"Cuban-Haitian Entrant" status established for recently arrived Cubans and Haitians.
15 July	Cuban-Haitian Task Force established, under US State Department's Office of Refugee Affairs, as lead agency for refugee resettlement. FEMA remains involved in funding and coordinating role.
14 September	Four Navy 172-foot ocean minesweepers and five high speed 65-foot Navy patrol boats join Coast Guard Cutters in preventing boats from reaching Cuba to pick up refugees.
25 September	Cuba ends 159-day Boatlift—orders all boats out of Mariel.
19 November	First of 600 Cuban refugees, stranded in Mariel when Boatlift ended, begin arriving by air in Miami.



City of Havana

1

An Open Gate

In view of the regrettable death of a (Cuban) guard at the Peruvian Embassy and the Peruvian Government's tolerant attitude toward such criminals, the Government of Cuba has decided to withdraw the guards from the Peruvian diplomatic mission. From now on, the embassy's officials will be solely responsible for what occurs in their embassy. We cannot give protection to embassies that do not cooperate with that protection.

Statement by the Revolutionary Government in GRANMA, *Havana, 4 April 1980*

THE MORNING SUN WAS SHINING BRIGHTLY as three diesel bulldozers made their way along the broad *Avienda Quinta* in the once fashionable *Mirimar* section of Havana. Men and women on their way to work stopped to watch the heavy machines rumble past the carefully trimmed and shaped trees that divided the two lanes of the avenue.[1]

It was 8 a.m. on 4 April 1980. The day also was Good Friday, a once solemn religious holiday for the people of Cuba, now just another day for the workers of this communist country. The bulldozers ground to a halt in front of the gates of the Peruvian Embassy. The embassy guards shouldered their machine guns and left their concrete guard posts. The recently reenforced

guard detachment, soldiers of the Cuban Interior Ministry, gathered around the bulldozers to talk with the construction workers. As they conversed, the soldiers and workers gestured toward the guard posts and the damaged iron gates, grim reminders of a recent incident.

Political Asylum

Three days earlier, six Cubans seeking asylum had commandeered a city bus and driven to the Peruvian Embassy. When the bus headed for the gates and accelerated, the Cuban guards opened fire. Two people on the bus were wounded as the vehicle passed through the fusillade, crashed into the gates, and reached sanctuary on the grounds of the Embassy. As the dust settled, 27-year-old Pedro Ortiz Cabrerra, a Ministry guard, was found on the ground, mortally wounded by a ricocheting bullet.[2]

Infuriated by the gate crashing, the Cuban government denounced the incident in a scathing statement on the front page of its official newspaper *GRANMA*:

> The Revolutionary Government of Cuba which has always maintained a dignified attitude in the face of attacks from outside and imperialist threats and has been considerate and respectful in its behavior toward Latin American countries—in spite of the traitorous, abetting and cowardly attitude adopted by many of those governments in the past—is not willing to stand for the violation of its sovereignty and its laws, whatever the cost. Therefore it categorically declares that no person who enters a foreign embassy by force will be granted a safeconduct to leave the country.[3]

The incident brought to a head the festering controversy over the right of Cubans to seek and receive political asylum. At issue was the interpretation of the 1928 and 1932 asylum treaties of the Latin American countries. The treaties provided that political asylum be

granted to those who felt their lives were in danger or feared arrest by police because of their political activities. The treaties, to which Cuba was a signatory, specifically excluded from asylum members of the armed forces and common criminals. Traditionally, the Latin American countries had broadly accepted the premise that persons feeling themselves threatened could seek refuge in a foreign embassy.[4] Castro, to the contrary, adopted the position that political asylum was merely a mechanism to protect criminals and counter-revolutionaries.

Earlier in the year, when 12 people seeking asylum had successfully rammed through the gates of the Peruvian Embassy, a strange chain of diplomatic events began. Acting on his own initiative, the Peruvian Ambassador, Edgardo de Habich, refused the request for asylum, dispatching the 12 men, women, and children back to their homes. He also sent a letter of apology to the Cuban Foreign Ministry. The Cuban government was so pleased with the actions of the Peruvian Ambassador that Castro had the letter published on the front page of *GRANMA*.[5] Seeing the potential to advance Cuba's position against political asylum, Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca called a meeting of representatives of all of the Latin American embassies. At the meeting, he praised the actions of Ambassador Habich and suggested that other embassies follow Peru's example. He denounced those who crashed their way through embassy gates as ineligible for political asylum.

Latin American diplomats were appalled at the suggestion that any government deny requests for political asylum; granting such asylum was a respected tradition throughout Latin America. Each diplomat expressed disappointment with the actions of the Peruvian Ambassador and refused to support the suggestion of Foreign Minister Malmierca. The last to speak was Ambassador Habich, who reported the following Peruvian government position: His own action in not granting political asylum had been "de-authorized" by the Peruvian Foreign Ministry, which had ordered him to

bring the 12 people back to the sanctuary of the Peruvian Embassy. Ambassador Habich then reported that he already had carried out these orders, personally going to the homes of the 12 and transporting them back to the Embassy in his own station wagon. Finally, he announced his own recall as Peru's Ambassador to Cuba. The Cuban Foreign Minister's meeting had been a dismal failure and, as a result, relations between Cuba and the other Latin American countries, particularly Peru and Venezuela, concerning the issue of asylum became even more strained.[6]

Cuban Guards Removed

When the guards and workers finished their discussions in front of the Peruvian Embassy, the bulldozer drivers went to work, reducing the cement guard posts to rubble. The workers next removed the large boulders placed to prevent vehicles from approaching the gates. When the work was completed, the bulldozers rumbled back down *Avienda Quinta* and the guards marched off unceremoniously, leaving the gates to the Peruvian Embassy open and unguarded.[7]

The people who had stopped on the street to watch the demolition work were confused by what they had just seen. The once heavily guarded gates of the Peruvian Embassy now were wide open. They could see no indication of soldiers or police anywhere in the neighborhood. Few had heard the Radio Havana broadcast, timed to coincide with the removal of the guards, that announced, "In the face of the painful death of the guard at the Peruvian Embassy and the tolerant attitude of the Peruvian Government toward criminals, the revolutionary Cuban government has decided to withdraw the guards from the embassy."[8]

Inside the Embassy, the six members of the Peruvian diplomatic legation, headed by Charge' d'Affaires Ernesto Pinto Bazerto, were both puzzled and alarmed by the Cuban Government's actions, the Havana Radio

broadcast, and a Cuban Government message which said, "From now on, the embassy's officials will be solely responsible for what occurs in their embassy. We cannot give protection to embassies that do not cooperate with that protection."[9]

In addition to concerns for the safety of his own diplomatic mission, Pinto worried about what would happen to the 25 Cubans, granted political asylum at various times throughout the year, now living in the Embassy. While a few had talked or tricked their way past the guards, most had used buses or trucks to batter their way through the gates.

The guards had not been gone long before the first group of young men seeking asylum arrived. After furtively checking for soldiers, they crossed *Avienda Quinta* and hastily climbed over the Embassy fence. Glancing over their shoulders, they hurried across the broad lawn toward the two-story white marble buildings of the Embassy. Stopped and searched by cautious Peruvian security guards, alerted for trouble, the young men were questioned. Their names and documents were taken, and they were released to wander in the gardens.

More people passed cautiously through the Embassy gates, reluctant to believe no guards or soldiers would stop them. Once inside the compound, they freely roamed about the carefully maintained lawns and terraces. Some sat in the shade of the huge mango trees, talking quietly. Many of the early arrivals were young men eager to leave the difficult conditions in revolutionary Cuba. Disillusioned by the lack of personal freedom, unable to obtain good jobs, and being free of family responsibilities, they were not reluctant to abandon their national ties in the hopes of finding freedom and opportunity in other countries. Many of the young men were of draft age and did not want to join the 50,000 Cuban soldiers and technicians serving in Angola and Ethiopia.[10] Soon families with small children, and young married couples arrived at the Embassy. The grounds took on the appearance of a spring outing. The people enjoyed the peacefulness of the gardens,

AP/Wide World Photos

Cubans who sought refuge at the Peruvian Embassy on 20 April 1980 squeeze together in attempts to sleep on the crowded grounds.

admiring the lovely lawns, ornate shrubs, and flowering poinciana trees.

The tranquil setting, however, was soon to change.

Trickle Becomes A Torrent

Before midnight, 300 people had decided to enter the Peruvian Embassy in an attempt to leave Cuba; by 3 a.m., the number had increased to 500. As word spread through Havana that the Peruvian Embassy was accepting refugees, the rate of new arrivals increased. By dawn, people were scattered throughout the grounds, sleeping on benches and the lawns, and between flower beds, or sitting on the grass in small groups, talking in hushed tones. The flow of Cubans grew throughout the night—young and old, men and women, individuals and groups.[11] The Cuban press reported the rush of people to the Peruvian Embassy:

> As was to be expected, a few hours after Cuban guards were withdrawn, hundreds, in their great majority criminals, lumpen, and antisocial elements, loafers and parasites, had gathered on the grounds of the Peruvian embassy.... Some of them have unfortunately taken with them relatives, including children.[12]

Cuban police on *Avienda Quinta* kept the morning traffic moving but made no effort to interfere with the hundreds of people streaming into the Peruvian Embassy grounds. During the night of 4 April, Fidel Castro rode past the Embassy twice to observe personally the defection of his citizens. In the morning, he called for a meeting with Peru's Charge' Pinto. What Castro apparently had intended as an embarrassment for Peru and an "object lesson" for other Latin American embassies had become an embarrassment for Cuba. Clearly, he had expected no more than a few dozen "malcontents" to enter the Embassy.[13]

On 5 April, Mr. Pinto was recalled to Lima, Peru, to confer with his government. With him when he left, Pinto carried a personal message from Cuban President Fidel Castro to Peru's President Francisco Moreles Bermudez. Because of the situation, Cuba's ambassador to Peru, Luis Karakadze, already had been recalled to Havana on Friday, 4 April 1980.[14]

Throughout Holy Saturday morning, hundreds of people flocked to the *Miramar* District, some seeing for themselves what was happening at the Peruvian Embassy, others planning to defect. Edmundo Navarro Cremati, a 37-year-old interpreter, and his family were curious and initially went to watch:

> I said to my wife, 'Let's go to the embassy to see what is happening.' I had no intention of going (into the Embassy), but then we were standing in front of the fence near the gate watching people crowd in and I felt my heart in my throat. I was looking at a man inside. He looked at me. I was saying to him with an expression, 'So what?'

When the man inside motioned to Navarro's 10-year-old son Arodi, the boy went in and Navarro and his wife followed.[15] In a matter of seconds, the Navarros had decided to abandon their home and all their belongings and leave their families and friends.

This story, repeated over and over, indicated the desperation of the Cuban people to leave communist Cuba in search of social and economic freedom.

About 2 p.m. Saturday, three senior officials of the Cuban government rode in a van down *Avienda Quinta* to the Peruvian Embassy and, using loud speakers, spoke to the people inside. The officials said that everyone, except those persons who originally had entered the Embassy by force, were free to leave Cuba as ordinary citizens if other countries would issue them visas. They also promised that the people could move freely between the Embassy and their homes. Inside the compound the people replied to the announcements with shouts of "Liberty! Liberty!" They did not believe they would be allowed to return to the Embassy once they left the grounds.[16]

The promises blared over the loudspeaker indicated a major change in the position of the Cuban government toward emigration, particularly to the United States. Until the Peruvian Embassy incident, only people included in ongoing negotiations had been authorized to leave Cuba for the United States in recent years. The most recent agreement allowed approximately 3,600 political prisoners, previously granted amnesty by Fidel Castro, and parents and children of Cuban emigres to leave Cuba for the United States in a parolee status.[17]

As the number of people crowding into the Peruvian compound increased to more than 1,000 Saturday, they asked reporters covering the situation not only to express their appreciation to President Morales of Peru for his humanitarian action in granting them asylum, but also to convey their pleas for food, water, and medicine for the children. What had begun as a trickle of refugees quickly had become a torrent. As thousands more poured through the gates and over the fences, Peru's Foreign Minister Arturo Garcia y Garcia accused Cuba of failing to meet its international responsibilities of providing security for embassies. He said that the Government of Cuba, in removing the guards at the Peruvian Embassy, had exposed the legation to a "mob whose motivations and real intentions are not known."[18]

Seventeen-year-old Mario Lopez, who lived only a few blocks from the Peruvian Embassy, sensed the

excitement. He and his friends were among the first youths to enter the grounds. Because he had not participated fully in revolutionary government youth activities, he knew his educational opportunities and future in Cuba were uncertain. He saw the open Embassy gate as an opportunity. About 2 a.m. Saturday, Mario went back to his home. He excitedly told his mother, "Momma, Momma, come with me, I can get you into the Embassy." She was hesitant at first, but then decided to see what was happening. She saw many of her neighbors and friends, who urged her to come inside. Mario finally told his mother he was going inside the compound with or without his family, and would stay "no matter what happened." She went back to her apartment and convinced her husband that this was the opportunity for the family to leave Cuba.[19]

Mario's mother and father decided to go to the Embassy with their other two children Saturday night. So they wouldn't arouse the suspicions of the representative of the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) responsible for their group of homes, they left their apartment separately after dark. They didn't tell their children their intentions until they were ready to leave. About 10 p.m., Mrs. Lopez and Mario's 12-year-old brother left the apartment, taking little with them so they wouldn't attract attention. As usual, the woman from the CDR was at the front of the building, and wanted to know if they were going for a walk.

Mrs. Lopez jokingly replied, "No, we are going to the Embassy!" They both laughed, and Mrs. Lopez left. Mr. Lopez left later, picking up their 15-year-old daughter at a neighborhood party. By arrangement, they all met a short distance from the Peruvian Embassy. When they saw uniformed police directing traffic near the gates, they were afraid they would be stopped. Their 12-year-old son guided them to the rear of the grounds. Reaching the fence in the dark, they helped their two children over and then climbed the fence themselves. They abandoned their jobs, homes, and belongings for the chance to leave Cuba.

2

Asylum

Our heart goes out to the almost 10,000 freedom-loving Cubans who entered a temporarily opened gate at the Peruvian Embassy just within this week.
President Jimmy Carter
Washington, DC, 9 April 1980

BY SATURDAY NIGHT, THE PERUVIAN EMBASSY GROUNDS WERE AWASH in a sea of humanity. The once beautiful lawns and shrubs had been trampled flat and hundreds of small under-ripe mangoes once hanging from trees had been eaten. Soon all the fruit from the papaya trees was gone, and the people began to eat the leaves. By early Easter Day, more than 7,500 persons had crowded onto the Embassy grounds. Inside the chain-link fence, the people chanted, "Peru! Peru!" while hundreds of Castro supporters outside replied, "Fidel! Fidel!" and shouted "*Gusanos*!" ("Worms").[1]

The foreign press was reporting widely the flight of thousands of Cubans desperate to escape revolutionary Cuba. It was rapidly becoming an international embarrassment to Cuba and a personal affront to Fidel Castro, who had based his reputation as a Third World leader on the achievements of his model society. "When the Cuban guards were withdrawn, the Peruvian diplomats demonstrated they were incapable of controlling the ensuing situation," the Cuban government said. "This is a demonstration of the bitter fruits of the policy of protecting common criminals."[2]

On Sunday morning, Castro ordered the movement of people to the compound halted, streets to the Embassy closed, and barricades erected to seal off the area. During the 38 hours the guards were absent, 10,865 men, women, and children had crowded onto the Embassy grounds, an area slightly larger than a football field.[3] Cubans still tried to reach the safety of the Peruvian Embassy even after the area was sealed off. The driver of a truck bringing water to the compound and the driver of an ambulance sent to pick up an injured person both abandoned their vehicles and joined the other refugees.

Gates Closed

"Pepe," a taxi driver hired to take a group of reporters to the Embassy, criticized and belittled the people seeking asylum, calling them "parasites" and "scum." But when the reporters finished their interviews and tried to find the taxi, both Pepe and the vehicle were gone. The reporters assumed another fare had hired him, but when they returned to the compound the next day, they saw Pepe among the refugees inside the Embassy fence. Once he had talked with the people seeking asylum, he joined them.[4]

A family that made a 22-hour train journey from Oriente Province was not as fortunate. When they arrived in Havana at 10 a.m., they borrowed a car to drive to the Peruvian Embassy. Several blocks from the compound they were stopped and taken to the police station, where the husband, a political prisoner from 1965 to 1975, was detained. When his wife inquired about him, the police told her that 4,000 prisoners were on their way to the *Combinado del Este* prison by train and he probably was among them.[5]

A Cuban farmer and his family travelling from the countryside were arrested when they attempted to reach the Embassy. At the police station, an angry mob beat them with electric cables. Police also stopped a 36-year-old woman and her family as they approached the Embassy. They were similarly abused by an angry mob

at the police station. Even her 9- and 10-year-old children were beaten with electric cables, while the police did nothing to restrain the mob. The police released the woman, but kept her identity card, which meant she would lose her job.[6]

Another man, unable to get to the Embassy with his family before the guards sealed off the area, stole a taxi and tried to crash through the barricades. Police stopped the vehicle with a burst of gunfire; the wife and a young girl were killed. The wounded driver was dragged from the car and beaten with rifle butts. The gunfire also wounded three people inside the compound.[7]

After the Peruvian Embassy had been closed, a junior member of a foreign diplomatic mission watched as 100 people gathered with small suitcases and bundles on the street corner across from his home in the Miramar section of Havana. The Cuban guard assigned to the house told the diplomat the people wanted to know if the house were an embassy—they wanted to ask for asylum. The guard explained that when he told them it was a private home, the people still waited. As the diplomat watched, a mob appeared and beat the waiting people with clubs, dispersing them. Soon members of the local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) patrolled the corner.[8]

In the Peruvian Compound

The Cuban government-controlled Radio Havana called the people at the Peruvian Embassy "criminals," "bums," "anti-socials," and "lumpen."* "Even though in our country homosexuals are not persecuted and harrassed," the official newspaper *GRANMA* said, "there are quite a few of them on the Peruvian Embassy grounds, aside from all those involved in

*Lumpen is a word of German origin meaning a member of the crude and uneducated lowest class of society. It is used here, and by Marxists, to describe non-producing parasites of the state.

AP Wide World Photos

Conditions worsen for Cuban refugees crowded into the Peruvian Embassy grounds in April 1980.

gambling and drugs who have no easy outlet for their vices here." Diplomatic sources familiar with the situation, however, disagreed with these characterizations, commenting that the refugees actually represented a spectrum of Cuban society, including doctors, artists, and journalists, as well as many workers and farmers.[9]

Living under a communist form of government for the past two decades obviously had influenced the Cubans in the compound. One of their first actions was to form a central commission to coordinate the communal lives of the people at the Embassy. The central commission found that of the 7,020 people they surveyed, 3,000 were men, 1,320 were women, and 2,700 were children; 40 children were younger than 45 days old and 50 persons were more than 60. Also included in the survey were 150 former political prisoners.[10]

This unofficial commission, which provided a sense of order in the overcrowded compound, was made up of 21 men and 6 women, including a third-year law student, a surgeon, a Seventh Day Adventist, a furloughed jail inmate, and a convicted car thief. The commission distributed what little food and water was available and kept order among the refugees. Dr. Aristides Martinez, a pediatric surgeon who served as a member of the commission, said that commissioners calmed the refugees, stopping fights before they could start by warning, "That's what the government wants—to make you look like animals." The refugees suspected that the Cuban government had infiltrated *provocadores* into their midst to make trouble. The commission also collected data for visas and exit permits.[11]

Sensitive to the international interest generated by the sight of the refugees at the Peruvian Embassy, the Cuban government provided water and had four hotels supply small box lunches of chicken, rice, potatoes, and beans. The boxes were thrown over the fence to the exhausted asylum seekers. Refugee Ivan Rodriquez said that the government brought television cameras with the food to show how desperate the people were.[12] The government set up a few portable toilets outside the

Embassy, but the people were afraid to leave the sanctuary of the Embassy grounds to use them.

Sanitary conditions became horrible in the hot and rainy weather, and the stench of urine and excrement pervaded the compound. The muddy ground and the press of humanity made sleep nearly impossible; bodies overlapped when people lay down. The unsanitary conditions and lack of water caused a fear of disease as hundreds of small children were forced to lie in their own waste. Men sleeping in trees and on the tile roofs of the Embassy buildings interlocked their arms to keep from falling. Despite hunger, heat exhaustion, and diarrhea, the people remained strong in their resolve to leave Cuba. Dr. Martinez, who was in the compound for eight days, reported the refugees displayed amazing discipline: "They were ready to die to leave the country. Women with sick children preferred to keep them at the Embassy rather than have the the government doctors treat them outside (the compound)."[13]

The two-story Embassy mansion sheltered many of the women and young children. A baby boy born in the mansion on Easter Day was named "Peru." Pro-government supporters gathered outside the fence to taunt the people, chanting "Scum! Scum! Up with the workers! Down with the criminals, let them go to Peru!" They threw sticks and stones at the defenseless refugees, who were gathered so tightly that they could not avoid being hit. Nine refugees were injured, one was reportedly struck by a bullet.[14]

Abandoning their buildings on Sunday, Peruvian diplomats moved to the Mexican Embassy to continue coping with the crisis. Peruvian Foreign Minister Arturo Garcia y Garcia reported in an official communique from Lima that people in the compound were suffering from dehydration, sun stroke, and gastroenteritis. "Peru cannot feed the refugees at the Embassy because Cuban food is purchased with ration cards," he said, adding that Peru alone could not accept all the refugees. He asked for help from the other Andean Pact countries of Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia.[15]

Tuesday night, 8 April 1980, a Peruvian Foreign Ministry delegation, headed by senior diplomat Armando Lecaros de Cassio, arrived at Jose Marti Airport to manage the crisis in Havana. A member of the delegation, Jorge Voto Bernal, said he had "never seen a case in the international community such as the one created by the Cuban Government." Charge' Lecaros talked to the people and asked them to remain calm and patient. He later reported that, despite many injuries and unpleasant conditions, the atmosphere at the compound was calm; people were peaceful and sang to pass the time away.[16]

Safe-Conduct Passes

President Castro visited the Peruvian Embassy on Monday, 7 April, and told the people they would be permitted to leave Cuba. Despite their displeasure with the Cuban government, the refugees remained silent during his brief stay, demonstrating the awe and admiration they felt for the charismatic revolutionary leader. After Castro's visit, government officials, in an attempt to defuse the situation, offered green "safe-conduct" passes to the refugees so they could leave the Embassy and return to their homes. The officials promised the people would be told when the time had come for them to leave the country. In spite of the terrible conditions at the Embassy, only 1,730 of the 10,865 people accepted the passes. The next day, another 1,000 accepted the green cards and left the compound. The rest of the refugees were afraid they would not be allowed to reenter the Embassy grounds once they had left. They also feared violence from the pro-Castro "bully boys" who waited just outside the fence.[17]

Jose and Dora Martinez and five of their seven children were among the people who had crowded into the Embassy when the guards were removed. Despite the unbearable conditions, they were determined to stay. When their 10-year-old son Carlos came down with a

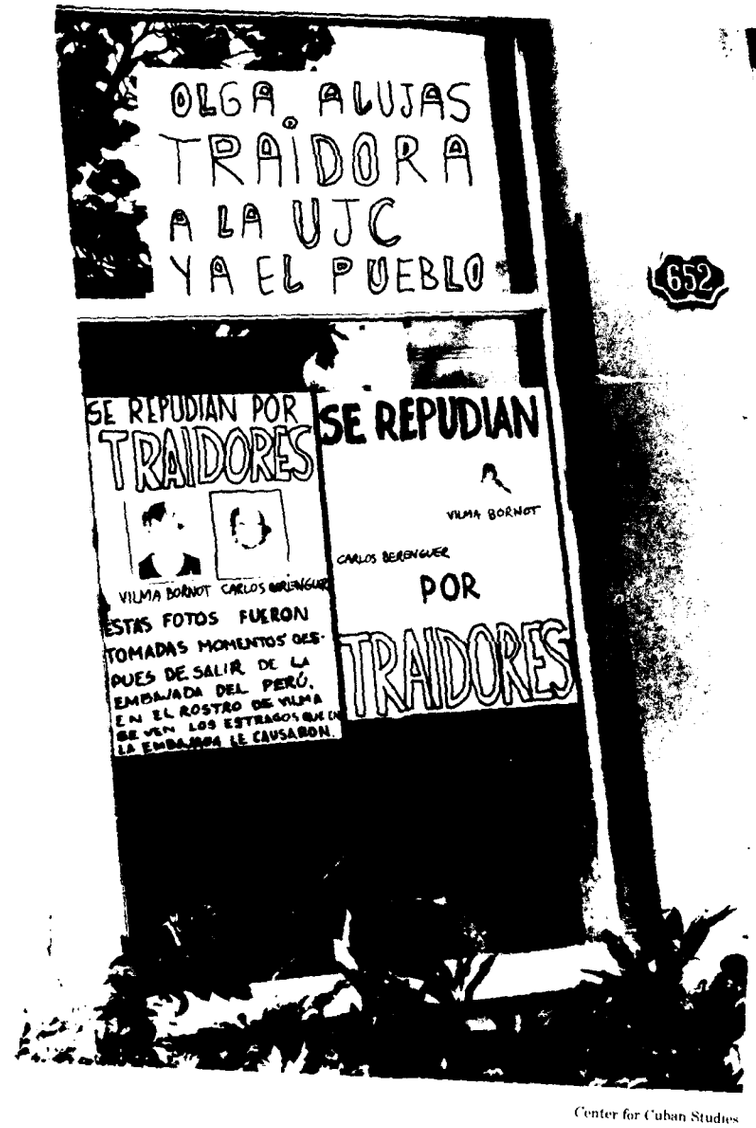
fever and stomach cramps, however, they were forced to return to their two-story home in Miramar with safe-conduct passes. When they got home, their neighbors called them "worms" and "scum," spattering the windows of their house with eggs. Green-uniformed police warned their friends and visitors away from the house. Locking themselves in, the Martinezes kept their shutters closed. Stick-wielding neighbors threatened their 20-year-old son when he tried to go outside. Friends warned them, "If you go outside, they will burn you."

Organized by local CDRs, neighbors banged metal pots in front of the Martinez house at night. Without money and afraid to leave the house, they lived on mangos from a backyard tree. A sign, "Lumpen live in this house," was decorated with worms and dollar signs and placed in front of their house. Their phone number was printed on the sign and throughout the night they received obscene phone calls. Dora Martinez assumed the government was provoking them into reacting, so they could be arrested.[18]

When Frank Gallardo and his family returned to their home with safe-conduct passes, they could not believe the actions of their neighbors: "They told our children to leave us—that they were the children of the country. We lived for 20 years in the same house. Our neighbors did it out of fear."[19]

Cuban Position

Despite the obvious crisis, the Castro government continued to defend its position against granting political asylum to Cubans who forced their way into embassies, blaming Peru and Venezuela for causing the current situation. A front-page editorial in *GRANMA* on the day of Castro's visit to the Embassy charged that, by granting asylum to "delinquents," Peru, with thousands of people in its Embassy, and Venezuela, with 15 people in its Embassy, were encouraging "criminal elements" and jeopardizing the security of all embassies. *GRANMA*



Center for Cuban Studies

Houses left by Cubans who sought refuge in the Peruvian Embassy were spattered with eggs and painted with slogans condemning them. Signs repudiating the owners and declaring them traitors were posted in the windows of this house.

also reported a plot to take over the US Interests Section in Havana. Wayne Smith, in charge of the section,* said he knew nothing of the plot, though he had heard rumors of possible demonstrations by people frustrated by the long wait for visas.[20]

The situation at the Peruvian Embassy heightened tensions among the Latin American countries and portended serious international implications for Fidel Castro's government. Peru, which had supported Cuba in its unsuccessful bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council, indicated it would consider "an eventual break" of relations with Cuba. Venezuela, one of the most influential countries in Latin America, reiterated its support for the right to seek asylum and said it awaited "evidence on the part of Cuba that it knows how to appraise its relations with our country." Both Peru and Venezuela, along with the other Andean Pact countries of Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia, had led Latin American efforts to end the American economic boycott of Cuba.[21]

Appeals for Assistance

Overwhelmed by the number of refugees on its Embassy grounds, the Peruvian government appealed for help to the entire diplomatic community in Havana, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the International Red Cross, and called an emergency meeting of Andean Pact countries. The United States indicated its willingness to accept "some" of the refugees,

*On 3 June 1977, Cuba and the United States agreed to open Interests Sections in each others' capitals on 1 September 1977. The agreement specified that Cuban and US officials operate the sections in portions of the closed embassies in Washington and Havana. The embassies, however, were to continue flying the flags of Czechoslovakia and Switzerland, the two countries representing Cuba and the United States since 1961. The Carter administration had negotiated opening the Interests Sections as a step toward normalization of relations between the two countries.

provided they went to Peru first. Peru, with a per capita income of $800 (the same as Cuba's), was concerned about the impact of refugees on its fragile economy. Peruvian diplomats sought commitments to accept refugees from the other nations.[22]

The thousands of people packed onto the Peruvian Embassy grounds, suffering from exposure to the elements and lacking food and water, presented a dramatic spectacle to the world—a graphic demonstration of the failures of a communist society. Political organizations representing a wide range of leftist opinion, with the exception of the Peruvian Communist Party, condemned Cuba's handling of the incident and questioned domestic conditions that could cause such a defection. "This is a terrible blow to the prestige of the Cuban revolution," stated a Panamanian Marxist. "These are people who find themselves frustrated by a system that they believed would bring them true socialism but has failed to do so." Senior UN Diplomat Luis Varela Quiros said, "The theoreticians will have to change their model of the Latin American revolution." The Italian communist daily newspaper, *UNITA*, also asked if Cuban socialism should review the need for changes.[23]

Using the Cuban press and Radio Havana broadcasts, the Castro government repeatedly condemned the people who sought asylum at the Peruvian Embassy as enemies of the State and traitors to the Cuban revolution, ridiculing them and calling them criminals, deviates, and parasites. Castro astutely manipulated the situation to incite the wrath of the Cuban population. He called for increased vigilance to guard against traitors in Cuban society. Portraying the refugees as objects of scorn, he used them to solidify the loyalty and support of the Cuban people for the regime.

3

International Relief

As everybody knows, it is in the United States, their natural habitat, that the great majority of the common criminals, lumpen, and other anti-social elements, for whom there is no place in our land of revolution, want to live.

"Calling a Spade A Spade"
GRANMA, *7 May 1980*

THE UNITED STATES INITIALLY TOOK A STRONG STAND that the resettlement of refugees at the Peruvian Embassy in Havana was a Latin American problem. On Monday, 7 April, State Department spokesman Hodding Carter said, "The entire matter is up to the Peruvian government."

As the refugees' plight worsened, increasing pressure was put on the United States to become involved. Influential members of the Cuban exile community were very vocal in petitioning President Carter to assist.

The following Wednesday, 9 April, Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance reaffirmed the US position: Cuban refugees were primarily a problem for Latin American countries to resolve.[1]

Resettling The Refugees

The same day, President Carter, speaking at a luncheon for several hundred professional, business, educational, and political leaders with Caribbean and Central American interests, ridiculed Castro's often-voiced concept that Cuba was a model for developing countries. Carter expressed concern for the Cubans in the Peruvian compound, but stopped short of offering direct assistance.[2] While the United States tried to minimize its direct involvement in the situation, such a course of action would prove to be impossible.

At 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, the Foreign Ministers of the five Andean Pact countries (Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia) met in emergency session late into the night at the Foreign Ministry in Lima, Peru.* After the high-level meeting, which was devoted to the immediate plight of the people in the Peruvian Embassy, Peru's Foreign Minister Arturo Garcia y Garcia said his country could not evacuate all the refugees from the Peruvian Embassy in Havana; he asked that the Andean Pact countries seek an international relief effort. He indicated the United States, Costa Rica, Argentina, West Germany, France, and Spain already had made commitments to accept refugees. Peru was ready to accept 1,000 Cubans from the Embassy, and Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia also had agreed to resettle refugees.[3]

In a joint communique, the Andean Group's Foreign Ministers asked countries beyond their region to assist with the refugees. Peruvian diplomats pointed out, however, that most of the refugees wanted to go to the United States. At the meeting, held under tight security, the Foreign Ministers analyzed the political

*Prior to the meeting of Andean Pact countries, Colombia's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colonel Julio Londono Paredes, reported that his country could not accept any of the refugees from the Peruvian Embassy in Havana, because of the ongoing delicate and complex situation of the leftist guerrilla seizure of the Dominican Republic's Embassy in Bogota, Colombia.

implications of the Cuban government's actions and denounced Cuban President Castro for creating the refugee situation. They were appalled at the plight of thousands of people without adequate food, water, or shelter—a situation that became more critical every day. The UN High Commission for Refugees and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration said that they would cooperate with Peru's request for assistance. Food and medicine gathered by the Peruvian government in Lima were ready to be flown to Havana. The Cuban-American community in Miami had collected tons of food and medical supplies to be air-shipped to Cuba. Some $80,000 in donations also had been placed on deposit in a Miami bank for purchasing supplies for the refugees.[4]

In spite of the human suffering, Cuba refused to permit the International Red Cross or any other international organization to provide humanitarian assistance.[5]

President Carter expressed his continuing deep concern for the people at the Embassy. In a statement from the White House, the President praised the efforts of the Andean Pact countries to solve the problem. Encouraged by efforts of Latin American and European countries, the President said the United States would bear a "fair share" of the resettlement costs. Calling on other countries to assist with the crisis, President Carter said, "The world also looks to Cuba to assure humanitarian conditions for the refugees, pending their evacuation, and to cooperate with Peru and international organizations to facilitate the prompt, safe, and peaceful exit of the Cubans from the Embassy."[6]

The State Department stressed that US assistance would be part of an international effort. "I don't accept the proposition that ours (the United States) is the only country that can act in the situation," said David Passage, a State Department spokesman, pointing out that during the previous 15 months, the United States had accepted between 9,000 and 10,000 Cuban exiles. Nearly 800,000 Cubans had come to the United States since Fidel Castro came to power in 1959.[7]

On Monday, 14 April, President Carter announced Presidential Determination No. 80-16, making $4,250,000 available for resettling refugees from the Embassy, under the US Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund. In a Presidential Memorandum to the Secretary of State, Carter said,

> I hereby determine, after appropriate consultation with the Congress, that special circumstances exist such that persons who have taken sanctuary in the Peruvian Embassy in Havana who otherwise qualify may be considered refugees even though they are still within their country of nationality or habitual residence.... I determine that an unforeseen emergency refugee situation exists, that the admission in response to the emergency situation of 25 to 33 percent of the persons who have taken sanctuary at the Peruvian Embassy in Havana, up to a maximum of 3,500 refugees, is justified by grave humanitarian concerns and is otherwise in the national interests.[8]

The entry of the 3,500 Cubans was to be under the authority of the 1980 Refugee Act, which became effective 1 April 1980. The act established the following priorities for the entry of refugees: First priority went to released political prisoners; second priority went to members of families already in the United States; and third priority went to refugees seeking political asylum. Other countries also announced specific plans to accept refugees. James L. Carlin, Director of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, said that Spain, the first country to volunteer to admit Cubans for permanent or temporary residence, would admit 500 people. Costa Rica and Canada both agreed to take 300 persons each and Ecuador said it would resettle 200 refugees.[9]

Refusing an offer of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to assist in the Embassy crisis, Cuba said the matter concerned only Cuba and Peru. Anxious to resolve the deteriorating situation, the Cuban government began issuing passports and exit documents to

people at the Embassy, even before firm transportation arrangements had been made. To entice more people to leave the compound, an Interior Ministry official read a statement over a loudspeaker early Friday morning, 11 April: The Cuban government would issue permanent safe-conduct passes to the refugees, and each person who accepted a safe-conduct pass also would receive a passport and an exit document from the Cuban government granting permission to leave the country. Documents would be issued even to people who did not have their official identification cards. As encouragement to accept safe-conduct passes and leave the Embassy, refugees were told those people who had the passes would be the first to leave Cuba. As a result of the government's efforts, passes were issued to 1,800 persons who departed the Embassy on Friday and to another 1,200 on Saturday.[10]

The spectacle of the remaining thousands of ordinary men, women, and children enduring despicable conditions at the Embassy in a bid to flee communist Cuba was a continuing embarrassment to Castro. Even though the area around the Embassy was sealed off, and access to the compound was denied to foreign news media, reporters' interest remained high and stories continued to be printed. The continuing friction between Cuba and the Latin American countries over the asylum issue was another consideration—attention to the controversy would continue as long as the Cubans remained on the Peruvian Embassy grounds.[11]

Castro wisely took action to persuade the refugees to accept safe-conduct passes and leave the Embassy, helping defuse the situation. He felt once the people were dispersed to their homes, diplomatic and media interest would diminish; the Cuban government then could determine what would happen to the refugees. People accepting safe-conduct passes and exit documents had to agree not to return to the Embassy until the situation had been resolved.

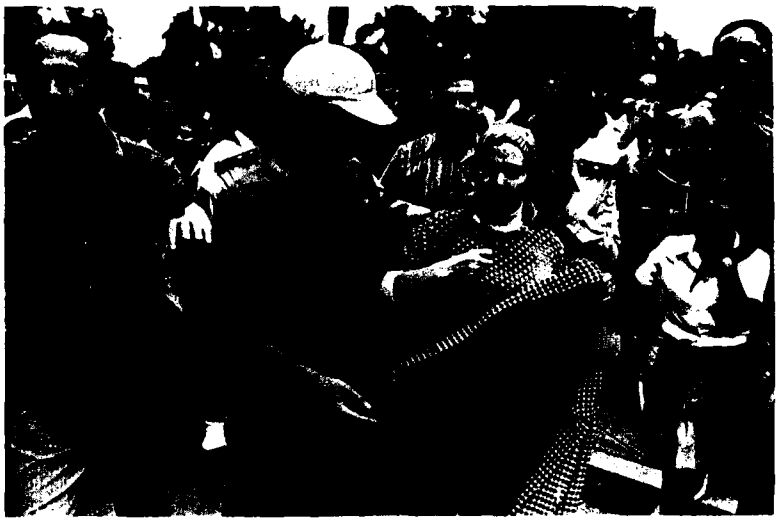
The five members of the Lopez family entered the Peruvian Embassy late on the night of 5 April. All they

were able to take with them were a few extra clothes. They endured the hardships of the Peruvian Embassy for 10 days before the Cuban government took them by bus to the Immigration Department to have passports prepared. Only 40-year-old Mercedes Lopez and her husband were issued passports before they were sent home with instructions to return the next day to get documents for their children. While at the Peruvian Embassy compound, Mercedes heard about people being beaten when they returned to their homes. To prevent such harassment, she spent her time at the Immigration Department washing the family's clothing and making the children presentable so they would not appear to have come from the Embassy.[12]

The bus let the Lopez family off some distance from their home late at night. They journied along the darkened streets without incident, arriving at their apartment about midnight. They quietly entered the building, careful not to awaken the neighbors. The next day, they returned to the Immigration Department and obtained the children's documents, then promptly returned home.

Mercedes and her family were to wait in their house behind locked doors for 18 days until they could leave the country. Bringing them food, their friends came to hear about what had happened at the Embassy. The next-door neighbor, resenting the visitors, reported them to the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). The local CDR representative claimed the Lopez family was celebrating their attempt to leave Cuba and wanted it stopped. The family was ordered not to have any more visitors. Mercedes' sister was the only person allowed to come and go from the house and bring food.

Peruvian Charge d'Affaires Armando Lecaros de Cassio made public an official communique reiterating Peru's appeal for international assistance. Although the population at the Peruvian Embassy slowly decreased, as people accepted safe-conduct passes and exit documents, conditions remained critical because of the shortage of food and medicine. A Cuban physician treating



AP/Wide World Photos

Refugees are jeered and insulted as they leave the Peruvian Embassy grounds with safe conduct passes in April 1980. They are escorted here past the security checkpoint by Cuban police.

refugees at a temporary hospital set up across the street from the Embassy, said facilities in the compound were "dangerously inadequate." He warned an epidemic was likely if the number of people was not reduced drastically. The Peruvians reported that only "20 percent of the people (in the compound) are getting one meal a day." Lecaros said Cuba's refusal to permit any assistance by the three international humanitarian organizations equipped to provide aid aggravated an already grave situation. Peru also accused Cuba of delaying efforts to transport people out of the country.[13]

Peru had three Air Force jet transports ready to evacuate the 1,000 persons the country had agreed to resettle, with priority to be given to refugees in the worst physical condition. A diplomatic dispute between Cuba and Peru delayed the evacuation flights for two days. Peru wanted the sick, families with small children, and older people to be evacuated first. Castro, aware of the media interest in the arrival of planeloads

of little children and sick and elderly people who had endured the "Peruvian Embassy Ordeal," insisted Cuba select those to leave from lists of people who had accepted safe-conduct passes.[14]

Veiled intentions of the Cuban government began to surface on Friday, 11 April, when a Radio Havana broadcast complained about the lengthy 2,500-mile journey the refugees would be forced to make to Lima, Peru. The broadcast suggested the refugees be processed at a closer location: With Florida less than 100 miles away, the statement foreshadowed things to come.[15]

Evacuation Flights

To facilitate the evacuation, and help overcome the Cuban government's objection to the long flight to Peru, nearby Costa Rica agreed to receive the refugee flights. San Jose in Costa Rica was offered as the site for initial processing. The plan called for two *Lineas Aereas de Costa Rica* passenger planes to fly to Havana each night and return to San Jose with refugees the following morning. The first Boeing 727 carrying refugees landed at Juan Santamaria Airport in San Jose at 8:25 a.m. on Wednesday, 16 April.

Crying *"Libertad!" "Libertad!"* ("Freedom! Freedom!"), the refugees emerged from the airplane. Heading the greeting party, Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo welcomed the refugees and embraced many of them.

Several of the 152 passengers got down on their knees and kissed the ground.

Safely out of Cuba, the refugees told about their ordeals at the Peruvian Embassy and later at Jose Marti Airport in Havana. They talked of hunger, illness, physical abuse, and constant fear. Edmundo Navarro, one of the newly arrived refugees, said of his experience: "It wasn't living. It was hell." Accountant Carlos Domingo said that when the refugees arrived by bus at Jose Marti Airport in Havana, they had to run a

AP Wide World Photos

Waving, and shouting *Libertad,* Cubans debark from a *Lineas Aereas de Costa Rica* jetliner at Santamaria Airport in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 19 April 1980.

gauntlet of hundreds of Cuban government demonstrators who cursed them. Shouting obscenities, the agitators struck the refugees and grabbed their possessions. "They took everything," Domingo said, "women's earrings, wedding rings, watches, even family heirlooms and mementos."[16]

"They grabbed me and threw me to the floor and kicked me," Juan Alberto Rodriquez, a slightly built

man of 23, said, "but I managed to get away." Refugee Maria Ramirez de Gallardo said she saw gold chains ripped from people's necks. "They even took my wedding ring," she said. "It had been on my finger for 18 years, but it is all right. I can get another." The Costa Rican Red Cross treated passengers for injuries at the San Jose airport.[17]

One refugee, suffering facial cuts and a knee laceration, said he had been attacked at the airport in Havana by demonstrators sent by the Castro government "to hassle us." Leonel Broche, whose nose had been broken and his eye bruised by neighbors in the *Santa Fe* suburb of Havana, also was treated in San Jose. When they learned that he had been at the Peruvian Embassy, Broche said, "They hit me with sticks, with rubber hoses, with their fists." He had gone to his home with a safe-conduct pass to get food, having eaten only twice in the six days he was at the Embassy.[18]

People arrived from Havana with nothing more than the clothes they were wearing and their newly issued gray Cuban passports. Before allowing them to depart, Cuban officials took their belongings and destroyed their personal papers, including addresses of relatives outside of Cuba. Most of the first people to arrive in San Jose had spent at least a week at the Peruvian Embassy compound. They eventually had accepted safe-conduct passes to their homes to get food and clothing, and to wait for the evacuation to begin. A majority of the first 250 passengers were males between 14 and 27. Very few women, children, or older people were in the first flights. Castro had won his dispute with Peru over who would be the first evacuees; the Cuban government had selected who would be in the first groups to leave Cuba.[19]

"I could not believe what these people had to go through to leave," Carlos Aguilar, chief of the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry, said when he arrived in San Jose with the second planeload of refugees. Aguilar said plans called for a constant flow of refugees from Havana to San Jose—two planes every 12 hours. During the first

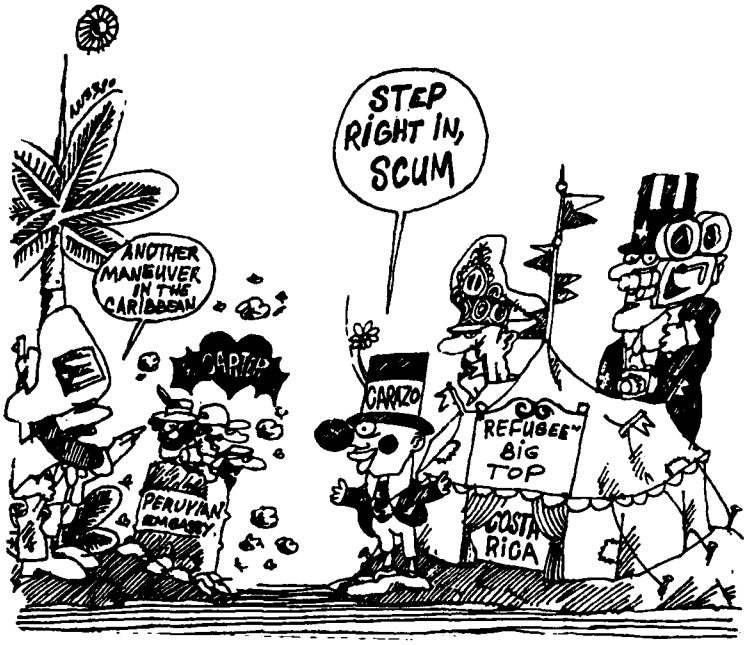


Figure 1. Cartoon from *GRANMA*, 27 April 1980

two days of the airlift 678 refugees were evacuated from Havana to San Jose. Suddenly, on the third day, the Costa Rican government announced all flights were suspended at the request of the Cubans. The negative international publicity generated by the refugee flights had greatly disturbed the Castro government.

Cuba portrayed Costa Rican President Carazo (see figure 1) as a lackey of the United States:

> Mr. Carazo has promoted the interests of the US Government and functioned as a mere spokesman of Washington.... It is clear that Carazo's watch is set to Washington time and that it is several decades, more than half a century to be exact, slow.[20]

Costa Rica reported that Cuba had made a new demand: That the refugees be flown directly to the countries in which they would be resettled. Castro charged that the United States and Peru were using the refugee arrivals in Costa Rica to propagandize against Cuba "for publicity and demagogic purposes." Cuba said the flights should go directly from Havana to the United States.

Most analysts believed stopping the refugee flights was a ploy on Castro's part and the flights would be resumed. They saw the move as part of Castro's "stop-and-go" tactics. They also reasoned he did not want the flights competing in the media with the reporting of the mass demonstration and parade planned to celebrate the 19th anniversary of Cuba's defeat of American-backed forces at the Bay of Pigs (called *Giron* by the Cubans). The demonstration and parade were to be outpourings of popular support for Castro and his communist government; arrangements had been made for maximum international media coverage.[21]

The flights to Costa Rica also may have been halted because Castro found accounts of the refugees' hardships emanating from a neutral Third World country difficult to denigrate and dismiss. The Castro government condemned the spectacle of the refugee arrivals in Costa Rica, saying "the firm, clear stand taken by Cuba put an end to the whole farcical act they (Costa Rica and the United States) were trying to stage in San Jose."[22] Refugee stories coming out of the United States were more easily labeled lies and propaganda. Castro's intentions to direct the flow of refugees straight to the United States became more and more obvious: He was maneuvering to turn the debacle at the Peruvian Embassy into a situation that would help ease domestic problems and divert Cuba's negative publicity.

In an effort to resolve the Cuban refugee situation, Costa Rica invited representatives of the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and more than 25 countries around the world to meet in San Jose on 8 May. Costa Rica said the meeting was called to "help us come up with a solution to the problem of those

who, of their own free will, entered the Peruvian Embassy in Havana in the thousands." The Cuban government again was extremely critical of President Carazo's initiative, questioning if Costa Rica was "once again suspiciously serving the interests of imperialism in this matter." Havana questioned the need for such a meeting, saying that the solution to the problem was "to have US officials really take them (the refugees) in with 'an open heart and open arms' as Mr. Carter promised."[23]

Venezuela and Belgium joined other countries in offering to resettle Cuban refugees; Venezuela said it would accept 500 and Belgium would take 150. Brazil and Sweden also agreed to accept unspecified numbers of refugees.[24]

Mass Demonstration

People began assembling along the eastern end of *Avienda Quinta* for the parade and demonstration, entitled "March of the Fighting People," as early as 6 a.m. on 19 April. A continuous stream of city buses shuttled marchers from distant Havana neighborhoods to the parade. Castro hastily inspected the parade route, speeding down Fifth Avenue past the Peruvian Embassy in a three-vehicle caravan. Marchers began moving along the parade route at 9 a.m., striding forth in neighborhood groups. The contingent from the *Miramar* District, renamed *La Playa*, led off the parade. Leaders from neighborhood vigilance committees or other government organizations, such as CDRs, marched in front of each group.[25]

The parade moved at a leisurely pace, with people of all ages strolling shoulder-to-shoulder down both sides of the divided avenue. Young children sat on the shoulders of adults. While the parade originally was scheduled to celebrate the Cuban victory at *Giron*, messages on signs and placards were directed against the refugees at the Peruvian Embassy. Marchers shouted

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An estimated one million people take part in the "March of the Fighting People" 19 April 1980. The mass demonstration, marking the Cuban victory at the Bay of Pigs, was routed down Fifth Avenue in Havana, past the remaining Cuban refugees in the Peruvian Embassy.

taunts and gestured at the 2,000 refugees remaining in the compound. The 200 journalists observing the parade were restricted to a tightly controlled press area. Many journalists, particularly from the United States, had not been allowed to enter Cuba until the day before the demonstration. Castro wanted to ensure the mass demonstration would be the focus of media attention and receive extensive coverage in the US press. Cuba stopped issuing safe-conduct passes to refugees at the Embassy before the demonstration to make sure enough people would remain in the compound to be ridiculed by the marchers.[26]

Cuban officials estimated that a million people, half the population of Havana, took part in the demonstration—an expression of popular support for Castro's communist government and contempt for those people who would leave Cuba. To prevent violence between the marchers and the refugees, an unarmed detachment of

Cuban militia was posted three deep in front of the Embassy. Castro used a familiar tactic for mobilizing popular support: Providing an object for the hatred of the people. While solidifying the loyalty of the masses, he also sent a message to would-be dissenters. Portraying the refugees in the Peruvian Embassy as a threat to Cuba and to the revolution, he incited the wrath of the people.[27]

The demonstration was the largest display of pro-government support in Cuba since Castro came to power. Thoroughly organized and well executed, the carefully staged activities exemplified the Cuban government's pervasive control over the population—a control Castro reinforced relentlessly. The enormity of the demonstration was living proof of the success of his efforts, which were begun when his rebel troops first entered Havana in January 1959.

4

Revolutionary Cuba

Within a short time we will have reduced the rich to the middle class and elevated the poor to the level of what today is called the middle class.... The Revolutionary government does not wish to harm anyone but the system in which the Republic was made must be changed.

Premier Fidel Castro
Havana, 17 March 1959

AT 2:40 A.M. 1 JANUARY 1959, A DC-4 FLEW OUT OF HAVANA into a moonless night. On board was Cuban President Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar, his family, and his closest followers. Pressured by increasing victories for the rebels of Fidel Castro and on the official advice of the US Ambassador Earl E.T. Smith, Batista had given up his six-year dictatorship and fled into exile in the Dominican Republic. Before leaving Cuba, he turned control of the government over to General Eulogio Cantillo, commander of the army in Oriente Province.[1]

Castro was using the home of a sugar mill worker as his headquarters in a small mill town, named Central America, and located 40 miles north of Santiago de Cuba, provincial capital of Oriente Province. He was listening to Radio Reloj on New Year's Day 1959 when a news bulletin announced Batista's flight from Cuba. Infuriated by the news, Castro shouted, "It's cowardice and treason, a trick by the dictatorship!" He angrily paced the floor and repeatedly called Batista a coward. The dictator had

escaped Castro's revolutionary justice. Castro was suddenly struck with the fear that while he was in the field a new government, possibly backed by the United States, would be formed in Havana, squeezing out his 26th of July Movement.* Castro ordered the *Fidelistas* near Havana to proceed to the capital as quickly as possible. They were to seize key positions and assert the dominance of Castro's Movement.[2]

Castro In Power

On 2 January, 26-year-old Camilo Cienfuegos entered Havana at the head of a column of 500 rebel soldiers. The victorious guerrillas were greeted by tens of thousands of jubilant, cheering "*Habaneros*." Tourists in the newly constructed Havana Hilton Hotel threw confetti from the windows as the rebel convoy passed below. Fidel Castro, colorful leader of the Revolution, arrived in Havana from Santiago de Cuba after a victorious eight-day procession across Cuba. On 8 January 1959, the charismatic leader addressed the people of Revolutionary Cuba for the first time, speaking to a crowd at Batista's former military headquarters at Camp Columbia. Fidel's brother, Raul Castro, remained behind in Santiago de Cuba to supervise the military tribunals and firing squad executions of Batista's supporters.**[3]

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*Castro's revolutionary movement took its name from the date of the disastrous 1953 attack on the Moncado Barrack in Santiago de Cuba. Castro was captured, tried, and convicted for his participation in the attack, but was pardoned by Batista after serving less than 19 months of a 15-year sentence.

**Supporters of the Batista dictatorship were tried and condemned in Santiago de Cuba on 12 January 1959. The 71 prisoners who were executed were described as soldiers, policemen, spies, and informers They were executed by firing squads at a target range about a mile outside the city. The condemned men were lined up in front of a freshly dug 10-foot-deep trench. Some of the prisoners smoked but most stood at attention, facing the firing squads without blindfolds. After the executions, a bulldozer covered over the mass grave.

AP Wide World Photos

Victorious rebel troops and supporters of Fidel Castro parade through the streets of Havana on 3 January 1959.

In Washington, Senator Wayne Morse (Ind.-Ore.), Chairman of a Senate Committee for Latin American Affairs, appealed to Fidel Castro to stop the mass executions until emotions had died down, deploring the "blood bath" which he said "appears to be the adoption by the new regime of one of the old techniques of the police state—kill your enemy." Roberto Agramonti, Cuba's

AP Wide World Photos

Aristidies Diaz is comforted by a priest as he awaits execution along the road to Manazanillo, Cuba, on 12 January 1959. Fidel Castro's victorious rebel forces were taking reprisals after their victory. Diaz was a member of the private army of ex-Senator Rolando Masferrer.

Foreign Minister, defended the use of firing squads, describing them as the mass executions of "war criminals," properly sentenced by military tribunals. Such measures were necessary, he said, to preclude the families of persons tortured and murdered by the Batista regime from taking justice into their own hands.[4]

The Castro government quickly published the "Program Manifesto" of the 26th of July Movement, setting forth themes of national sovereignty and social justice and calling for the expansion of health, education, and welfare programs for the people. Other goals of the "Program Manifesto" were increasing the rate of economic growth, reducing dependency on sugar, diversifying agriculture, developing the industrial sector, expanding trade relations, and improving the standard of living of

the population. While not specifically stated in the Manifesto, early actions of the revolutionary leadership indicated that the redistribution of income from rich to poor and from urban to rural areas were major social goals.

The propertied Cuban upper and middle classes who were opposed to the corrupt Batista regime initially supported the Castro revolution and its economic objectives. Castro assured all levels of Cuban society of a bright future. To facilitate continued access to credit and maintain the confidence of investors, Castro quickly proclaimed he would honor the previous regime's debts. Heartened by the idealistic zeal of the young, bearded revolutionary leader, the people of Cuba anticipated progress for their country. They held high hopes for improved social conditions and economic growth. Business leaders and landowners of the upper and middle classes were cautiously optimistic about the enthusiastic talk of the revolutionaries, but waited to see what the new Castro government would do about businesses and property.[5]

Prior to Castro's revolution, Cuba was not one of the poorest, but rather one of the most developed of the 20 Latin American countries. (Table 1 shows Cuba's relative position in Latin America in gross national product (GNP) per capita from 1952 to 1981.) As in most of the region, a wide disparity existed between living conditions of rural and urban areas and the different classes. Cuba was unique, however, because it had the largest middle class, proportionately, in Latin America: About 25 percent of Cuba's total population, approximately 235,000 households, were considered "middle class" and included 6,000 civil servants, 90,000 business people, 86,000 technical personnel, and 53,000 professionals with advanced degrees. Cuba ranked fourth behind Venezuela, Uruguay, and Argentina in gross national product (GNP) per capita. In the mid-1950s, Cuba's GNP per capita was $361, slightly less than Argentina and comparable to Puerto Rico.[6]

Table 1
Cuba's relative position in Latin America in gross national product per capita

Position	1952	1981	Change in position
1	Venezuela	Venezuela	—
2	Argentina	Uruguay	4
3	**CUBA**	Argentina	−1
4	Chile	Chile	—
5	Panama	Mexico	3
6	Uruguay	Brazil	1
7	Brazil	Panama	−2
8	Mexico	Paraguay	10
9	Colombia	Costa Rica	1
10	Costa Rica	Colombia	−1
11	Dominican Repub.	Dominican Republic	—
12	Guatemala	Ecuador	4
13	El Salvador	Peru	4
14	Nicaragua	Guatemala	−2
15	Honduras	**CUBA**	−12
16	Ecuador	Nicaragua	−2
17	Peru	El Salvador	−4
18	Paraguay	Honduras	−3
19	Bolivia	Bolivia	—
20	Haiti	Haiti	—

(Source: Hugh S. Thomas, Georges A. Fauriol, and Juan Carlos Weiss, eds., *The Cuban Revolution 25 Years Later* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, Significant Issues Series, Vol. VI, No. 11, 1984), p. 29.)

Tightening The Reins

As the new revolutionary government took power, national ministries were reorganized with sweeping staff changes. Uncertain if the Cuban population would accept the total control he intended to exercise, Castro proceeded with caution. He judiciously installed Manuel Urrutia, a respected moderate, as provisional president of the official government, and appointed other noncontroversial members of the 26th of July Movement as Cabinet Ministers. While the "official government" was restoring

order in Havana, a "covert government" of Castro confidants, with the innocuous title of "Office of Revolutionary Plans and Coordination," met in Tarara, a seashore resort a short distance from Havana, to plan the future of Cuba. Meeting in the house where "Che" Guevara was recuperating from two years of asthma and malaria attacks suffered during the Sierra campaign, the group drafted new laws, became familiar with critical government operations, and prepared for the radicalization of the government.[7]

Castro shrewdly eliminated the possibility of organized and armed competition by other leaders of the successful revolution by implementing widespread social and economic changes. He diminished the potential power base of the 26th of July "Militia" by disarming all members of the movement. Only members of the regular rebel army, which had been carefully reorganized by Castro, were permitted to bear arms and to circulate freely. Castro also reorganized the National Police Force and personally selected Major Efigencio Almejeira as its commander.[8]

After a brief respite, military tribunals, which had sent more than 450 persons to firing squads, were reestablished in October 1959. While the Cuban people, accustomed to Latin American revolutionary justice, accepted the executions of Batista "henchman" who themselves had been responsible for murder and torture, they had difficulty accepting large-scale executions of hundreds of minor officials, members of the armed forces, and civilians. As the tribunals began again, hundreds of prisoners, sentenced to death for the capital offense of counterrevolutionary activity, already awaited their fates before firing squads. Reestablishing military courts, the revolutionary government also suspended all civil rights, including the right of *habeas corpus*, indefinitely. Fear and uncertainty spread throughout the island.[9]

The revolutionary government expanded its popular support by vigorously proclaiming its goal to improve living conditions for the poor. Social opportunities were

made available to large numbers of persons who previously had been excluded from political and social activities. All private clubs in Havana and Santiago were nationalized and opened to the public. New housing projects were planned, and social programs to bring basic services to more people, particularly in rural areas, were initiated.[10]

While Castro was improving conditions for the people, he also was depriving them of institutions that guaranteed their freedom. After seizing power on 1 January 1959, Castro said that national elections would be delayed until political parties, suppressed by the Batista dictatorship, could be reorganized—only a matter of months. He next declared that free elections would be delayed for two years, saying, "Elections could not be held now because they would not be fair. We have an overwhelming majority at the present and it is in the interest of the nation that the political parties become fully developed and their purposes defined before elections are held."[11]

In February 1959, the New Fundamental Law was passed, reducing the minimum required age of the Cuban President from 35 to 30. This move was seen as clearing the way for the 32-year-old Fidel Castro to be a presidential candidate when elections were held. The new law also granted "native born" status to Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara, 30, an Argentine, making him eligible for election as President or to serve in the Cabinet. Some saw the new law as an indication Castro actually intended to hold elections.

Next, Castro said general elections would be delayed for not less than four years. He made the statement on the television program "Meet the Press" during his visit to the United States in April 1959. His provisional government would need that long to "solve our problems," he said, and create "conditions for free elections." "Don't worry about elections," he told reporters later the same day. "The person most worried about elections is myself. I'm not interested in being in power one minute more than necessary."[12]

AP Wide World Photos

A young Fidel Castro answers questions during the television program "Meet the Press" in Washington on 19 April 1959. At one point, the Cuban Prime Minister said that Cuba would be committed to the West in the event of any struggle between democracy and communism. With him here are Ned Brooks, the moderator, at left, and Anthony Hervas, the interpreter.

In a speech during a mass rally on May Day 1960, Castro closed the issue of elections when he proclaimed that no more elections would be held in Cuba. The 500,000 Cubans assembled in the *Plaza Civica* in Havana gave the announcement a roar of approval. Castro asked the multitude "Do we need elections?" and the people replied with a thunderous, "No!, No!" He said that the Cuban government from then on would rely on direct input of the people in mass rallies, such as the May Day demonstrations. "The Revolution does not contemplate giving the oppressive classes any chance to return to power," Castro said.[13]

Castro carried out a relentless effort to eliminate organized opposition. Without the prospect of elections, the last vestiges of hope for those Cubans who were clinging to the possibility of some form of future democratic government disappeared. Their options were reduced to accepting the communist dictatorship, or fleeing the island. At the May Day demonstration, Castro also announced that all private schools would be nationalized, prompting Cuban parents to send between 13,000 and 15,000 children to be educated in the United States. They feared the government's political indoctrination and objected to the loss of religious education. During a mass meeting of workers on 20 December 1959, Castro said they must report any Cubans who oppose the Revolution to the police, that everyone must be on the alert in parks and streets to hear remarks made against the government, and that the middle and upper classes were carrying on tremendous campaigns to slander the revolutionary government of the people. He charged servants, chauffeurs, hotel waiters, store clerks, barbers, and beauty shop employees to report customers who opposed the Revolution to authorities.[14]

"With the Revolution or Against the Revolution"

On 3 May 1960, the important Havana newspaper, *Diario de la Marina*, one of the oldest and largest papers on the island, called the May Day rally a "totalitarian demonstration." An editorial compared Castro's "direct democracy" to the systems of the Soviet Union's Premier Khrushchev, Mao Tse-tung of the Chinese Communist party, and Hitler, Mussolini, or Juan Peron of Argentina. The publisher, Jose I. Rivero, described the May Day demonstration as Marxist in tone in the most critical editorial he ever printed. Within eight days, the Castro government closed the newspaper. Of 16 daily newspapers published in Cuba at the time Castro took power, only six papers continued two years later, all under direct control of the Cuban government.[15]

The student union of the University of Havana, led by its president, Major Rolando Cubela, one of Castro's

guerrilla veterans, mounted a campaign to reorganize the university in accordance with the "Revolution." On 16 July 1960, the student union, representing only 20 percent of the students, successfully overcame resistance of the university council and faculty and took control of the university. A governing body of four professors and four students, led by the bearded Major Cubela, initiated significant changes. Major Cubela, who frequently appeared on campus in uniform wearing a pistol, provided a direct link between the university and Castro's revolutionary government.*[16]

The University of Havana had been a traditional center for free thought and youthful protest against the government, much like universities in many Latin American countries. The new Cuban regime gained control of the Federation of University Students (FEU), which had been noted for its rebellious attitude toward past governments. The FEU served as a tool of the government, purging students critical of Castro's actions, because "the University is only for revolutionaries."[17] Castro, whose own revolutionary thoughts were nurtured at the university when he attended as a law student, wanted to eliminate the institution's potential as a breeding ground for discontent and organized resistance to his actions.

A Cuban law prohibiting the removal of judges was suspended for 45 days on 20 December 1960, enabling the Castro government to purge the Cuban judicial system, including the Supreme Court. A new law reduced the Supreme Court from 32 to 15 members; within 12 hours after passage, 13 judges were dismissed. The law also provided that, in the future, Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado would appoint all judges, with the help of Premier Castro and the Council of Ministers. Castro eliminated the requirement that judges and law professors participate in selection of new judges, when

*A Cuban court convicted Rolando Cubela in 1966 of conspiring with the US Central Intelligence Agency to assassinate Fidel Castro. Sentenced to 30 years in prison, he was released in 1979 after serving 13 years. He left Cuba to live in exile in Spain.

he learned a majority of Cuba's judges intended to defect, going underground or fleeing the country. Uncovering the plan after Dr. Emillo Menendez took refuge in the Argentine Embassy, Castro preempted further defections. The Cuban government continued its judiciary purge in early February 1961, when 119 judges, at all levels, were removed because they did not agree with the principles of the revolutionary government. The purge was part of a "house cleaning" by the National Board, an agency Castro formed to help restructure the Cuban government.[18]

Castro's pervasive control of the government was extended to homes and neighborhoods with the creation of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) on 28 September 1960. Committee members were appointed for groups of homes to monitor and report on the activities and revolutionary zeal of their neighbors. The CDR slogan "With the Revolution or Against the Revolution" was broadcast day and night over the radio. Participation in orientation programs, demonstrations, and rallies for the government was mandatory for the Cuban people; passive protests against the government were unacceptable. "Vigilance Committees" were organized throughout Havana on 11 November 1960 to seek out "friends of the Yankees." Pamphlets urged people to join the vigilantes, at the request of Premier Fidel Castro, and to inform on neighbors who did not fully support the revolution. [19]

The Cuban government created a youth regimentation program in elementary schools, the Union of Rebel Pioneers, which included boys and girls as young as seven years old. Children were trained to report "sabotage and counterrevolutionary attitudes." Young men and women, 14 to 25, were organized into an educational-military organization called The Association of Rebel Youth. Many older youths were sent to the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia for training.[20]

The Ministry of Education distributed questionnaires in all schools in December 1960 with a

AP/Wide World Photos

Cuban schoolgirls, supporters of Fidel Castro, drill on 9 April 1960 with wooden rifles in Havana as members of Castro's volunteer militia, formed to defend Cuba against "outside aggression."

mandatory requirement to complete the forms to "accumulate a student index." The four-page questionnaires were designed to give the Ministry of Education scholastic information on children and financial position, educational background, and views of parents. In addition to information on the "child's school record," the four-page questionnaire attempted to learn the social attitudes and beliefs of parents. The survey collected data on family background: number and kinds of books and newspapers read by the parents, type and year of automobiles owned by the family, and whether the family had radios or television sets.[21]

During the early years of the new revolutionary government, commercial flights transported people directly from Havana to Miami on a regular basis, facilitating the flight of educated and skilled professionals

from Cuba. From February 1961 to October 1962, 153,534 Cubans registered at the Cuban Refugee Center in Miami. The flights were halted by the "Cuban Missile Crisis" in October 1962. Professionals left Cuba because repressive measures and an overreliance on non-economic rewards systematically eliminated incentives to work hard and advance. Of 5,000 physicians in Cuba before the Revolution, 1,300 left the country, along with 300 of 1,800 pharmacists. Only 800 of the country's 1,800 certified public accountants remained in Cuba. Some 46 percent of agricultural engineers, 44 percent of civil engineers, and 38 percent of electrical engineers departed the country in the first three years after the Castro Revolution. During a mass rally for professionals and technicians at the University of Havana on 13 December 1960, they were required to take an oath not to leave the country; those attempting to leave Cuba were stopped at the airport and their passports destroyed. [22]

Premier Castro used television and radio extensively to provide policy direction to government officials, the press, and the people. He said he had to "talk to the people" about every 10 days or they would "become confused." Cuban workers supported Castro enthusiastically because he promised increased wages, better living conditions, and social benefits. Organized labor looked forward to the rapid industrialization of the island, and the many benefits that would come to the workers. Castro maintained the confidence of the people with his charm and charisma, as he attempted to restore the island's economy. Returning idle sugar mills to production, thereby generating badly needed revenue, was one of Castro's highest priorities. The new government initiated immediate efforts to restore Cuba's transportation and communications infrastructure, not only to facilitate sugar production but also to exercise a greater control over the entire population—not just the cities.

Expropriation And Reform

Less than a month after coming to power, Fidel Castro began to reveal his real intentions toward private industry. After seizing the American-owned Cuban Electric Company, Castro reduced rural electric rates by 50 percent, with the aim of improving the lot of the poorest sector of the population. Sworn in as Prime Minister on 16 February 1959, Castro next passed the Rent Law, reducing housing rents. People who paid less than 100 pesos a month had their rents reduced by half; those who paid higher rents were given reductions of 30 to 40 percent. The law had widespread economic impact on the upper class, which had invested heavily in rental property. Castro continued his reform goals, adopting the Vacant Lot Law, which affected real estate interests by limiting appreciation on urban real estate to no more than 15 percent. As a result, private construction dropped by 56.5 percent in 1959.[23]

Recovery from the economic shock of the violent overthrow of the government was extremely difficult, particularly when revolutionary leaders had little concern for the long-range impacts of achieving their immediate goals. The removal and flight of experienced managers compounded the problems facing Castro and his new revolutionary government. Young radicals replacing trained professionals were filled with idealistic theories but lacked skills and experience. The new Cuban government imposed severe controls on foreign exchange and froze the assets in Cuban bank accounts. Commercial transactions and banking activities were obstructed as the new government attempted to stem the flight of capital. The Castro government required exporters to turn over proceeds of sales in US currency to the National Bank of Cuba, and accept Cuban currency in exchange. Massive amounts of property and assets, belonging to persons suspected of having been connected with the Batista government, were confiscated. While the revolutionary government promised

AP Wide World Photos

Argentine-born Ernesto "Che" Guevara, wearing the uniform of the Cuban guerrilla forces, takes the oath of office as new president of the National Bank of Cuba. To Guevara's right is Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos; with them here are Felipe Pazos, outgoing president of the Cuban National Bank, at Guevara's left elbow, and Osmani Cienfuegos, Cuba's new Public Works Minister, at President Dorticos's right.

the return of seized assets "not acquired through collaboration" with the former dictator, the process was long and tedious, seriously hampering the Cuban economy.[24]

The most far-ranging reform initiated by the revolutionary government was the Agrarian Reform Law of 17 May 1959, which transferred ownership of rural property from wealthy landowners to the peasant *campesinos*. Castro and his confidants had drafted plans for this law while they were in their guerrilla camps in the Sierra Maestra mountains in October 1958. Appropriating estates and plantations, the government redistributed the land without cost to peasant-farmers in plots of 66⅔ acres. All American-owned sugar properties were seized, resulting in the expropriation of 8,310,000 acres.

The National Institute of Agrarian Reform was created by the law to encourage agricultural cooperatives and divide large plantations and estates into small farms for distribution to the peasants. The appropriated properties, however, were turned into Chinese Communist-style communes. A year later, the National Institute for Agrarian Reform, headed by Captain Antonio Nunez Jimenez, operated 120 former plantations and businesses valued at $250 million, and continued to expand its communistic role in the economy.[25]

While educated at the Belen Jesuit High School in Havana and later at the University of Havana Law School, Castro's views on agrarian reform were primarily influenced by his rural background. He grew up on his father's 23,300-acre farm in the rugged eastern province of Oriente, where he was dismayed by the vast difference between living conditions in cities and in rural areas. The plight of the rural poor concerned him from the time he was a youth. Little of the developmental progress enjoyed by the major cities of Cuba, particularly Havana, extended into the country, where the *campesinos* eked out meager livings. Castro was critical of his father's wealth and profits made through exploitation of workers.[26]

His sympathies remained with the rural poor throughout his revolutionary career. Castro envisioned that redistribution of land would bring increased economic benefits to the countryside and improve living conditions for the peasants. He believed cultivating idle land and employing underutilized labor would result in increased production and bring economic benefits to the country and the farmers. A Special Decree on Recuperation of Ill-Gained Wealth, which dispossessed wealthy landowners, later supplemented the Agrarian Law. In a single week in January 1960, 1,482,000 acres of land were confiscated as "ill-gained wealth."[27]

Cuba And Communism

Premier Castro walked a careful path as he outlined his intentions for social reforms; he did not want to discourage badly needed capital investments and financial assistance. Foreign investors, however, became reluctant to make further investments on the island and began to assess their current holdings. During his visit to the United States in April 1959, Castro said the American people should have no concern about communist influence in his revolutionary government. He said, "My heart lies with democracies and I do not agree with communism." He further stated he was not neutral, as had been claimed, in the conflict between the West and the Soviet Bloc, implying that he would support the West. He denied reports that his brother Raul, a leader in the new government, or Raul's wife, Vilma, were communists and said that if communists were in his government, "their influence is nothing." In a televised interview during his US visit, Castro conceded the possibility of deception by Cuban communists, but appealed to the American people to observe Cuba's progress and not listen to rumors. "We are against all kinds of dictators, whether of a man, or a country, or a class, or an oligarchy, or by the military," Castro said at a National Press Club luncheon in Washington during his visit. "That is why we are against communism."[28]

When the Batista government collapsed, organized communist groups quickly seized labor unions and headquarters of competing factions. Within a few days, the Communist Popular Socialist Party published the first issue of its newspaper *HOY* and broadcast an hour of programs on a Cuban radio station. *HOY* and the communist radio programs praised Premier Castro daily for his "neutral" stand in the competition between democratic countries, such as the United States, and the communist bloc aligned with the Soviet Union. The communists expounded on the major contributions of party members during the Revolution. The well-organized Cuban Communist Party expanded its

influence into the countryside, towns, and villages. The young rebels of the 26th of July Movement tried to compete with the expanding influence of the communist organization but with little success; the more experienced communists continued to increase their influence.[29]

In May 1959, *HOY* published a joint statement by a leader of the 26th of July Movement and a leader of the Communist Popular Socialist Party supporting Castro's revolutionary government. *REVOLUCION* attacked the communists for the joint statement, saying that the communists were making an "underhanded" attempt to form a pact with the "Revolutionary Movement." Attacking the communists in its struggle to retain power, *REVOLUCION* said, "The only organization authorized to make political pacts or joint declarations, or take similar actions is the national direction of the 26th of July Movement." It quoted Premier Fidel Castro as saying, "This is a humanist revolution against right and left dictatorships."[30]

At this point in the revolution, Castro may not yet have been a committed communist. But communists, such as Fidel's brother, Raul, and the Premier's close friend and aide, "Che" Guevara, certainly were in important positions in his government. Castro planned to make sweeping socialistic reforms of the economy and improve conditions for the poor through the redistribution of wealth, but he was aware that such reforms could be accomplished only at the expense of the upper and middle classes.

Castro later professed to have been a dedicated communist from the beginning of his revolution. In May 1986, Castro was asked during a French television interview if he had not falsely proclaimed himself a democrat in 1959. Castro responded:

> The United States wanted us to commit a strategic and tactical error and proclaim a doctrine as a communist movement. In reality, I was a Communist. It would have been premature to proclaim the Marxist-Leninist character of the revolution.

> Nevertheless, anyone who read attentively 'History Will Absolve Me' and the Moncada program can appreciate that it was a socialist who guided it and wrote those lines.[31]

His ultimate decision to embrace communism may well have been pragmatic. He needed the security and economic benefits afforded by a communist affiliation in his effort to break the economic domination of the United States. Castro probably never intended to share his power over Cuba with anyone, however, particularly an international movement dominated by another "superpower." If Castro were a communist, he intended to introduce his own brand of Cuban communism to the island nation.

Dr. Wayne S. Smith, an authority on Cuba who served as the State Department's Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana, said, "I'm not sure if he is a communist now. I believe he had a grand plan for revolutionary movements throughout Latin America. He needed Russian support, and his ego was large enough he thought he could use them and still maintain his own independence."[32]

Castro showed a predilection toward Marxism in a letter from prison, where he served 19 months of a 15-year sentence for leading the 26 July 1953 attack on Batista's Moncado garrison in Santiago de Cuba. Saying what an easy time he was having in prison, Castro wrote, "They are going to make me believe that I am on vacation! What would Karl Marx say about such a revolution?"[33]

The experience of "Che" Guevara, Castro's friend and adviser, may have influenced the Cuban leader to conceal that he was a communist. Guevara had been associated with the leftist movement of Colonel Jacobo Arbenz, leader of the military government of Guatemala. After coming to power, Arbenz attempted to expand his power base by aligning himself with the country's communists, the Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT). A prominent member of the PGT, Jose Manuel Fortuny, was put in charge of Guatemala's land reform,

which called for expropriation of foreign properties. The US Government openly condemned the communist leanings of the Arbenz government. On 18 June 1954, a small invasion force crossed Guatemala's border and eight days later Arbenz resigned. Financing of the invasion force by the US Central Intelligence Agency is generally accepted.[34]

The Guatemalan lesson was clear: Castro did not want to provoke a similar invasion of Cuba through his early declaration of a new Marxist-Leninist state in Latin America. Extending his control over all aspects of Cuban life, and building a creditable modern armed force to defend against an attack from abroad, would require time. Concealing any leftist intentions in the early years of the Cuban revolutionary government had obvious advantages. History would prove that such logic was not unreasonable.

Communists indeed were in the government, according to Major Pedro Luis Diaz Lanz, former commander of Castro's Air Force who fled to the United States in 1959. And their influence was growing stronger, Major Diaz told the US Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security.[35] The effectiveness of Castro's deception is shown in a front-page *New York Times* article by Herbert L. Mathews, published on 16 June 1959. "There are no Reds in the Cabinet, and none in high positions in the Government or in any sense of being able to control either governmental or defense policies," Mathews reported. He went on to say in his article, entitled, "Cuba Has A One-Man Rule And It Is Called Non-Red," that

> the only power worth considering in Cuba is in the hands of Premier Castro, who is not only not a Communist but decidedly anti-Communist, even though he does not consider it desirable in the present circumstances to attack or destroy the Reds—as he is in a position to do anytime he wants.

The article pointed out that Cubans showed little interest in the question of communism in Cuba until

AP Wide World Photos

Surrounded by white doves, symbolic of peace, Fidel Castro speaks to the Cuban people from the former headquarters of Fulgencia Batista at Camp Columbia Military Barracks, after arriving in Havana on 8 January 1959.

Americans raised the issue. No matter how anti-communist Cuban leaders feel, Mathews continued, "they will not, as they see it, humiliate themselves by acting as though they were under American orders, pressures or threats."

As Castro's drift toward communism became painfully obvious, key members of his 26th of July movement rebelled. Manuel Urrutia, President of the new

government, resigned on 17 July 1959, accusing Castro of being part of a communist plot to take over Cuba. Castro berated the highly regarded Dr. Urrutia, who was staunchly anti-communist and friendly toward the United States, and said his actions "bordered on treason." While Castro continued to deny he was a communist, he did say, "We respect all ideologies and we do not persecute anyone," and that the Cuban Revolution was neither capitalistic nor communistic.[36]

Premier Castro personally flew with Major Cienfuegos, Chief of Staff of the Army, to Camaguey province to arrest Huber Matos, the provincial military commander. Matos, a high-ranking officer in Castro's guerrilla army from the early days in the Sierra Maestra mountains, had resigned in open protest against the increasing communist influence in the revolutionary government. Castro testified for six hours before the military tribunal that found the former military commander of Camaguey province guilty of treason, and sentenced him to 20 years in prison. The sentence was an ignominious end for one of Castro's most trusted officers.[37] The Cuban Foreign Ministry recalled Sergio Rojas, who had been named Cuba's Ambassador to Great Britain shortly after Castro came to power. Rojas took refuge in the Argentine Embassy in Havana on 27 June 1960. In a letter to Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado, Rojas said,

> I have arrived at the conclusion that the Cuban revolution has been frustrated and betrayed. I consider our country has been placed within the framework of the interests of two great imperialistic and aggressive powers—the Soviet Union and Red China.[38]

On 7 December 1961, Premier Castro removed any doubt as to whether he was a communist, when he declared himself a "Marxist-Leninist until the last day of my life." Communist leaders in Cuba and the Soviet Union were surprised and not necessarily happy with Castro's declaration. They feared that the pronouncement would affect the Cuban Premier's image as an

independent revolutionary leader. A month earlier, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev had said in public that he did not think that Dr. Castro was a communist. Three days elapsed before the Soviet press reported the speech, in which Castro said the Marxist-Leninist party in Cuba would be modeled after the communist party of the Soviet Union. Cuba's selective membership and national political system, Castro said, would be the "dictatorship of the proletariat."[39]

Two weeks later, on 22 December 1961, Castro explained in *REVOLUCION* why he had concealed his true political persuasion: "If we would have said from the Turquino Peak (Sierra Maestra mountains) that we were Marxist-Leninists, probably we would have not been able to go down to the plains."[40]

5

Cuba and the Superpowers

We shall consider any attempt ... to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace.

President James Monroe
The Monroe Doctrine, *2 December 1823*

FIDEL CASTRO'S ANTAGONISM TOWARD THE UNITED STATES began to manifest itself immediately after his revolutionary movement took control of Cuba. On 10 January 1959, Castro condemned the US Government for training soldiers of the dictatorship of the former Cuban President, Fulgencio Batista. Five days later, he threatened the United States, warning "200,000 *gringos* will die" if President Dwight D. Eisenhower sends Marines to Cuba.[1]

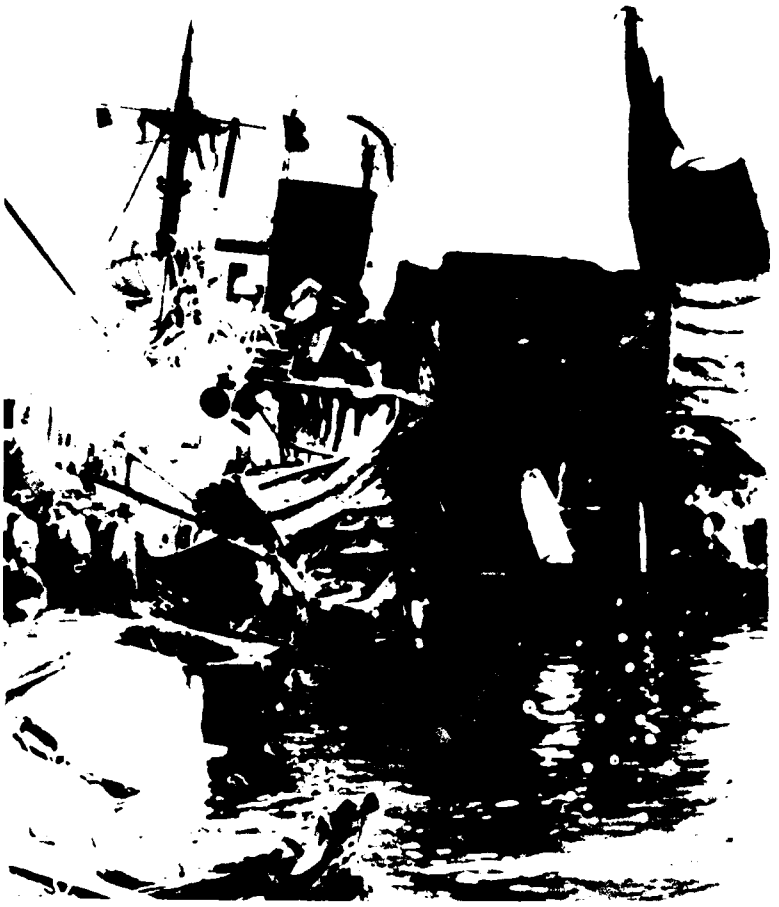
The comment was the first of a series of provocative statements directed by the Cuban leader to the United States. The Eisenhower administration tolerated the attacks, attributing them to a young and "heady" revolutionary newly flush with power. Americans largely applauded the victory of Castro's 26th of July Movement; they admired the bearded revolutionary and had high expectations for him to improve conditions in Cuba.

Premier Castro's criticisms gradually became more severe, however. He vehemently condemned the United States during a January 1960 television address, accusing the US Government of conspiring with counterrevolutionaries. He charged that Vice President Richard M. Nixon and various Senators were carrying on a "campaign of hostility" against Cuba. Secretary of State Christian A. Herter called it Castro's most insulting speech ever, adding that the Cuban Premier's actions were cause for great concern.[2]

United States Position

At a press conference shortly after Castro's outburst, President Eisenhower said he was "concerned and, more than that, we are perplexed" about developments in Cuba. In a written statement, the President said, "The United States adheres strictly to the policy of nonintervention in the domestic affairs of other countries, including Cuba." He went on to say, however, that while the United States recognizes the right of governments to initiate whatever social reforms they feel appropriate for their countries, Washington will "continue to bring to the attention of the Cuban Government any instances in which the rights of (US) citizens ... have been disregarded."[3]

The French merchant vessel *LA COUBRE*, which was off-loading Belgian arms and explosives in Havana Harbor in March 1960, blew up in a tremendous explosion, killing more than 70 people. Castro used the destruction of the French munitions ship to foment anti-American fervor, charging the United States was responsible for the explosion and deaths. Secretary Herter angrily declared Castro's charge was "baseless, erroneous, and misleading," the product of an "unfounded and irresponsible attitude" that could only result in the deterioration of relations. "This government finds itself increasingly obliged to question the good faith of your excellency's government," Secretary Herter told Cuban Charge d'Affaires Enrique Patterson, "with respect to a desire for improved relations between our governments."



Center for Cuban Studies

French merchant ship *LA COUBRE* rests on the bottom of Havana Harbor after an explosion, in which more than 70 died. Castro accused the United States of blowing up the ship, which was off-loading Belgian arms and ammunition.

In an April 1960 interview with an American correspondent, published in Cuba's semiofficial newspaper *REVOLUCION*, Premier Castro likened the hostile US policy toward communism to policies of Hitler and Mussolini: Both used the pretext of combatting communism

to justify domestic persecution and the denial of social justice. "If comparisons must be made," said Lincoln White, a spokesman for the US State Department, responding to Castro's accusations, "one of the principal hallmarks of a dictatorship, such as that of Hitler and Mussolini, was the muzzling of a free press. It is difficult to understand how Prime Minister Castro can make such a reference when 95 percent of the Cuban press is under Government control." Becoming less tolerant of Castro's attacks, the United States became more concerned about dictatorial policies and growing communist influence in the Cuban government.[4]

Relations between the two countries were becoming severely strained.

In an effort to bring all industry under the control of the Cuban government, Castro "intervened" at the US-owned Texaco and ESSO (Standard Oil) refineries and the British-Dutch Shell Oil Company on 29 June 1960. "Intervention" was the Cuban government's euphemism for "expropriation" of foreign investments. The revolutionary government took over the three refineries, representing most of Cuba's oil industry, when they refused to process Russian crude oil imported under Cuba's new trade agreements. The refineries rejected the Soviet oil for the following reasons:

- The Cubans were $60 million behind in foreign exchange payments.
- The refineries were built specifically to refine the integrated companies' own Venezuelan oil.
- Patriotism (and public relations) left them no choice but to refuse.[5]

Because of the Cuban action, the US Congress rushed through legislation that authorized the President to cancel the $150 million bonus the United States planned to pay Cuba for sugar imports. In turn, Castro said that Cuba would keep taking over *gringo* assets "until not even the nails in their shoes are left."[6] President Eisenhower quickly, but "with the most genuine regret," used the congressional authorization to virtually wipe out the US market for Cuban sugar. For the

AP Wide World Photos

Armed Cuban workers guard the Shell Oil refinery near Havana on 1 July 1960, shortly after Fidel Castro ordered the Shell and ESSO refineries seized to enforce his orders to process Soviet crude oil.

rest of the year, the United States purchased only 39,752 short tons of sugar from Cuba, a reduction of 700,000 short tons from the original quota. The economic impact of the action was compounded because the United States traditionally paid above-world-market prices for Cuban sugar. While Castro had already begun negotiating barter arrangements with Iron Curtain countries, the replacement of the American market for one third of Cuba's total sugar production was difficult.[7]

Premier Castro continued his proclaimed "attack on imperialism" on 7 August 1960, with the forcible expropriation of all US-owned companies, valued at more than $500 million. The owners were to be reimbursed, Castro said, in 50-year Cuban bonds tied to the sale of

sugar to the United States in excess of three million tons per year at a set minimum price—but little prospect for reimbursement was seen.[8] President Eisenhower imposed a broad embargo on exports to the island nation on 19 October 1960; medicines, medical supplies, and many food products were excluded, however. Technical information, such as that prohibited from export to communist countries, also was embargoed. The action was taken "reluctantly," the US State Department said, to "defend the legitimate economic interests of the people of this country against the discriminatory and injurious economic policies of the Castro regime." The administration said the action was taken in response to the following specific measures of the Cuban government:

- A variety of taxes on US flour, potatoes, rice, drugs, cigarettes, shoes, and automobile parts.
- Surcharges ranging from 30 to 100 percent on remittances of foreign exchanges to pay for certain imports, and restrictions and delays on dollars to pay for imports.
- Seizure without compensation of US-owned properties valued at $1.25 million.

In a speech on 2 January 1961, Premier Castro said that of the 300-person staff of the US Embassy in Havana,* 80 percent were agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Pentagon spying on Cuba. He described the Embassy as the center of counterrevolutionary activity. That same day, Cuba demanded by diplomatic note that the staff of the US Embassy in Havana be reduced to 11 persons in 48 hours. In response to "this unwarranted action by the government of Cuba," President Eisenhower formally severed diplomatic and consular relations on 3 January 1961, after several months of increasingly tense relations. The President said the Cuban government "can have no other purpose than to render impossible the conduct of normal diplomatic relations." Most US Embassy

*The US Embassy in Havana actually employed 76 persons, including five at the Consular Office in Santiago de Cuba.

AP Wide World Photos

Castro sent a detachment of Cuban militiawomen, armed with Czech-made automatic weapons, and wearing boots and berets, to guard members of the staff of the US Embassy as they prepare to leave Cuba in January 1961.

personnel and their families left Cuba the same day, taking the ferry to Florida.

Six Latin American countries also had severed relations with the new Cuban revolutionary government—the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Haiti, Guatemala, and Peru.[9]

Soviet Cooperation

On 7 May 1960, revolutionary Cuba became the fourth Latin American country to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, joining Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay. The Soviets wasted no time in establishing their presence on the island. They rented a white suburban mansion and three nearby houses to form an embassy

complex with a staff of 200, the largest embassy in Havana; Soviet technicians and military advisers also began arriving quietly in Havana. An exchange of visits between Premier Castro and General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev was among the first topics of discussion between Havana and Moscow. Cuban trade missions were dispatched throughout the communist world, as Cuba sought to establish alternatives to markets in the United States and other democracies.[10]

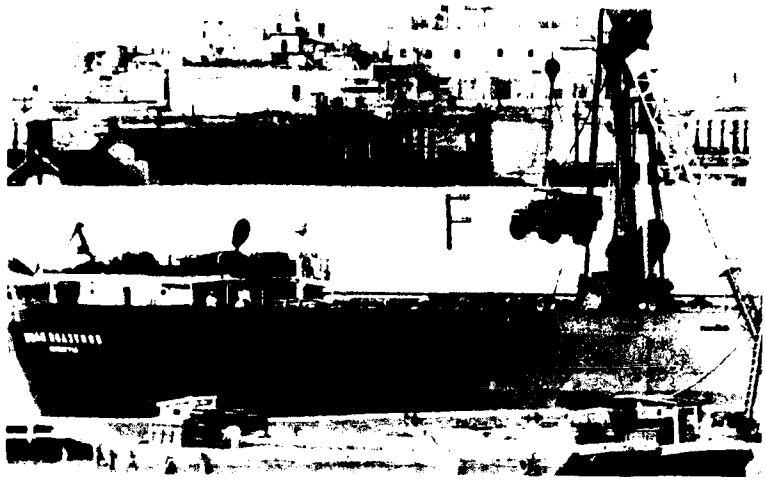
On 18 June 1960, Cuba signed a trade agreement with the Soviet Union. The accord, signed by Antonio Nunez, who was in charge of the Cuban Economic Mission to Moscow, and Soviet Foreign Trade Minister Nikolai S. Patolichev, called for the purchase of Soviet oil and oil products. Nunez and Patolichev also signed joint communiques on trade, general economic relations, and cultural cooperation. Nunez said in the Soviet newspaper *IZVESTIA*, "Cuba's geographical proximity to the United States puts her under no obligation to maintain a political alliance with that country." On his return to Cuba, Captain Nunez reported communist countries would provide 56 new factories to Cuba, at a cost of $92 million. The USSR-Cuban agreements included a Soviet steel mill, with an annual capacity of a million tons, and plants from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. The projects were to be financed by a $100 million credit offer extended by the Soviets in February 1960. The People's Republic of China also indicated it would provide economic support to Cuba.[11]

The agreement for Soviet oil to replace supplies from western countries was particularly significant, because 95 percent of Cuba's electric power depended on oil. Cuban refineries, unable to obtain crude oil to process, were faced with a possible shutdown, slowing Cuba's oil-dependent economy. Major "Che" Guevara assured the Cuban people that the Soviet Union could provide all the petroleum the island needed; the seized Texaco refinery already was processing Soviet crude oil. Concerned by the loss of US and British technicians, the Cuban government was replacing refinery managers and engineers with Soviet-bloc technicians.[12]

In July 1960, Secretary of State Herter instructed the US Ambassador to Moscow, Llewellyn Thompson, to deliver a warning to the Kremlin not to intervene in Cuba. Ambassador Thompson told First Party Secretary Frol R. Kozlov the United States would consider the establishment of a Soviet base in Cuba or any other violation of the Monroe Doctrine as an unfriendly act. Kozlov dismissed the warning, saying the whole idea of Soviet intervention in the Caribbean was "fantastic." The United States was shocked when, a week later, Soviet Premier Khrushchev said in a speech in Russia, "If need be, Soviet artillerymen can support the Cuban people with their rocket fire should the aggressive forces in the Pentagon dare to start intervention against Cuba."[13]

The first "Latin-American Youth Conference" opened in Havana on 26 July 1960, bringing together approximately 500 leftist and communist youth and delegates from Latin American labor groups and observers from the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and other communist countries. Raul Castro, Cuban Minister of the Armed Forces, told the conference that even before the receipt of arms offered by the Soviet Union, Cuba had decided to fight off an American attack. "Today with the Soviet help," he said, "we are confident that we can fight and win." Cuba does not fear an "economic blockade" by the United States, Major Castro continued, because the Soviet Union will sell Cuba everything it needs and buy Cuba's products. He said Soviet assistance to Cuba, unlike that of the United States, did not have any conditions: "The help being received from the Communist countries is simply in exchange for nothing." He also revealed that he had met with Premier Khrushchev for five hours during a recent trip to the Soviet Union. During the meeting, Khrushchev not only assured Cuba of the USSR's economic support for its "just struggle," but renewed his pledge to defend Cuba against armed US intervention.[14]

In the United Nations, the Soviet Union supported Castro's charges of US aggression against Cuba because of the embargo imposed on exports to the island that



AP Wide World Photos

Supplies are offloaded from a Soviet ship in Havana Harbor during January 1963. A military-type truck, built in the Soviet bloc, is swung over the side here for the USSR's new ally.

went into effect on 19 October 1960. Major "Che" Guevara, head of the Cuban National Bank and Castro's principal economic adviser, announced on 26 December 1960, after returning from a three-month trip to Iron Curtain countries, that the Soviet Union had increased its economic support. The new aid pact, promising a $250 million aid program that included 100 new plants in Cuba, established Cuba as an economic partner of the Soviet bloc. New facilities to be built included a refinery, power plants, cotton mills, textile plants, and factories for tools, bicycles, kitchen utensils, and refrigerators. Guevara said that the People's Republic of China and Czechoslovakia also would build factories in Cuba, and that the Soviets would send technicians to explore for oil and minerals on the island. New steel mills would increase Cuban production from 40,000 tons to 200,000 tons per year. Cuba would pay for the economic assistance with sugar and hides; neither commodity, however, was in great demand in the USSR.[15]

Bay of Pigs

On 17 March 1960, President Eisenhower authorized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to begin recruiting and training Cuban exiles as guerrillas to overthrow the Castro government. US relations with Cuba had deteriorated rapidly and the specter of a communist government 100 miles off the coast of Florida was considered an unacceptable danger. The President had used the CIA in 1954 to organize and finance a guerrilla force of 150 exiles, supported by a few World War II P-47 fighters flown by civilian American pilots, to overthrow the leftist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala.

Hardly a shot was necessary, and the CIA envisioned using the "Guatemala Model" for Cuba, but on a somewhat grander scale.[16]

The Democratic Revolutionary Front, an anti-Castro organization in Florida supported by the CIA, began recruiting Cuban exiles for military service in May 1960. The original plan was to organize and train small guerrilla units for harassing Castro's military forces during incursions into Cuba. The overall plan was changed, however, in November 1960 to an invasion. A base for training a larger "Liberation Army" was established in Guatemala. Members of the original guerrilla group began infiltrating into Cuba in December, with the dual mission of sabotage and organizing anti-Castro resistance. By January 1961, training of the brigade in the Guatemalan mountains was in full swing. By March, the training of Brigade 2506* was no longer a secret: it was a frequent topic of discussion in the homes of Cuban exiles in Miami. Rumors of an invasion of Cuba were widespread and CIA recruiters in Miami were conspicuously enlisting volunteers. Articles about the speculated invasion were published in *The Miami*

*The name for the Brigade was taken from the serial number of the first member of the Brigade to be killed. Young Carlos Rafael Santana was killed in a fall during training while on a platoon reconnaissance mission in the mountains of Guatemala.

Herald and *U.S. News & World Report*. Cuban families in Miami, proud of their young patriots in the training, were not reluctant to brag about them. Castro's informants in Miami had little difficulty obtaining information about the pending invasion to transmit back to Havana.[17]

President John F. Kennedy inherited the Cuban invasion plan from the Eisenhower administration on his inauguration on 20 January 1961. While he supported the concept of removing Castro's leftist government in Cuba, he had serious doubts about the planned operation. He was concerned not only about the reaction of the Soviet Union, which was becoming more belligerent, but also the potential condemnation of nonaligned countries, particularly in Latin America, and US Allies. The President was worried about what he termed "the noise level" of the operation: He wanted it carried out with a minimum of publicity and international exposure.[18]

Kennedy presided over a late afternoon session that included a briefing on the Cuban operation in a conference room in the new wing of the State Department on 4 April 1961.* To keep the meeting inconspicuous, participants arrived at varying intervals; the press was told that the meeting concerned "Laos and other problems." Senator William Fulbright (D-Ark.), attending at the invitation of the President, expressed his doubts and moral objections to the pending Cuban operation. A consensus existed among the other participants that the

*Richard M. Bissell of the CIA gave the final briefing on the operation during the meeting. Attending were: Secretary of State Dean Rusk; Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara; Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, US Army; CIA Director Allen Dulles; Senator J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; McGeorge Bundy, Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs; Paul Nitze, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; Thomas Mann, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs; and three Kennedy Latin American specialists—Adolf Berle, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., and Richard Goodwin.

operation should proceed. The meeting ended inconclusively, however, with the President saying, "Gentlemen, we'd better sleep over it."[19]

After being briefed on the plan on Saturday, 8 April 1961, in New York, Adlai E. Stevenson, Ambassador to the United Nations, said, "Look, I don't like this. If I were calling the shots, I wouldn't do it. But this is Kennedy's show. All I ask is three things: Don't do anything until the Assembly adjourns. Second, nobody leaves from US territory. Third, no American participation."

On 13 April, the President was still undecided about going forward with the plan. He dispatched the US military commander for the operation, Marine Colonel Jack Hawkins, to the Guatemala camps for a final evaluation. Colonel Hawkins returned with an enthusiastically positive report on the force's ability to accomplish the mission.[20]

In deference to objections from Senator Fulbright, Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles, and UN Ambassador Stevenson, two critical changes were made in the invasion plan.

- US air support would not be called in at any time.
- The 16 B-26 bombers of Brigade 2506 would make just two strikes before the invasion; the first would be two days before the landing, and the second on the morning of the landing.

As the date for the invasion approached, the media began pressing for more information. On Friday, 14 April, President Kennedy told the head of the CIA operation that the first of two air strikes was approved. Almost as an afterthought, Kennedy asked how many planes would take part in the raid. When he was told 16 B-26 bombers, the President said, "Well, I don't want it on that scale. I want it minimal." Without "minimal" being defined, six planes were used for the Saturday attack.

Even though the air strike was made to appear as if it were carried out by defecting Cuban pilots, US involvement was the focus of considerable international speculation. Rusk told the President he doubted the

second air attack would appear to be launched by defectors. Concurring with Rusk's evaluation, the President ordered the second strike on Castro's airfields canceled only hours before the invasion was to begin.[21] This decision was crucial to the outcome of the invasion.

While President Kennedy clearly had taken the position no American forces would be committed to the invasion, the Cuban exile leaders of the invasion force continued to receive assurances US military forces would support them, if necessary. US advisers in the field told Colonel Jose Perez "Pepe" San Roman, the Brigade 2506 commander, "If you fail, we go in."[22]

In April 1961, Fidel Castro was so certain the invasion was coming he started sleeping during the daytime so he would be alert during the night, when the attack was most likely. He also felt one of the first objectives of an attack would be a strike against his small air force. As a deceptive measure, he positioned old and disabled aircraft in groups of three on his airfield taxiways, while operational aircraft, dispersed and camouflaged, were protected by antiaircraft guns. As Castro had anticipated, the Brigade's B-26 bombers began the invasion with a strike on Cuban airfields. Flown by Cuban pilots, the bombers inflicted considerable damage to Castro's air force on the ground. After the raid, however, Castro still had four operational fighters and two B-26 bombers to use against the invasion.[23]

The coordinated attacks on the airfields was the signal Castro was waiting for—the invasion was imminent. Between the air raids on 15 April, and the actual invasion on 17 April, Castro confined an estimated 100,000 Cubans. Using information from his network of neighborhood informers, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), Castro arrested anyone with the least suspicion of counterrevolutionary sentiment. When the prisons were filled to overflowing, prisoners were confined in stadiums, schools, and even in the moat of *La Cabanas* prison. The mass arrests effectively neutralized the resistance movements expected to rise and support the invasion with sabotage and active revolt.[24]

The invasion began shortly after midnight on 17 April 1961. As daylight broke, the 1,500 members of Brigade 2506 extended their beachhead inland from the initial landing sites and prepared to unload tanks and heavy equipment from landing ships. Castro's remaining air force attacked the supply ships, destroying much of the ammunition and supplies before they could be landed. Repeated strafing and bombing by Castro's fighters and bombers kept the invasion forces from advancing, giving Castro's army time to encircle the area with tens of thousands of troops and Soviet-made tanks.

The invasion forces on shore made urgent requests for air support from the US Task Force cruising over the horizon south of Cuba. On the third day, Colonel San Roman made one last desperate plea for air support from the aircraft carrier USS *BOXER*. "Where is our support?" he asked. The reply was, "We cannot give you any further support. You are on your own." The angry and frustrated San Roman quickly replied, "And you, sir, are a son of a bitch!" At 5 p.m. Colonel San Roman issued his final order to the Brigade: Destroy the heavy equipment, separate, attempt to reach the Escambray Mountains, and then fight on as guerrilla bands. By the time this order was being given, Castro had massed 80,000 troops and more than 100 tanks against the invaders. Of the 1,500 men of "*La Brigada* 2506," 1,180 were captured and brought to trial in Havana; 100 were killed in the three days of fighting, and another 60 died of wounds or other causes.[25]

The continuing tragedy of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion was the excuse it provided the Castro government to impose and institutionalize repressive controls on the Cuban people, eliminating any possibility for a revolutionary uprising or even peaceful disagreement. His repeated harangues about a US-supported invasion had proven true, and he continued to use the possibility of future attacks as a pretext for militarizing the Cuban society. Castro also used the invasion attempt as a basis for his increasing requests for sophisticated weapons

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***La Brigada* prisoners captured at the Bay of Pigs are marched through the streets by Cuban guards.**

from Soviet-bloc countries. He wanted missiles capable of striking targets in the United States to discourage any further attempts to overthrow his regime. The attempted invasion, directly supported by the United States, also justified his increasing military capabilities to the Latin American community, previously critical of Cuba's growing military might.

Cuban Missile Crisis

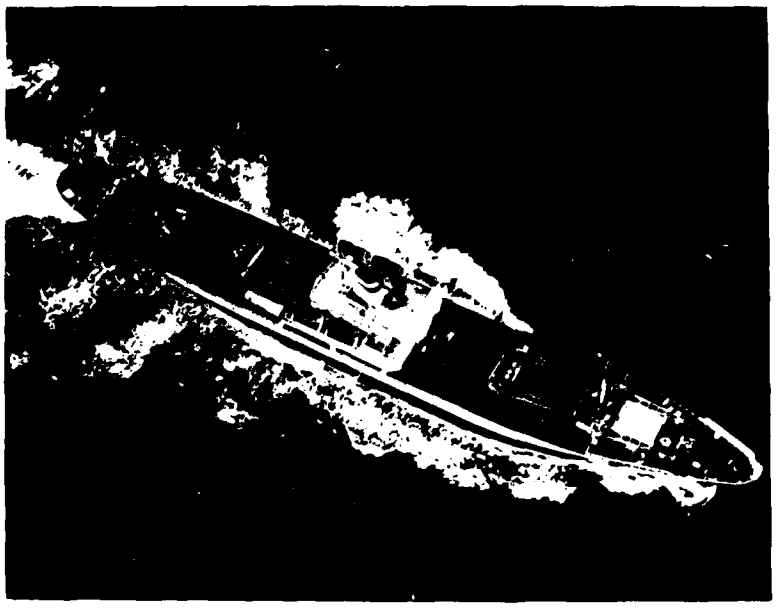
Cuban refugees arriving in the United States had reported as early as August 1962 that pads and storage bunkers for missiles were being constructed on the island. The White House did not consider the missile reports serious, but did express concern over the substantial amounts of conventional Soviet armaments Cuba was receiving; Cuban surveillance was increased in early October 1962. Aerial photographs made by a

U-2 surveillance aircraft on 14 October 1962 revealed more than traditional weapons: They provided the first graphic evidence of missile bases under construction. A next-day analysis concluded that facilities under construction were for medium-range missiles capable of striking targets as far away as 1,265 miles.[26]

When completed, missiles launched from these sites could strike several major US cities and critical military facilities in the southern, eastern, and midwestern sections of the country, as well as the Panama Canal. Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy told President Kennedy early on the morning of 16 October 1962, "There is new hard photographic evidence that the Russians have offensive missiles in Cuba." As the President sat on the edge of his bed in pajamas and a bathrobe, he ordered a meeting of top security officials.

At the 11:45 a.m. meeting, the CIA gave a formal presentation in the Cabinet Room, explaining the U-2 photographic evidence. During the briefing, the President's brother, Robert F. Kennedy, reflected on recent Soviet assurances that no offensive weapons would be located in Cuba. When Kennedy had expressed his concerns to Soviet Ambassador Anatole Dobrynin about the Cuban buildup, Dobrynin told Kennedy that Chairman Khrushchev had directed him to assure the President no ground-to-ground missiles nor offensive weapons would be given to Cuba, and that the military buildup was insignificant. A week after the Dobrynin meeting, Khrushchev again reassured the President in a personal message that under no circumstances would surface-to-surface missiles be sent to Cuba. As Robert Kennedy listened to the CIA briefing, he realized the assurances had all been "one gigantic fabric of lies." Missile launching pads were being built and missiles were being shipped to Cuba at the same time the assurances were being given.[27]

Three days after the initial detection, reconnaissance flights discovered more missile bases under construction. These bases were for larger 2,530-mile intermediate-range



AP Wide World Photos

Eight canvas-covered missiles are shown on the deck of this Soviet freighter, after it departed the Cuban Port of Mariel in November 1962. This aerial photo is dated 7 November 1962.

missiles, extending the Soviet threat throughout most of the United States. Construction on the sites progressed rapidly from the time of detection until late October, when the Soviets had completed nine sites—six with four launchers each for medium-range missiles, and three sites with four launchers each for intermediate-range missiles. Newly constructed bunkers for nuclear weapons also were observed at the missile bases. John T. Hughes, special assistant to the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, later reported the Soviet Union's objective was to "achieve clandestinely a fully operational capability for all systems by early December 1962, in order to confront the United States with a fait accompli."[28]

The nuclear missile threat, so close to the United States, seriously upset the balance of world power—a situation the United States could not accept. Failure of the Kennedy administration to detect, and accurately evaluate, the Cuban missile bases had brought the United States to the brink of war. The advanced stage of construction left no room to negotiate or compromise—removal of the missiles was a "vital national interest" to be accomplished even at the risk of war. President Kennedy met with his advisers in emergency meetings on 17 and 18 October. On 22 October 1962, he announced to the American people that he would impose a naval and air "quarantine" of Cuba, to prevent delivery of additional offensive weapons from the Soviet Union. In the days that followed, a US invasion force was assembled at military bases in Florida, and US armed forces throughout the world were placed on Defense Condition 2,* one step away from war. Bombers of the Strategic Air Command loaded with nuclear weapons were rotated in an airborne status, poised to strike targets in the Soviet Union.

On the other side of the world, the Soviet Defense Ministry alerted the Soviet armed forces for "atomic war."

The Organization of American States (OAS) issued a unanimous resolution on 23 October 1962, condemning Cuba for "secretly endangering the peace of the Continent by permitting the Sino-Soviet powers to have intermediate- and middle-range missiles on its territory capable of carrying nuclear warheads." The resolution called for immediate dismantling and withdrawal of all missiles and offensive weapons, and recommended that

*US Defense Conditions (DEFCONs) follow an escalating scale of readiness, from DEFCON 5, normal peacetime condition, through progressively higher levels of combat readiness to DEFCON 1, war. As published in *PRAVDA*, "On 23 October 1962 the Soviet government ordered the minister of defense to defer the release of the older classes from the Strategic Missile Forces, the Air Defense Forces, and the Submarine Forces; to cancel all leaves; and to raise the combat readiness and vigilance of all forces."

all member states take measures, individually and collectively, including the use of "armed force to prevent the missiles in Cuba with offensive capability from ever becoming an active threat to the peace and security of the Continent." The OAS action, which gave a legal basis to the quarantine of Cuba, was a heavy blow to Khrushchev. He had hoped to castigate the United States in the world arena for taking provocative and aggressive outlaw actions; instead, he faced an Alliance of 21 nations protecting their interests. Many OAS countries provided men, supplies, and ships during the several weeks that followed.[29]

After a paralyzing four days, during which the world came closer to nuclear war than ever before or ever since, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev negotiated an agreement. Consistent with a proposal made to President Kennedy in Khrushchev's letter of 25 October, offering "no more weapons to Cuba and those within Cuba withdrawn or destroyed, and you reciprocate by withdrawing your blockade and also agree not to invade Cuba," the agreement called for the following steps:[30]

- The Soviet Union would dismantle and remove offensive missiles from Cuba.
- The USSR would allow United Nations inspectors to supervise and verify removal.
- The Soviets would not reintroduce ballistic missiles to Cuba.
- The United States would pledge publicly not to invade Cuba.

Just as the Bay of Pigs invasion attempt justified Castro's repressive internal measures, eliminating the possibility of a revolt from within, the Cuban Missile Crisis provided a guarantee against attack from without, ensuring a Cuban communist government for decades to come.

6

Cuba in 1980

What does Cuba expect in 1980? Well, a net income per capita of some $3,000, or more than the actual per capita income of the United States. And if you do not believe me, all right. We are here to challenge you, gentlemen. If you just leave us in peace, if you let us develop and in 20 years let us come back, we shall see if the chant of the siren was that of revolutionary Cuba or not.

Ernesto "Che" Guevara
Organization of American States,
August 1961

AFTER 1962, WITH THE CUBAN PEOPLE UNDER FIRM INTERNAL CONTROLS and the country secure against US-initiated attacks from abroad, Fidel Castro set about consolidating the revolution and promoting himself and Cuba to positions of world prominence. Exporting revolution was Castro's international goal for the 1960s. He sent covert bands of dedicated Cuban guerrillas to foment and support revolutionary movements throughout Latin America. Castro and "Che" Guevara believed Cuba's revolutionary success would serve as a model for other countries in the region. Cuba's efforts to promote revolutions, however, were generally unsuccessful and did little more than alienate Cuba from established Latin American governments. Castro's covert guerrilla

operations essentially ended when his close friend and adviser, "Che" Guevara, was captured in the mountains of Bolivia.

Guevara failed to gain the trust of Bolivian peasants or the support of Bolivian communists. A special force of the Bolivian army hunted down Guevara and his small band of Cuban revolutionaries. After an engagement in a remote mountain ravine, Guevara was captured and unceremoniously executed the next day, 9 October 1967. His expedition had failed to precipitate a Bolivian revolution.[1]

Economic Problems

Castro turned his attention inward in the late 1960s, focusing on Cuba's social and economic issues. The Cuban Prime Minister enjoyed the international acclaim accorded Cuba for its special social programs,* such as subsidized housing, expanded education systems, elimination of illiteracy, and health care and free medical treatment for all Cubans. While some socialistic improvements were made, the Cuban people still were forced to cope with shortages of food and basic essentials. As the society and economy were centralized, the Cuban people were systematically brought under

*While Castro prided himself on Cuba's socioeconomic achievements, many of the successes for which he accepted full credit were programs and trends begun before his revolution. Some medical advances he claimed, such as the elimination of poliomyelitis from Cuba, were brought about through technology transfer. Other developing countries accomplished equally significant social and economic objectives without the political repression or loss of individual freedoms that occurred in Cuba. Costa Rica, for example, was an open pluralistic Central American democracy that started from a lower economic base than Cuba and achieved comparable socioeconomic standards. For a further discussion of Cuban equivalent socioeconomic comparability, see Hugh S. Thomas, Georges A. Fauriol, and Juan Carlos Weiss, *The Cuban Revolution: 25 Years Later* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984).

tighter controls and deprived of their individual rights. In the late 1960s, Cuba's sugar production was steadily increasing and the Cuban economy showed strong signs of recovery. The Cuban people had hopes the improvements in living conditions, repeatedly promised by the government, finally would be realized.

Prior to Castro, attempts to stabilize the Cuban economy by moving away from the reliance on sugar had been unsuccessful, primarily because of unrealistic planning and ill-conceived government economic strategies. Under Castro, sugar actually increased as a percentage of total agricultural production and total economic output. The economic fate of Cuba became even more dependent on the rise and fall of the price and production of a single crop—sugar. The failure of Cuba to diversify its economy by moving away from the near total dependence on sugar may well have been a conscious decision by Fidel Castro, whose paramount goal was his continued dictatorial rule of the country. Castro was aware that extensive industrialization and economic diversification would have required a greater degree of decentralized decisionmaking, access to a wider range of world markets, comprehensive and realistic planning, and large-scale capital investment—all of which would have introduced new influences on the government and people of Cuba.

Probably the most difficult aspect of economic development for Castro to accept was the necessity to put economic priorities ahead of political decisions. After comparing alternatives, Castro opted for economic stagnation over giving up his tight centralized control over the country.[2]

The economic debate of the early 1960s, crucial to the fate of the people of Cuba, centered on the role of moral versus material incentives. Castro supported the early stand of "Che" Guevara, Cuba's first Minister of Industries. Guevara proclaimed, "While not denying the objective need for material incentives, we maintain that the development of the consciousness does more for development of production in a relatively short period of time than material incentives do."

Castro later disagreed with Guevara over fundamental issues of incentives and Marxist economic development. In the mid-1960s, Castro began to favor the practical application of material incentives to increase productivity. Guevara, however, steadfastly believed in the idealistic use of moral incentives as the key to increased production. This basic disagreement concerning economic development may have been the reason Guevara embarked on his revolutionary mission in Bolivia.[3] After Guevara's death in 1967, Castro apparently reconsidered his position concerning incentives and economic development. Cuba's economic policies in the late 1960s, a radical extension of Guevara's theory of centralized budgeting, moved the country away from a market economy. In March 1968, Castro confiscated the country's remaining 55,600 small businesses, including peddler trade. The move virtually ended all Cuban private enterprise and eliminated any legal means of making a profit through individual initiative and industry. In defense of the government's action, Raul Castro said, "We did not make a revolution in order to establish the right to trade." Castro's brother condemned the short-ranged benefits of a market economy, stating, "To say that small merchants lived better because they were influenced by material incentives is true. And for that reason we reject material incentives. We do not want a small merchant mentality for our people."

The Castro government continued its drive to eliminate individualism, and communize the Cuban people. The state provided more services free or at greatly reduced costs, based on the theory that free services would lessen the significance of money and wages, giving greater importance to moral incentives, and facilitating the use of voluntary labor. The priority of moral versus material incentives officially was adopted at the Twelfth Workers' Congress in Cuba in August 1966. The Cuban government's idealistic reliance on moral incentives to motivate workers led to significant inefficiencies and serious problems in production and

services. Without the incentive of material reward to motivate workers, the development of systems to prod workers into performing became increasingly more necessary. As the "carrot" became less desirable, the state had to use a larger "stick."[4]

The apparatus for monitoring and controlling the Cuban people became more severe and pervasive. The Cuban State Security Organization, *Seguridad del Estado*, equivalent to the Soviet KGB (Committee of State Security, Soviet Secret Police), and its various intelligence-gathering systems was firmly established throughout Cuban society, to maintain internal security. Every facet of a Cuban's life was controlled, even personal affairs and recreation. The purchase of food, which was rationed, from any place other than a government facility was a crime. The Cuban government had become the sole employer, educator, and healer of the Cuban people. All religions were repressed, with less than 1 percent of the people in this once highly religious country ever attending church services. The Cuban government became the conscience of the people, establishing acceptable norms of behavior—rewarding and punishing accordingly.

Sugar and Soviet Aid

Fidel Castro announced in 1969 that Cuba would achieve the largest sugar harvest in the country's history. He said the *zafra*, as the sugar harvest is called in Cuba, would be ten million tons—almost twice what Cuba had been averaging annually. By his direct involvement, Castro implied his acceptance of personal responsibility for accomplishing his proclaimed goal. In a series of national speeches, he exhorted all Cubans to do their share. Tens of thousands of Cubans left their offices, factories, and schools for the cane fields to help achieve the Premier's goal. All available labor and resources were diverted to the harvest without regard to economic impact.

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Fidel Castro joins in cutting sugar cane during the 1969 effort to achieve the largest sugar harvest (*zafra*) ever in the history of Cuba.

Achieving the goal became a national priority. But the *zafra* failed to meet its widely publicized goal by a

million-and-a-half tons, and the economic distortions of the inefficient dedication of resources to achieve an unrealistic goal had been costly: The monumental effort left the Cuban economy virtually bankrupt. Worse than the loss of prestige was the devastating impact on the nation's directed economy. Contrasted with a market economy, the cost of production versus the value of the product had not been a relevant factor in Cuba's overall planning. The failure of the *zafra* was an example of Cuba's guerrilla mentality applied to economic planning.

The failure of the sugar harvest made Castro even more indebted to the Soviet Union, and even more dependent on extensive aid from the Soviet bloc. A US congressional report estimated that the total accumulated Soviet assistance to Cuba as of 1979 was $16.7 billion (US), in subsidies on commodities traded and repayable loans. The 1979 outstanding repayable loan portion of the Cuban debt to the USSR was $5.7 billion (US). Supporting the Cuban economy was costing the Soviet Union an estimated $3 to $4 billion annually. Cuba's debt to the West also had grown to nearly 60 times what it was before Castro took over. When the Soviet and western debts were combined, the total Cuban indebtedness was 200 times greater under Castro than under any other Cuban leader.[5]

As a result of Cuba's growing dependence on the Soviet Union, the Kremlin became more involved in Cuba's internal affairs, exacting a price for its increased subsidy of the Cuban economy. In the early 1970s, Castro "institutionalized" the communist form of government in Cuba, perpetuating communist leadership, and theoretically relinquishing some of his centralized control over the country to the Cuban Communist Party. Evidence now indicates, however, that Fidel Castro manipulated the cover of "institutionalization" to receive increased Soviet support, while giving up little of his power to the Cuban Communist Party. Fidel still remained the true and unquestionable ruler of Cuba, aided by his brother Raul and his trusted foreign policy adviser Carlos Rafael Rodriguez.[6]

Overseas Adventures

While strongly denied by Castro, Cuba's ambitious foreign involvements in the 1970s may well have been a quid pro quo for continued Soviet economic support. With the Soviets providing transportation, arms, and advisers, Cuban troops and technicians became more active internationally, serving as the communist vanguard in the developing nations of the Third World. This arrangement appealed to Castro: He could satisfy his ambitions of being an international leader, while rekindling waning socialist fervor in Cuba. Cuban tank commanders demonstrated their military prowess by fighting successfully for Syria in the 1973 Yom Kippur War with Israel. Serving as a suitable proxy for Moscow's forces, more than 100,000 regular and reserve Cuban military personnel had taken part in African campaigns, primarily in Angola and Ethiopia, by the end of 1980.[7]

Cuba's investment in providing thousands of trained and skilled personnel to overseas operations was a considerable drain on the country's limited pool of technically qualified manpower, further burdening the faltering economy. The magnitude of Cuba's foreign activities was particularly significant, considering the overseas resources were drawn from a population of less than 10 million. Projecting a Cuban presence, and playing such an important international role, only could have been accomplished with extensive financial and resource support from the Soviet Union.

In addition to economic hardships, the forced conscription of young men as soldiers for far-off battles caused concern among the Cuban people. In the late 1970s, Cuban forces accounted for two-thirds of all communist military and technical personnel in Third World countries, exceeding even the numbers of Soviet forces in Afghanistan and Vietnamese forces in Southeast Asia. Cuba also had technical advisers and construction workers in Algeria, Iraq, Jamaica, Libya, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Vietnam, and Grenada. Cuba's overseas involvement continued with 70,000 military troops,

technicians, and technical advisers in 23 countries around the world in 1982.[8]

Cuban Unrest

Cuba approached 1980 beset with serious social and economic problems. It was dependent on the Soviet Union for an estimated $3 billion a year in financial aid and subsidies to keep the economy from collapsing. The population showed signs of unrest, and rumors of sabotage and anti-government activities circulated throughout Havana. The pervasive control of the Castro government over all aspects of the Cuban economy and society meant any signs of discontent were basically political in nature. Thousands of Cubans were arrested under the 1978 *de peligrosidad* ("potentially dangerous") law, which enabled the government to imprison anyone for up to four years as a potential threat to society. More escapes from Cuba were made in 1979 than in the previous seven combined years, another indication of mounting dissatisfaction. President Castro* brought back a hard-liner, Ramiro Valdes, as Minister of the Interior, in charge of the police. Valdes, who had organized intelligence and security systems for Castro in 1959, instituted extensive identity requirements that resulted in new detentions, presumably to stop anti-government propaganda.

The upward trend in the Cuban gross national product (GNP) leveled off, and then declined sharply from 6.5 percent in 1978 to a record low of 0.4 percent in 1980. This minimal increase in GNP signaled stagnation and a severe economic situation. Cuba suffered from a serious shortage of housing, food and consumer

*Fidel Castro was Prime Minister of Cuba from 1959 until 1976. In 1976, he also became President of the Cuban Council of State, making him "head of state" as well as "head of government." From that point on, his title was President.

goods were scarce and strictly rationed, unemployment and underemployment continued at high rates, water and sanitary systems were inadequate, electrical blackouts occurred daily, and public transportation was insufficient. Aware of the obvious problems, the Cuban government took little substantive action to correct them. In speeches in late 1979, both Fidel and Raul Castro attributed Cuba's dire economic straits to inflation, the US trade embargo, the low price of sugar, "sugar cane rot," and "blue mold" that damaged two successive tobacco crops. They also blamed Cuba's problems on the indifference and corruption of workers and supervisors, shoddy workmanship, and falsified production records.[9]

The government was reorganized, in an effort to improve the economic situation; 11 ministries and state committees were merged or abolished and nine high-ranking officials were dismissed. These highly publicized changes may have been staged to give the population the impression of sweeping reforms. But no changes were made in the country's basic economic or political policies. Cubans remained weary of government rhetoric and unfulfilled promises of better times to come.[10]

7

Life in Cuba

To satisfy his desires most easily, a tyrant uses three ruses: first, he makes sure that those who follow him are fools and live in constant fear, so they will not dare rise up against him; second, he does whatever he can to ensure that his subjects do not trust one another, because those who live in strife will never dare speak ill of him; third, he keeps the people impoverished by submerging them in great projects and interminable adventures, so that they will never think of doing anything against him.

Alfonso the Wise, King of Castille
Siete Partidos, *Thirteenth Century*

THE IRREVERSIBLE DECISION OF MORE THAN 10,000 CUBANS to enter the Peruvian Embassy, abandoning homes and possessions and fleeing their country in a matter of hours, was symptomatic of the desperation of the population. Thousands of supporters of the former dictator Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba immediately after Fidel Castro overthrew the Batista government. Their flight was consistent with the historical movement of refugees after a violent change of government, not unlike the British Tories who fled to Canada after the American Revolution.

The flight of significant portions of the Cuban populace, however, after relative stability should have returned to the country, raised questions over why the

migration continued. An examination of conditions within a society that could precipitate an incident such as occurred at the Peruvian Embassy is important. The rash decision by more than 10,000 Cubans to give up everything and leave the country indicates more than isolated dissatisfactions.

Committee For The Defense Of The Revolution

Mercedes Lopez was one of Havana's two million residents in 1980. She awoke every day at 5 a.m. to prepare breakfast for her three school-age children before leaving for her job at the shoe factory. She lived with her family in a one-story apartment building in a middle-class residential neighborhood. She shared the one-bedroom apartment with her husband, from whom she was separated and in the process of divorcing, two sons, 17 and 12, her 15-year-old daughter, her divorced sister, and her sister's three-year-old son. When Mercedes came home from work, the large woman who represented her group of apartments on the local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) would be waiting with questions about where Mercedes had been, why she was late, and what she had in her packages. Mercedes resented the way the CDR representative was always checking on everyone, but was too afraid to say anything. She knew the large woman could get her into serious trouble with the government.[1]

An accusation of counterrevolutionary activity could put her in jail. Mercedes smiled to herself when she thought about the gossip that said the large woman's husband, a policeman, was just as afraid of her as everyone else.

The Committees, with millions of members 14 and older, were very much a part of everyone's life in Cuba. The state-controlled CDRs were organized as neighborhood watch groups. They were the eyes and the ears of the

Castro government—present in all facets of Cuban life. Committee members watched for signs of political discontent and anti-social or illegal behavior. Individual representatives reported to the chairs of neighborhood committees, who in turn reported to regional offices. The CDRs also coordinated volunteer labor projects and fieldwork outings, neighborhood political indoctrination programs, mobilization for mass demonstrations, and neighborhood security watches. The Committees also served as mass control mechanisms for the state, supervising and regulating daily life in Cuba. People deferred to Committee members because of their power. The CDRs maintained careful records, issuing certificates for participation in revolutionary activities. While these certificates had little positive benefit, they were used to discourage political passivity. Failure to take part often led to official discrimination for job applications, housing permits, and school assignments. Cubans joined in government activities out of fear of the consequences of nonparticipation for themselves and their children.[2]

Political indoctrination of all Cubans began at the CDR level, the first step in an individual's "integration" into the sphere of communist beliefs and doctrine. Appropriate authorities considered the level of an individual's cooperation and progress in the "integration" process in making decisions affecting the lives of individuals and their families. The Cuban system of control coerced active conformity. "The CDR cannot do anything for anyone," an economics student who emigrated from Cuba in 1979 said, "but it could 'sink' anyone."[3]

Housing

The Lopez apartment was crowded and inconvenient, but the family survived. Houses and apartments were in such short supply in Havana that even divorced couples were forced to remain together in the same residence. In the late 1970s, the Cuban housing shortage was estimated at 700,000

units; new construction never exceeded 21,000 units annually. To further aggravate the deficit, houses had deteriorated to the point where more were demolished as uninhabitable than were being built each year. Newly married husbands and wives had to continue living separately with their families because no housing units were available for them, and not enough room was available for both to live with one family. On weekends, married couples separated by the housing shortage often went to one of the cheap rooming houses, called *posados*, where they could be alone in a room for three hours for about $5. The lines at the *posados* were long and couples usually had to wait for hours. Special areas in some public parks were designated "zones of tolerance," where couples were permitted to make love undisturbed by the authorities.[4]

The white building in which Mercedes Lopez and her family lived had been built in the early 1940s; it was old but in relatively good condition. She felt fortunate to have her apartment and did not mind sharing it with her sister; she enjoyed being near her little nephew, who called her "Grandma." She was disturbed, however, that his daycare center taught the young children to hate Americans. The little boy would bring home pictures he had drawn of guns, telling her, "Grandma, this is what I am going to use to kill the Yankees."[5]

The government adjusted house rents in Cuba to be no more than 10 percent of a family's income. After a family had paid rent to the government for a house or apartment for 20 years, it became theirs and could be willed to their heirs. Many Cuban houses were old and deteriorated but, once owned by the occupant, the government no longer assisted with repairs. The government was proud of this expedient system of distributing houses—ending profiteering and rent gouging by landlords. In the years since the Castro Revolution, ownership of 78.8 percent of all homes on the island passed to the occupants free of any rent or taxes. Before the revolution, housing for Cuba's rural agricultural workers

was particularly poor. With investments in materials and volunteer labor, the government had made significant housing improvements for *campesinos*, but the great disparity between housing for rural and urban workers still remained.[6]

Despite a modest population growth, ranging from 2.2 percent in 1965 to 0.8 percent in 1979, Cuba still had a severe shortage of housing units. Once a house or apartment was owned by an individual or family, with no mortgage or tax to be paid, any incentive to relinquish the property was eliminated. Even if a person were assigned to work in another city, keeping the original house cost him nothing. While the housing system tended to control geographic mobility, it also limited status mobility, because families who lived in large houses in the better sections of the city before the revolution still occupied those houses. The government could reassign houses or apartments of persons emigrating from Cuba, however.[7]

The government sponsored a program in which "work brigades" built new houses in the Alamar suburbs of Havana. Young men with good records of taking part in government activities could submit their names for selection for a brigade. If selected, they would build houses with the brigade during their free time for the next several years. After two or three years, depending on participation, they would become eligible to live in one of these newly constructed homes.[8]

Cuban Workforce

Unemployment was a serious problem in Cuba in the late 1970s. After waiting a long time to get her job at the shoe factory, Mercedes Lopez was careful not to be late for work. On the street corner every day at 6 a.m., she worried that the bus would be too crowded or behind schedule, or that it would break down before she got to work.

Havana's buses were in short supply and in poor repair. Mercedes' husband, a bus driver, told her of the difficulty in obtaining the repair parts and in finding good drivers and mechanics because so many were serving with Cuban troops in Angola or Ethiopia.* Private automobiles were scarce because permission to purchase one generally was reserved for party or government elite. Buses were the common conveyance in Cuba: In 1980, they provided 94 percent of the transportation on the island. Although they were no longer free, the buses were cheap—only 5 *centavos* a fare.[9]

Cuban workers secure in their jobs often did not bother to go to work. The shortage of food and consumer goods in the economy gave workers little incentive to earn more than the minimum. During the day, movie theaters often were filled with men and women who chose not to show up for work. The Cuban government reportedly opened more restaurants to give workers additional opportunities to spend their wages, hoping to create incentives to earn more money and decrease absenteeism. The government may have ended rationing of liquor and cigars for the same reason—incentive to earn and spend. In 1980, Cubans could buy all the rum they wanted for $14 a bottle, or $10.50 for a lower-quality liquor. While eliminating rationing on alcohol gave workers something to spend their wages on, it aggravated Cuba's serious alcoholism problem, contributing to more absenteeism. The sale of alcoholic beverages was restricted until the end of the work day—6 p.m. weekdays, 2 p.m. Saturdays, and 9 a.m. Sundays.[10]

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*Cuba's regular standing military force was not large enough to sustain the country's overseas commitments. Troops assigned outside Cuba roughly equaled about 20 percent of the country's regular armed forces. To supply its overseas manpower commitment, Cuba had to mobilize its reserve forces. Reserves made up 80 percent of overseas personnel. Mobilization of reserves drained skilled manpower from the country's economy, leaving less-qualified technicians and workers to do their jobs.

Education

Mercedes Lopez worried about the future of her son Mario. She knew the only way he could get ahead in Cuba was with proper training, but she doubted that the government would assign him to a quality school. A good student, Mario wanted to continue his education, but he had not taken part enthusiastically in communist activities, nor was he a member of any revolutionary youth organization.[11]

The Cuban education system, often cited for its achievements, was used for repression and Marxist-Leninist indoctrination. The government compelled Cubans to comply with the will of the regime, and take part in government activities, out of fear they or their children would not get an education. Educational opportunities were highly visible rewards for government activism and political allegiance—selection for university and advanced courses was based largely on a student's political record as much as academic achievement. Decisions on continuing education were based on information in personal dossiers. The dossiers were begun when the student first entered school, and contained cumulative information on academic and political activities and attitudinal information about individuals and their families.

Schools were the principal instruments for communist orientation programs, beginning with daycare centers. Throughout the school year, university and high school students routinely engaged in "agricultural activities," such as the sugar cane harvest. The government considered these periods, when students were away from home and family distractions, to be particularly productive for political indoctrination.[12]

Indoctrination, rather than agricultural production, may have been the primary goal of the programs for school children.

The Cuban educational system in 1980 included a preparatory school (kindergarten) and six years of elementary school. After elementary school, alternatives were three years of basic secondary school, or a two- or

AP Wide World Photos

Student volunteers from Havana University harvest sugar cane by hand, as part of Castro's "agricultural activities" program.

three-year course at a polytechnical school. After that, students could be selected for three years of pre-university studies, four years of teacher school, three or four years at polytechnical institutes, or a one- or two-year advanced course in a polytechnical school. From these schools, the government selected students to go on to university centers, or colleges. The school system also provided a parallel program of adult education for farmers and workers that could lead to studies at the university level.

The state ran all schools in Cuba; no private education was available at any level. A survey by the Cuban government in 1979 indicated that 4.5 percent of the working population had "university education," and another 17 percent had received at least 12 years of schooling. Just under half of the labor force had at least nine years of education. The five years before 1980 saw an apparent decline in the emphasis on education, with the Cuban government's total gross investment in this

"nonproductive sphere" of education dropping from 10.3 percent in 1975 to 3.2 percent in 1980.[13]

While Castro boasted of Cuba's achievements in education, citing high enrollments, he was silent about two important educational deficiencies—a high dropout rate and a shortage of graduates in technical areas. In the 1970s, more than 70 percent of elementary school-age children and 85 percent of high school-age children dropped out of school programs before completion. While Cuba graduated large numbers of students qualified in foreign languages, it did not produce enough technicians to meet the country's technical needs.[14]

Entertainment

Lines at movie theaters always were longest when American films were shown. But Mercedes Lopez, like most Cubans, did not mind waiting, because she preferred seeing US pictures. Cuban theaters generally featured highly politicized Soviet films but, every now and then, they would show a US movie. The Castro government selected particular American films because they portrayed corruption and violence in American society. Mercedes Lopez was certain that most Cubans knew they were shown for propaganda purposes, but she could not be sure, because everyone was afraid to say so. Government radio and television stations carried few entertainment programs, showing mostly political programs, documentaries, and local news. Even the music in Cuba had become politicized—few romantic songs were played.

Mercedes and her family liked to go to the beach for recreation. Because of her husband's job as a bus driver, they used the transportation workers' beach, which had been a private beach club before the revolution. Most labor groups had their own recreational facilities, designated by the government. Activities were easier to control when even recreation hours were spent with the people with whom the people worked. In their free time

on Saturdays, the people would receive instruction in the Russian language. After the revolution, the Cuban government systematically eliminated all professional and social organizations. Civic organizations, such as Lions Clubs or the Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees), were not allowed to exist unless they were directly controlled by the government; this repression also applied to independent professional organizations, such as medical, legal, or engineering associations. In their place, the government established such groups as the Federation of University Students, the Women's Federation (with more than two million members), and the Federation of Secondary Students.[15]

Delfin Hernandez resisted government pressures to discontinue his membership as a Freemason. A blacksmith, he was one of the few Cubans still self-employed. Since Cuba needed his individual skills as a blacksmith, his employment could not be threatened. In resisting, however, he was identified as a "political diversionist" who failed to "integrate" with the Castro revolution.[16]

Cubans often spent their extra money, and their free time, in dimly lit government-run neighborhood bars and *titos de cervasa*, beer shops, where they could drink, smoke, and talk with friends. Drinks cost $1 and cigarettes were $1.60 a pack. Occasionally, Cubans would go to one of the larger hotels, where the atmosphere was nicer but the drinks were more expensive, at least $1.50. Because of rationing and the usual shortages in food stores, many people ate in restaurants for variety in their diets. Restaurants also were subject to rationing, however, and many items on their menus were not available. Meals varied from $2 for a plate of spaghetti at a pizzeria, to $20 for a full-course meal at the Tropicana Night Club. Considering costs and the average weekly wage, which ranged from $88 for a physician or engineer to $30 for a receptionist, opportunities to go out for food and drink appeared limited. Most people, however, lived rent-free, or paid only a small rent. With free medical care and education, and consumer goods scarce, they had little to spend their

incomes on, so eating out was a popular form of entertainment.[17]

Rationing

Some consumer goods were not rationed, but their availability was limited. Luxury items also were particularly scarce, so the right to purchase them was a privilege reserved for Cuban Communist Party members and faithful supporters of the Castro revolution. Before being permitted to buy a television set, for instance, a committee first determined if the person or family were hard workers and deserving of such a luxury. If the committee turned the person down, the only hope of obtaining the item was through the "black market," where prices were greatly inflated and the risk of getting in trouble with the police was high. The price and scarcity of appliances, for example, made them virtually impossible for average Cubans to obtain. In 1980, Cuba produced only 25,000 refrigerators, 40,000 television sets, and 200,000 radios—well below demand. Prices for appliances ranged from $990 to $1,130 for refrigerators, $1,050 to $1,270 for television sets, and $70 to $210 for radios.[18]

Antero Fong had to take even better care of his clothes in 1980 than before. The annual clothing ration for men was reduced from two shirts to one, and to only one pair of shoes instead of two; the trouser ration remained at two pairs. Making clothes last and keeping them presentable was particularly difficult because of their low quality. But Antero had no choice—buying replacement clothes on the black market was too dangerous. Persons buying or selling on the black market risked imprisonment without trial as a "dangerous person." In spite of the danger, black market activities became rampant when the government, reacting to economic conditions, reduced food and clothing rations.[19]

To discourage the black market and raise additional revenue, the Cuban government initiated what it called

AP Wide World Photos

Cubans brave the elements in a long line waiting for a Havana bakery shop to open toward the end of December 1983. Many staples of everyday life are still rationed or hard to find, more than two decades after the Castro revolution.

a "parallel market" or "free market"—commonly referred to by the Cuban people as the "red market." Purchasing items on the "parallel market" without a ration book was legal, but prices were greatly inflated—even higher than the black market. For example, blue jeans on the "parallel market" might cost $100, but only $15 with a ration book; a shirt on the "parallel market" could cost as much as $80.[20]

The food ration also was reduced in 1980. The new monthly ration for each person was five pounds of rice, one and a quarter pounds of black beans, two ounces of coffee, four pounds of sugar, and one and one half pounds of lard. The meat allotment of 12 ounces per person for nine days drove the price of fresh beef on the black market as high as $10 a pound. Milk was rationed at one liter a day for children under seven. Adults were permitted four packs of cigarettes a month at 20 cents each with the ration book; they had to pay $1.60 to

$1.80 a pack on the "parallel market." The Cuban rationing system was an economic necessity, but it also was an effective control over the mobility of the Cuban population, since individual "supplies booklets" were valid only at designated neighborhood stores. Rationing, like the housing system, hindered people from moving freely about the country.[21]

Youth

In 1980, nearly half the Cuban population had been born after Castro came to power in 1959. Most people were too young to be familiar with the anti-Batista struggle, the Bay of Pigs incident, or the Cuban Missile Crisis. They were, however, very much aware of the unfulfilled promises of the Castro government, conscription, volunteer labor, rationing, and the sacrifices they were asked to make for the sake of the revolution. They did not share in the opportunities of the early 1960s that created the new social hierarchy. Instead, they found themselves in a situation of limited opportunities for social mobility.[22] The only way young people could succeed under the Castro regime was to conform. But in conforming, their drive and ambitions were stifled.

They questioned their future and the future of Cuba, but not openly.

The exceptionally large school dropout rates and increasing acts of juvenile delinquency, often against the state, indicated the frustration of Cuba's young people. The Cuban government recognized the need to exert a greater influence over the restless young people and to increase their political consciousness. To instill revolutionary loyalty and communist ethics, the government expanded membership in the Young Communist League (UJC) to more than a million. The government also concentrated greater effort on the political indoctrination of youth and younger age groups. Those who did not respond appropriately to the teaching techniques of the

UJC faced the Youth Army of Work (EJT). The EJT, formerly the Youth Column of the Centenary, engaged primarily in agricultural activities. Recruitment into the EJT supposedly was voluntary; however, youth with low academic standings and no interest in higher-level studies and young people who did not support the revolution enthusiastically were coerced to join. They were threatened with assignment to the General Military Service (SMG) or arrest under the "law against vagrancy." While EJT labor normally was in isolated areas under difficult conditions, it was less rigorous and the wages were higher than the $7 per month paid the SMG.[23]

Religion

When Antero Fong applied to the University of Havana, one of the first questions he was asked was "do you believe in God?" He knew that if he said "yes" he would not be selected. While people were not prohibited from attending church services in Cuba, the government openly ridiculed those who did and made obtaining decent jobs difficult for them. Being "religious" disqualified a person from getting a government job or achieving a status position. Children of people who practiced their religion also were discriminated against. They were not punished directly, but were excluded from the opportunities other children had.[24]

The Cuban government, through its discriminatory policies, reduced organized religion in Cuba to its minimum expression. By 1975, Cuba had the lowest rate of religious marriages and baptisms in the Western Hemisphere. Less than 1 percent of the population attended a religious service at least once during the year. These statistics represent a drastic change in a country where 48 percent of the population attended church services and were religiously active before the revolution. Article 54 of the 1976 Cuban Constitution, modeled after the Constitution of the Soviet Union, granted freedom of

worship, but did not eliminate discriminatory practices such worship brought on. The Programmatic Platform of the Cuban Communist Party, the only political party in Cuba, spoke for the Castro government when it proclaimed as a goal "the progressive elimination of religious beliefs through scientific materialistic propaganda."[25]

The government employed such harassing techniques as blaring loud music from loudspeakers outside churches during Sunday Mass so the congregation could not hear the priest. Harassing tactics were particularly evident during important holy days. The government devised a *Plan de la Calle* (Street Plan) to discourage children from attending religious classes at the churches. Government-sponsored recreational activities were conducted adjacent to the churches on days scheduled for religious instruction. These activities, well publicized and with plenty of sports equipment, were enticing alternatives to attending religious classes.[26]

Approximately 15,000 Jews lived in Cuba before the revolution. In 1980, only a small fraction of the estimated 1,500 remaining members of the Jewish community would identify themselves. Castro's open support of hard-line Middle Eastern Arab countries was difficult for Cuban Jews to accept and made their relationship with the Cuban government even more tenuous. A few older Jewish men still came to the large synagogue in the once-affluent *Vedado* neighborhood of Havana for Sabbath services, but otherwise it received little use. The last time a cantor conducted a service there was in 1960; the last Jewish wedding was in 1976. Few young Cuban Jews practiced Judaism, because they feared they would be deemed ideologically unfit, affecting their chances to get an education, good jobs, or housing.[27]

Youths suspected of being Young Communist League members often raided Cuban churches, disrupting services by screaming, throwing eggs, and urinating on the floors. Windows often were broken and holy objects desecrated. Streets in the vicinity of churches

were dug up and never repaired. While the Cuban government may not have directly sponsored the vandals, authorities certainly condoned their acts, since no actions ever were taken to discourage them.[28]

Repression

Within the Cuban government, Cuban State Security was directly responsible for repressive measures. A political police force functioning within the Ministry of the Interior, State Security had far-reaching authority. Equivalent to the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB), it had authority to arrest anyone suspected of real or potential crimes against the state. It could detain, without charges, anyone suspected of "potential future illegal activities," subordinating the interests and rights of individuals to the designs of the Cuban government.

Cuban laws and procedures had been revised under the tenets of Marxism-Leninism to guarantee the conformity and cooperation of the people. Organizations such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution were created to discourage individualism and force conformity. The purpose of Cuban State Security was to punish dissenters and nonconformists. After 1970, Cubans were required to carry Soviet-style identification booklets, *carnet de identidad*, which served as internal passports. In addition to a photograph and personal information, the booklet contained an evaluation of the individual's political activities.[29]

As in most dictatorships, the Cuban political police, *Seguridad del Estado*, was one of the most powerful and efficient organizations in the government, responding directly and solely to President Castro. Young men were selected to serve in the State Security forces on the basis of their intelligence, potential, and, most importantly, their unquestionable loyalty to Fidel Castro. This elite force received special training and enjoyed special economic and social privileges. Along with the Cuban

Border Guard, another elite force, they were responsible for putting down internal uprisings, particularly among the military. Members of State Security held the fate of every Cuban in their hands and had access to all sources of information concerning individuals. State Security was responsible for interrogating political prisoners. Secrecy and fear were major instruments of State Security repression; the identity of agents and informants was closely guarded. The Directorate of General Intelligence (DGI) provided information to the Cuban government from agents working in Cuban communities overseas, infiltrating and manipulating Cuban exile groups. Cubans had to be careful about what they wrote or said to their families in other countries—their words easily could get back to Cuba.[30]

For its size, Cuba had the greatest number of political prisoners of any country in the world. Dr. Juan M. Clark and Dr. Juan A. Figueras, conducting research into political repression in Cuba, said that between 20,000 and 30,000 people were imprisoned there for crimes against the state. Amnesty International's 1979 report indicated that political prisoners in Cuba in the mid-1970s numbered 20,000. Based on population, this figure would be the equivalent of 500,000 political prisoners in a country the size of the United States. Using Castro's own 1977 estimate of 5,000 political prisoners, and a Cuban population of 10 million, the political prisoner-to-population ratio in Cuba was 125 times greater than that of the Soviet Union, with its highly publicized *gulags*.[31]

Sentences for political crimes in Cuba also were exceptionally long, and treatment of political prisoners was extremely harsh. The International Rescue Committee, a world-wide group organized in 1933 to assist anti-Nazi refugees escaping from Germany, reported that in the first 18 years of the Castro government no amnesty had been granted for Cuban political prisoners. The Rescue Committee further stated that Castro's estimate of 5,000 political prisoners was understated; the actual figure could be as high as 50,000. The Cuban

government steadfastly denied access to its prisons by all international organizations, including the International Red Cross and Amnesty International.[32]

Exile Visits

President Carter lifted the prohibition against American citizens traveling to Cuba to visit relatives on 18 March 1977. He took a further step toward normalizing relations with Castro when he removed the prohibition against spending US dollars in the island nation, opening the door for American visits to Cuba. This action, which authorized American visitors to purchase up to $100 worth of Cuban *pesos* for personal use, was the first relaxation of the trade embargo since 1963. It coincided with direct Cuban-US negotiations on international fisheries issues—the first direct high-level contact between the two neighbors in 16 years.[33]

As various tour groups visited Cuba throughout 1978, Castro realized the economic potential of rapprochement. Feeling confident in the consolidation of his revolution, and anxious to receive US dollars, the Cuban president took actions to increase the number of US visitors. Bypassing diplomatic channels, Castro met with a "Committee of 75," representing the Cuban exile community, on 21 November 1978 at Havana's Palace of the Revolution. They agreed on the following:

1. Cuban exiles would be allowed to return to the island to visit relatives.
2. Cuba would allow 3,600 political prisoners to emigrate from Cuba.
3. Separated Cuban families could be reunited in the United States.

Members of the Committee of 75, who described the meeting as a Castro "monologue," were not aware that Cuba and the United States had already agreed on these same terms in a secret accord. In the year and a half following the agreement, more than 100,000 Cuban exiles

from the United States visited relatives in Cuba. No longer were the exiles called "worms" and other derogatory terms; they had become the "community abroad." In spite of an unfavorable dollar exchange rate imposed by the Cuban government and greatly inflated prices, Cuban Americans, *la communidad*, eagerly returned to Cuba to see their relatives and visit their homeland. To raise even more revenue, the Castro government required all Cubans, even naturalized US citizens, to obtain Cuban passports before their return to the island. Cuban-American visitors had to pay premium rates for hotel rooms, even though they were never used—visitors usually stayed at the homes of relatives.[34]

Cuban-Americans paid a high price for their visits—more than $800 per person. But their fine clothes and expensive gifts imposed an even greater price, in terms of traumatic social shock, on the Cuban society. An American official in Havana said of the visits,

> The exiles arrived decked out in their best clothes, carrying radios, television sets, and toasters, smoking cigars, and talking about how the streets of Miami were paved with gold. Watching some of these meetings, I could see how upsetting it was for the people who still lived in Havana.[35]

The situation had a particularly negative effect on the most dedicated Cuban communists. Cubans who had remained in touch with relatives and friends in the United States received food, clothing, and appliances from *la communidad*, while loyal party members and supporters of the Castro revolution were "left out in the cold." The visits almost took on humorous proportions, with relatives arriving with suitcases full of cosmetics, medicines, watches, and all sorts of items difficult to find in Cuba. The visitors even brought parts for old American automobiles on their flights to Cuba. People wore several layers of clothing, peeling them off to give to their relatives.[36]

The obvious high standard of living enjoyed by the Cuban expatriates made the hardships of the Cuban

people all the more difficult to endure. The visitors were living proof that Cuban government reports of mistreatment and hardships endured by Cubans who emigrated to America were only false propaganda.[37]

The visits triggered serious second thoughts by people intimidated by mechanisms of mass control and weary of economic hardship. Cubans pondered dreary prospects for their future and the future of their children.

8

To Mariel

The Castro regime may again resort to large-scale emigration to reduce discontent caused by Cuba's deteriorating economic condition.... During the 1960s, Cuba resorted to large-scale emigration to rid itself of opponents of government policies and to reduce demand for scarce goods.... The revival of such a policy could reduce popular discontent.

Central Intelligence Agency
Cuban Analytic Center, 31 January 1980

SOME 65 CUBANS, SIX ARMED WITH PISTOLS, seized the 100-foot Cuban government dredge *FIFTH OF DECEMBER* on 31 January 1980 while it was docked at Varadero Beach in the Port of Cardanas. Boarding the vessel at night, the hijackers bound and gagged the captain and crew for the 12-hour crossing to the Florida coast. After they reached the Florida Keys on 1 February 1980, the United States granted the hijackers and two of the crew political asylum; the dredge and remaining five crew members were returned to Cuba. A similar incident occurred four months earlier, when 22 Cubans hijacked a motorized barge in Havana harbor and sailed it to Key West, where they were given political asylum.[1]

Two weeks later, eight men armed with five handguns took over the Liberian freighter *LISSETTE* on

US Coast Guard Photo

Hijacked Cuban tugboat, displaying its homeport of *Habana* on its stern, is assisted by a US Coast Guard cutter as it moors in Florida in 1980.

16 February 1980, while the ship was moored in Havana harbor. In the course of the hijacking, one of the ship's crew was struck on the head during a brief scuffle. The hijackers told the crew a bomb was planted in the engine room and forced them to sail to Florida, where the eight Cubans were granted asylum. Yet a third hijacking occurred during the month, when 26 Cubans seized the 45-foot Cuban fishing boat *LUCERO* on 25 February 1980 and forced the crew to take them to Florida.[2]

Each event was widely publicized in the Florida media, and the Cuban exile community welcomed the hijackers as heroes.

Early Warnings

Angered by the hijackings, and the failure of the US Government to discourage them, Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez called Wayne S. Smith, Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana, to a meeting on 19 February 1980. During the meeting, Rodriguez warned Smith,

> Despite your failure even to reply to our notes, we have continued to cooperate in deterring aerial hijackings. But our patience is running out. Unless your government responds soon, we may have to take measures of our own, and those measures could include the opening of a new Camarioca.* If your government wants people in small boats, we can give you more than you bargained for.[3]

Smith reported the warning to the State Department in Washington.

Fidel Castro criticized the United States in an 8 March 1980 speech before the Third Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women for encouraging the hijacking of vessels from Cuba to Florida. He said that while Cuba had complied with the wishes of the United States

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*On 28 September 1965, Castro announced that as of 10 October 1965, the Cuban port of Camarioca would be opened to the boats of "Cuban Exiles" who wished to return to Cuba to pick up relatives. The relatives leaving Cuba were forced to abandon their homes and property to the government when they went to Camarioca to await the boats. The Cuban government suddenly closed the port on 15 November 1965 and terminated the "boatlift" after 2,979 Cubans had left the island. The 2,104 people remaining in the Camarioca compound were transported to Florida on boats chartered by the United States. The "Camarioca boatlift" ended because President Lyndon B. Johnson had negotiated the safer and more orderly use of commercial aircraft for the transportation of refugees. The "Freedom Flights," as they were called, began on 1 December 1965 and continued with two flights a day, five days a week until August 1971, when they were stopped. During the "Freedom Flights," 260,561 Cubans came to the United States on 3,049 flights.

with regard to airplane hijackings, the US Government had not responded to Cuba in kind for the hijacking of vessels. Castro said,

> We hope they will adopt measures so they will not encourage the illegal departures from the country because we might have to take our own measures. We did it once.... We were forced to take measures in this regard once. We have also warned them of this. We once had to open the Camarioca port.... We feel it is proof of the lack of maturity of the US Government to again create a similar situation.[4]

Smith said the Cuban threats resulted from "the US failure to do anything about the boat hijackings. It was not that Cuba wanted the people returned necessarily but it was the lack of US action to punish or even reprimand the hijackers that upset them (the Cuban government). Instead, they (the hijackers) were welcomed as heroes encouraging more hijackings."

Castro also was concerned by the lack of progress with the agreed-on emigration of former political prisoners. Processing of applications for immigration lagged far behind requests; US Attorney General Griffin Bell, in 1979, personally reviewing each file to exclude "spies, terrorists, and common criminals."* The Cuban government complained that hundreds of released political prisoners were wandering the streets while waiting for US clearances. The Cubans also complained the numbers for immigration were smaller than they had expected. The United States, in turn, was concerned because Castro had unilaterally decided to include former prisoners released before August 1978 in the agreement. His action substantially increased the number of emigrants. Smith said, "The sense in the Cuban Government in 1980 was that the United States was taking advantage of them."[5]

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*Robert A. Pastor of the National Security Council said the Justice Department continued the tedious and prolonged review of the applications despite President Carter's "direct handwritten appeal" to the Attorney General to speed up the process.

After an initial thaw in relations in 1977, when the Carter administration took steps toward normalizing relations, the United States began resuming a harder line with Cuba. Castro's external policies, including a greater involvement in the Caribbean, Central America, and Africa, and Cuba's increasingly close military relationship with the Soviet Union, caused the United States to take stronger stands with the Castro government. Under *Presidential Directive 52*, the United States increased its economic aid and sale of military equipment to allied countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Surveillance flights over Cuba, which had been suspended, were resumed, and major military exercises were scheduled for the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The priority of these actions had taken precedence over the emigration of political prisoners.[6]

The Cuban Analytic Center of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported that as early as 21 February 1980,

> The State Department learned that discussions about reopening (the port of) Camarioca were taking place within the Cuban government and that Cuba wanted the United States to allow more Cubans to migrate to the United States. The CIA viewed this as confirmation of their earlier warnings.[7]

Meetings were held with representatives of the Cuban government in Washington and Havana, in response to Castro's speech and Cuba's growing concern about delays in the emigration of political prisoners. Cuban diplomats were assured that the pace of emigration for political prisoners would increase under the new Refugee Act of 1980. US diplomats excused the lack of action against Cuban hijackers because of sympathetic juries in heavily Cuban-American South Florida. The Cubans explained to the US diplomats that the Camarioca threat was only a last resort, but that the United States should appreciate the depths of Cuba's feelings on the two issues.[8]

Persistent rumors in Miami about an impending boatlift prompted the State Department's Refugee Program Bureau to call an interagency meeting* in Washington, DC, on 3 April 1980. The subject of the meeting was, "What if Cuban President Fidel Castro suddenly opens a Cuban port to mass emigration, as he did at Camarioca in 1965?" On the agenda were the faltering Cuban economy, the increase in the number of hijackings and defections, CIA data, and Castro's speech of 8 March. While the possibility of another Camarioca existed, the consensus of the meeting was that it did not appear imminent. Attendees agreed that the situation required careful monitoring but, as yet, not enough concrete evidence was seen to justify sounding an alarm. The new Refugee Act of 1980, effective 1 April, was seen as a relief valve available to the Castro government. The new statute provided for the United States to accept as many as 1,000 former political prisoners each month for six months. Members of the group also expressed concern that overt preparations for a migration might help to precipitate one. The meeting concluded with an agreement to draw up a contingency plan. The Federal plan was in the first-draft stage when it was overtaken by events in Cuba.[9]

Opportunity Seized

Castro clearly desired to relieve internal pressures in Cuba through some type of mass migration early in 1980. Advantages of another migration from Cuba were obvious: Easing housing shortages and unemployment problems, strengthening the Castro Revolution by removing dissidents and potential troublemakers from the

* Attending the meeting in the fourth-floor conference room of the State Department Annex were representatives of the Justice Department, Coast Guard, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Department of Health and Human Services, and three State Department experts on Cuban affairs and refugees.

country, and it could cause Cubans who were unable to "integrate" with the revolution to come forward and identify themselves. As with the Camarioca "boatlift," when the people who couldn't integrate with the revolution were known, the Cuban government could remove them from their jobs in favor of more deserving revolutionaries, give them special identity cards, and monitor their activities. Castro also knew that further resistance to the government would be abandoned once an application was made to leave Cuba; persons would conform to the rules, out of fear of jeopardizing their chances of emigrating.[10]

As Castro struggled with the overcrowded Peruvian Embassy and the negative publicity generated by the evacuation flights to San Jose, he realized the situation was an excellent opportunity to initiate another boatlift. While the Cuban President had proclaimed the Peruvian Embassy crisis a bilateral problem between Cuba and Peru, and the US President was making every effort to limit US involvement, Castro knew he could prey on the emotions of the large Cuban-American population to involve the United States. In his view, the US Government had failed to respond to Cuba's legitimate requests concerning hijackings and political prisoners; any difficulties caused to the United States would be deserved.

With characteristic shrewdness, the Cuban leader manipulated the emotions of the Cuban community in the United States to put his migration plan into effect. By opening the nearby port of Mariel and inviting members of the "Cuban Overseas Community" to come to Cuba by boat to pick up refugees from the Peruvian Embassy and family members, he could circumvent US Government controls. Castro knew he would be in control of any situation involving boats coming to Cuba; he could use this situation to Cuba's advantage.

Napoleon Vilaboa, a member of the executive council of the controversial Cuban exile group, the "Committee of 75," was in Havana at the time of the rush on the Peruvian Embassy. The Committee of 75, also known as

the "*Dialogo* Committee," was established in 1978 to negotiate with Castro for the release of political prisoners and opening Cuba for visits by exiles to see their relatives. Castro reportedly was involved in selecting members of the Committee of 75, which had maintained communications with the Cuban government since the 1978 negotiations. Other Cuban exile groups considered many members of the Committee of 75 to be pro-Castro.[11]

Vilaboa, who spent two years in a Cuban prison after being captured at the Bay of Pigs, had taken part in previous negotiations with Castro. On 12 April 1980, he was told by high-ranking officials of the Cuban government during a meeting in Havana that Castro had no objection to the refugees in the Peruvian Embassy leaving Cuba. Vilaboa pointed out that the vast majority of the refugees wanted to come to the United States—a fact the Cubans certainly realized.[12]

For Castro, Vilaboa and his committee represented a more desirable alternative than the flights to Costa Rica.

First Boats

The first private attempt to provide direct relief for the refugees in the Peruvian Embassy began on 11 April 1980. A Miami radio station broadcast a call for Americans to assemble with their boats prepared to sail to Cuba to take relief supplies for the people suffering in the Peruvian Embassy. Organizers hoped to pressure Castro into taking more expeditious action to resolve the deplorable situation at the Embassy. The plan called for boats to sail to the limits of Cuban territorial waters, where they undoubtedly would be met by Cuban Border Guard vessels. Food and supplies would be transferred to the Border Guard for delivery to the people in the Peruvian Embassy. With members of the media aboard to cover the event, organizers hoped publicity would stimulate the Cuban government to resolve the Embassy crisis.

Only nine boats arrived in Key West after encountering heavy weather enroute from Miami. Of these, only one actually began the trip to Cuba on 14 April, but heavy seas forced it to turn back. When State Department officials learned of the boaters' plans, they tried to discourage them, warning that the action would only complicate ongoing international negotiations.[13]

American boats began the next organized effort when Vilaboa confirmed to the "Committee of 75" from Havana that the Cuban government would allow exile boats to enter Mariel Harbor to pick up refugees from the Peruvian Embassy—and their own relatives. "When I returned to Miami," Vilaboa said, "We in the exile community agreed that the refugees had to flee as quickly as possible." He put out a call for boats and crews to sail to Cuba. In less than 24 hours, a flotilla of 42 privately owned boats was ready to sail from Florida to Mariel.[14]

In a separate effort, two lobster boats from Key West, *DOS HERMANOS* and *BLANCHE III*, were the first boats to actually reach Cuba, where they were welcomed by Cuban authorities and directed to the port of Mariel, about 30 miles west of Havana.[15] Vilaboa's group of boats, which sailed on Saturday, 19 April, ran into bad weather and rough seas. The 24-foot *LISA MONICA* sank near Sombrero Cay. When rescued, the owner, Vincente Mejia, and crewman Enrique Sanbastiani returned to Miami to prepare another boat to sail to Cuba. After being scattered by the weather, boats arrived at various points along Cuba's northern coast; the Vilaboa flotilla reassembled at Mariel. Rene Rodriquez, a member of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee, met with leaders of the group and responded enthusiastically to the request to pick up refugees from the Embassy. He said relatives of people who brought boats to Cuba also could leave. When Vilaboa pointed out that an estimated 250,000 Cubans had applied for exit visas, Rodriquez said, "If a million want to go, then a million could leave." A Radio Havana broadcast confirmed the Cuban position: "Of course we

will not receive them (the boats) with cannon fire. They are coming in peace. We don't mind that they take them (refugees) away."[16]

The Cuban newspaper *GRANMA* reported the departure of the first two American boats from Mariel:

> On the morning of April 21, two Florida-based vessels left the port of Mariel with 48 antisocial elements aboard. Today, April 22, a total of 11 vessels, also from Florida, will be taking more than 300 of those elements to the United States. That's a good pace!

"These vessels came to Cuba on their own and were given a courteous welcome," the article continued, in a more conciliatory tone, and went on to say, "Their masters requested permission to take to the United States several of the former guests of the Peruvian Embassy as well as a number of relatives of residents in that country; permission was granted with pleasure."[17]

DOS HERMANOS and *BLANCHE III* returned to Key West from Mariel on the night of 21 April 1980. One of the boats broke down and was towed into the harbor by a US Coast Guard cutter. The other boat moored at the Stock Island pier in Key West, where an excited group of Cuban-Americans greeted it. US Customs Service inspectors interviewed the refugees, who were released to the Key West Chamber of Commerce for the night. The next day, they were bussed to Miami for processing. Domingo Galvan, a 44-year-old Cuban exile, sailed with one of the lobster boats in hopes of bringing back his relatives. The Cuban authorities who welcomed the boats were "very friendly, very friendly," he said. "Just like Cubans. No guns. They jumped on board and were very friendly." The boats brought back five family members and 37 refugees from the Peruvian Embassy. Galvan told the Cuban authorities that he would return for his brother as soon as he could get a boat ready; the Cuban authorities responded "fine."[18]

US Coast Guard Photo

***JO MAR* arrives alongside Pier BRAVO at Key West in April 1980 with some of the first refugees from Mariel.**

Castro's message to the Cuban exile community was loud and clear: This is your chance to reunite your family.

The State Department immediately warned that anyone travelling to Cuba illegally to pick up relatives would be committing a felony and be subject to arrest and a fine. Few members of the Cuban exile community took the warning seriously, and boats began to mobilize. The exile community felt a sense of urgency—members recalled how the Camarioca boatlift of 1965 had been stopped as quickly as it had begun.

By Bus To Mariel

As Castro's plan materialized, temporary facilities were constructed for the refugees at Mariel, where they waited to board the boats. Three separate compounds were built, with high chain-link fences separating the categories of refugees; varying levels of security were provided for each compound. Existing buildings were used for processing refugees and housing guards and immigration workers. The refugees were provided with bare essentials—the least facilities were for "undesirables" and former prisoners. Heavy open-sided canvas tents provided protection from sun and rain. The compounds were established at a place called *Mosquito*, two and a half miles east of the entrance to Mariel Harbor. From the compounds, the refugees could see boats arriving from the United States.

Delfin Hernandez lived with his family in his father's house in the *Marinao* suburb of Havana. He and his father, a retired Cuban army surgeon, operated a blacksmith business. Dr. Hernandez was quite elderly; he had retired from the Army in 1954 after 33 years of service. A respected member of the community, Dr. Hernandez enjoyed good relations with his neighbors because of his profession and his prior military service. Because of his age, the neighbors were tolerant of his critical attitude toward Cuban communism—an attitude he attributed to his many years in the military. Delfin, 47, was influenced by his father's feelings and had been

critical of communism from the time he was a boy. The Hernandez family, however, performed a needed service for the community with their blacksmith business, so their dislike for the communist system generally was overlooked. The quality of their work was appreciated and respected by their customers. Some people in the Cuban government, though, were not so tolerant, resenting the independence of the Hernandez family and the fact that they did not take part in revolutionary activities.[19]

When the boatlift began, the Cuban government tasked local Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) to identify "undesirables" who did not fully support the Castro Revolution or were burdens on the Cuban society. Representatives of the neighborhood CDR told Delfin Hernandez that he was a bad influence in the neighborhood because he had failed to "integrate" with the Revolution—they wanted him to leave Cuba. When he learned that he could take his wife and two children with him, he agreed to leave. From that moment on, everything happened very quickly for Delfin: Committee representatives talked to him on Friday afternoon, and at 2 a.m. Saturday, he and his family were on a bus for Mariel. Delfin had difficulty saying farewell to his father, realizing that he might never see the old physician again. The driver of the bus told the Hernandez family and other passengers to keep their belongings with them. But when they arrived at Mariel, their valuables were taken from them. The authorities even took the papers on which the people had written names and addresses of relatives and friends in the United States. Some people smuggled this information past the guards by attaching small pieces of paper to their teeth. Delfin had expected their belongings to be taken, so he had memorized the information needed to contact family friends in the United States.

Delfin and his family spent little more than a day in a fenced-in compound at *Mosquito* waiting for a boat. In the compound, which guards and dogs continually patrolled, cots were available for sleeping under canvas

shelters, but the people had to wait in long lines for small amounts of food and water. While the families waited for their food, guards harassed them, calling them "scum" and "traitors" and pushing them back in line. Despite the large number of people, the lines were very quiet. The guards and their dogs intimidated the people, who were afraid to say anything.

Separate compounds were maintained for families, prisoners, and "undesirables." Mosquitoes and summer heat made life miserable for the refugees, who tried to sleep in the open tents. Delfin Hernandez was anxious about the future—he worried about how he would support his family and wondered what would become of his 16-year-old son and his 12-year-old daughter. The Hernandez family was assigned to the yacht *ROSEE* for the trip to Florida; 80 people were crowded onto the boat, which was designed to safely hold about half that number. The yacht had been chartered by a woman who came to Cuba to get her son. When she arrived at Mariel, she learned that her son was in prison; authorities told her that if she took the 80 people to the United States, the Cuban government would release her son later. Castro was anxious to have the boats return to Mariel, so the authorities allowed only a few relatives to leave, telling the boat crews to return for the remainder later.

When the green-uniformed policeman came to Mercedes Lopez's apartment in Havana, 18 days had passed since they left the Peruvian Embassy with their *salvo-conducto* (safe-conduct) passes. The officer told the Lopez family to get their things—the time had come for them to leave. They followed him down the street for five or six blocks while people shouted at them, calling them "worms," "lumpen," and "traitors." Finally, the policeman stopped a passing car and ordered the driver to take Mercedes and her family to a point several blocks from the police station, where he was directed to put them out of the car. As they neared the police station, they could see groups of people waiting to harass them. Fortunately, they knew the car's driver, who took

them closer to the police station than he should have. When they got out of the old station wagon, the people began throwing things at them and calling them names. Mercedes was injured when a large rock struck her in the back. At the police station, the Lopez family was put on a bus with others from the Peruvian Embassy and driven the 30 miles to Mariel. When they arrived at *Mosquito*, the men and women were separated and searched for money and valuables. The 40 *pesos* Mercedes had brought with her to buy food for the family was taken. The guards took all the jewelry, valuables, and personal papers they could find.[20]

In the compound, the children slept in bunk beds and the adults slept on the tent floor. They could see other groups in separate compounds, but they were not allowed to speak to them. Mercedes thought the guards were stricter with the people from the Peruvian Embassy than with others. She believed that one compound contained families waiting for relatives to come for them and another held convicts and "antisocials." For their dinner, the refugees in Mercedes' compound were given little boxes containing hard rice and *picadillo* (a ground beef mixture). When her 17-year-old son Mario was given the small box of food for his meal, he dug under the fence and went to the other compound to get more food. Mercedes was afraid he would be caught and not allowed to leave Cuba with his family. She was so concerned about her children that she was unable to sleep for the two days they waited.

When the time came for them to leave, they were taken by bus to a former brick factory, where three groups were brought together to be assigned to boats. Each boat was assigned a small number of relatives, a large number from the "*represso* mixture," and some from the Peruvian Embassy. The groups had to say they were from the Peruvian Embassy when they got on the boats, or they would not be allowed to leave Cuba.

University-educated Antero Fong had wanted to leave Cuba for many years, but could not because he was of military age and his father did not want him to

leave. By the time of the Peruvian Embassy incident, Antero's father had been dead for five years, and his mother had no objection to his leaving. He considered going to the Embassy for three days. But when he finally made up his mind to go, the area was sealed off with police barricades and he was turned back. When the Cuban government started allowing people to leave through the port of Mariel, he decided, with his mother's encouragement, to try again. Castro had announced that people with police records could go to the police station and ask to leave. While Antero did not have a police record, he decided on 5 May to go to the police station anyway and ask to leave. The police sent him back to get a letter from the chairman of his neighborhood Committee for the Defense of the Revolution explaining why he should be sent out of Cuba. He told the chairman that he liked American ways and wanted to leave Cuba because he did not participate in orientation or volunteer work. She declared in a letter that he was a danger to the Cuban society.*[21]

That same day, Antero presented his letter to immigration officials in the *Marinao* suburb of Havana, where he filled out applications and had his picture taken. Processing at the Immigration Office took almost two hours and he didn't finish until 6 p.m. He was given five hours to say goodbye to his family; he was to be back at the Immigration Office at 11 p.m. to board the bus for Mariel. Antero took only the clothes he was wearing. With him on the bus, which left *Marinao* for *Mosquito* at 1 a.m., were 30 other men—all "undesirables." The bus took two hours to make the 30-mile trip to the port. When it left the Immigration Office, the security guard told the men to put their money in a container. "You're just going to be searched when you get to *Mosquito*," the guard said, "and won't be allowed to keep any money."

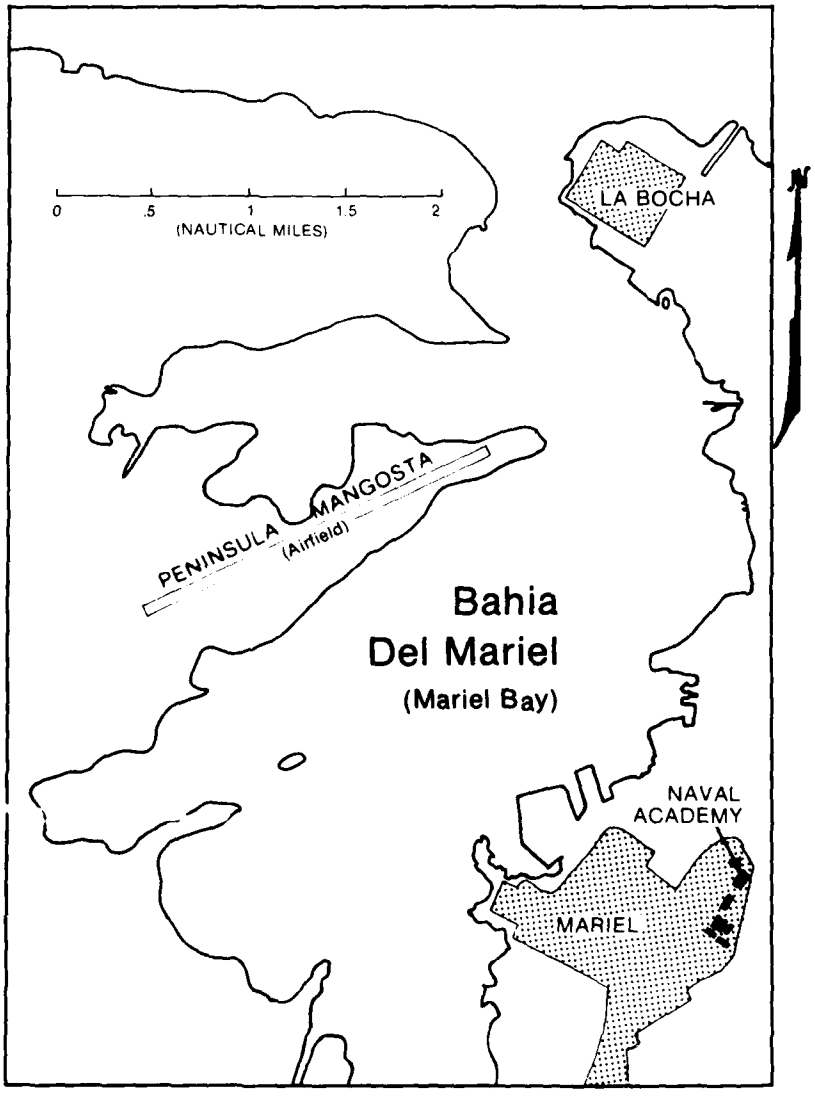
* To support claims that refugees were "social dregs" and "undesirables," the Cuban government had the people sign papers declaring themselves undesirables (*un dross*) as a condition for leaving Cuba. These declarations complicated determinations by US officials concerning the true composition of the refugee group.

The night was very dark when the bus arrived and Antero was nervous—he had no idea what was going to happen. The men were taken to a large building, where they were searched and had their valuables taken from them. When Antero finished being processed, he was put in a compound with the "antisocials." The guards would not allow them to talk to the people in the other compounds. Antero's fenced-in area had only two tents for more than 2,000 people, so he stayed outside for three days without shelter. He didn't sleep for fear he wouldn't hear his name called: The refugees had been told that if they did not answer when their names were called, they would miss their chance to leave Cuba.

The food was bad. They were given a small cup of yogurt and a small biscuit for breakfast, old hard rice with pieces of hard-cooked eggs for lunch, and pressed ham with rice or eggs with rice for dinner. Drinking water came directly out of tank trucks that had been sitting all day in the sun. They had to wait in long lines for food, and if they got out of line, the guards used their rifle butts to push them back. Guard dogs were always present. No one had soap or water for washing the whole time they waited.

Mariel Harbor

Radio broadcasts from Havana invited Cuban exiles in the United States to come to Mariel to pick up refugees from the Peruvian Embassy and relatives who wanted to leave Cuba. Members of the Cuban community flocked to Key West with their own boats or bags of money to hire or buy boats. As more boats carrying refugees returned from Cuba, confirming the Castro government's offer, a steady stream of boats of all descriptions headed south across the 100 miles of open seas. Mariel, an industrial harbor area 27 miles west of Havana, gained notoriety in 1962 as the port to which Soviet ships brought the missiles that triggered the "Cuban Missile Crisis." The



Mariel Harbor

old Cuban Naval Academy sat like a white castle on a hill overlooking the harbor, and columns of white smoke billowed out of the Mariel Cement Plant stacks.

During the early days of the 1980 Cuban Exodus, Mariel was fairly well organized. A patrol boat from the Cuban Border Guard met boats arriving at the harbor entrance and escorted them to the dock. Cuban soldiers searched them, checking identifications of boats and the people on board, and issuing numbers to the boats, like customers in a market. When a boat's number was called, a member of the crew gave the officials a list of people the boat had come to get. Cuba set the rule for passengers—one family member for every four other passengers, to be designated by the Cuban government. When the authorities were given the names of relatives, they called Havana, where the people had an hour to get to the pickup point for the bus to Mariel. If they could not be located, they lost their opportunity to leave. When a boat's number was called again, it went to the dock to pick up refugees.

The people in the boats in the harbor watched as refugees, many with tears in their eyes, silently got out of the yellow buses and into the boats. They all appeared to be very frightened.[22]

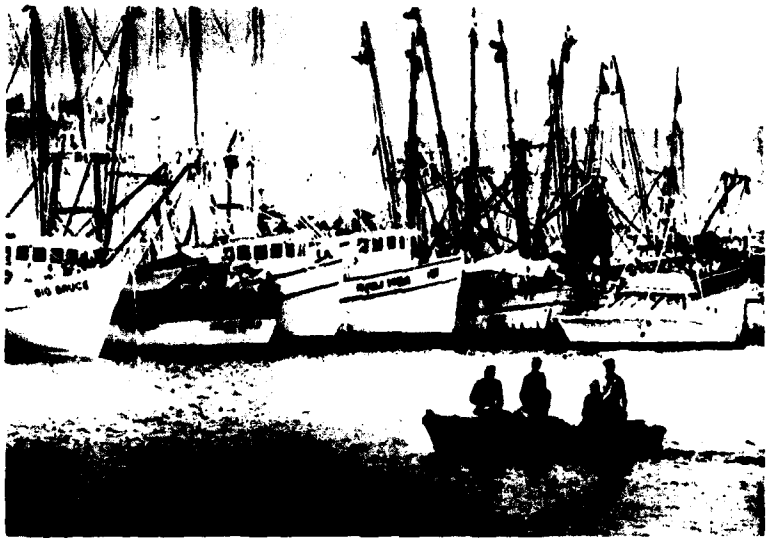
While the Cuban authorities directed the boats not to use their radios, messages were still broadcast back to Florida. Frustration and uncertainty were reported among the waiting Cuban-Americans, who were hoping to receive their relatives. The Cuban officials at Mariel were friendly and cooperative, but the process was extremely slow. By 25 April, 300 to 400 boats—from steel-hulled fishing vessels and fancy yachts to sailboats and speedboats—were in the harbor. Cuban boats continually cruised the harbor, taking pictures of all American boats. Overhead, Soviet-made helicopters maintained aerial surveillance. No one was allowed to leave the boats, even to go swimming. Over loudspeakers, the patrol boat crews ordered, "Stay out of the water. Get back to your boats. Don't leave your boats."

AP Wide World Photos

Cuban soldier stands guard as a boat is loaded with refugees in Mariel harbor, bound for the United States on 23 April 1980.

People watched from the flotilla as Cuban guards armed with automatic weapons patrolled the shore line. At night, searchlights probed the waters surrounding the flotilla, making sure that no Cubans attempted to swim to the boats nor boaters tried to reach the beach.

The atmosphere surrounding the flotilla was subdued and cautious—no one wanted to antagonize the Cuban authorities. Radio messages from Mariel informed boats coming to the port that fuel and water were available, but boaters were warned to bring enough food for several days. As the Cuban officials only processed about 20 boats a day, boaters waiting in the harbor quickly ran out of food. They had expected to be in port only a few hours before returning to Florida with their relatives. Radio messages confirmed that less than 25 percent of the passengers a boat was allowed to take could be family members. As the people waited on the boats, the flotilla in Mariel harbor swelled to 1,500 boats by the end of April, and many more arrived each day than left. Unprepared for the hundreds of boats that



AP/Wide World Photos

Cuban boat patrols the flotilla of US boats assembled in Mariel harbor on Saturday, 26 April 1980.

arrived, the capabilities of the Cuban immigration authorities to process the vessels were quickly overwhelmed. A Cuban ferryboat took Americans from their boats to Havana. People on smaller boats without accommodations stayed at the Triton Hotel in Havana while they waited. The Cubans charged outrageous prices for services and facilities.

Afraid he might run aground in the unfamiliar harbor, the captain of *CALUSA*, a large vessel, radioed for help when he entered Mariel on the night of 25 April. When the boat did indeed run aground, the Cuban government would not allow any of the larger shrimp boats to help tow *CALUSA* free. Instead, authorities told the master to raise $10,000 to pay a Cuban tug to refloat his boat. The crew of *CALUSA*, going from boat to boat throughout the flotilla, raised the money; if they hadn't, as the captain later said, "this boat would be a Cuban patrol boat." The waiting boaters played cards and dominoes, a popular Cuban game, drank, told stories, and

Center for Cuban Studies

Boats from Florida are escorted in Mariel harbor by Cuban patrol boats. Small pleasure craft were among the first to arrive at the Cuban port.

listened for their boat names to be called. When the control boat called a name, the crew would get underway

as quickly as possible and head for the dock, where the refugees would board.

Cuban soldiers put the refugees through a little ritual before they got into the boats: They had to brush the Cuban soil from their shoes before they left. Some of the refugees, as they were leaving the harbor, carried out a ritual of their own: They threw their shoes overboard.[23]

As the number of boats in the harbor grew, Cuban officials no longer searched each arrival or even had crews fill out forms and sign temporary visas. They had enough difficulty just keeping track of boats as they entered the harbor. Seeing an opportunity to earn American dollars, two blue-topped Cuban government *turismo* boats quickly appeared in the harbor to sell goods to the boaters. Ham sandwiches cost $1 one day, $3 the next, and $5 the day after that. A bottle of Havana Club rum sold for $85. Water sold for more than $3 a gallon, about the same as Cuban fuel. Some of the skippers tried to organize a boycott, sensing that the Cubans would keep them in Mariel until they had extracted all their money. The people on the boats were so desperate for supplies, however, they continued to pay whatever prices were asked.

Because the boaters were so isolated in Mariel Harbor, they did not mind paying $5 for a boat ride to the dock and $20 to go by bus to Havana, where they were allowed to wait for hours to make a phone call from the Triton Hotel to the United States. An eight-minute phone call to Miami cost as much as $63.[24]

As the days dragged on, tempers in the harbor began to wear thin—particularly among the crews of commercial boats chartered by families to pick up relatives. Crews were tired of waiting and wanted to leave. Families, however, were desperate to stay as long as they had a chance to get their relatives. Finally, in the first week of May, Cuban officials realized the situation was beyond their capability to handle and authorized boats to leave empty. When informed they could leave, there was a mad scramble for the fuel pier, where boaters bought fuel before starting back to Key West. By the

second week of May, the Mariel flotilla looked like a waterborne tent city; laundry fluttered in the breeze as unshaved boaters waited dejectedly for something to happen. Cuban *cantina* boats systematically made their way through the flotilla, selling chicken dinners for $30 and other supplies at highly inflated prices. A baby was born on one boat, and a man suffered a heart attack on another.

As tension increased in the harbor, so did the Cuban military presence—more armed guards appeared on the shore and helicopters and patrol launches increased. As the Cubans became better organized, boats no longer were permitted to leave without a full load of refugees. Authorities cracked down on reporters, seizing cameras and film. Accreditations were withheld and 12 journalists at the Triton Hotel in Havana were forced to leave Cuba immediately. They were bussed to Mariel and put on a refugee boat ready to leave. Boats forced to leave without the relatives caused the biggest disappointments of the Boatlift. Under contract, the 140-foot commercial vessel *VIKING STARSHIP* waited in Mariel Harbor for a week; it was allowed to leave only when the crew agreed to take 500 refugees, not one of them a relative they had come for. "Few boats are getting any relatives out," said Captain Paul Forsberg of *VIKING STARSHIP*. "I didn't see anybody hugging and kissing at Mariel."[25]

On 14 May 1980, the US Coast Guard broadcast an "Urgent Marine Information Broadcast" (UMIB) to the US vessels. The UMIB, transmitted in English and Spanish, said,

> All US citizens in Cuban Ports and enroute Cuba are advised to return to the U.S. at this time. The U.S. will arrange alternative transportation for Cuban citizens desiring to emigrate through an organized sea lift that will ensure safe and orderly t ansportation. Vessels not under charter or hire by the U.S. government are subject to heavy fines and and possible seizure if they transport Cuban citizens in violation of U.S. Immigration Laws. All

> U.S. boats in Mariel and those enroute Cuba are advised to return to the U.S. without delay.[26]

In response to US Government complaints about Cuban activities at Mariel, and the broadcast directing the boats in Mariel to return empty, the Castro government stated in a front-page editorial in *GRANMA*, "If the United States wants to assert its authority it should do so in Florida because in Mariel it can't do a thing."[27]

The situation in Mariel took on more ominous dimensions as the would-be rescuers became virtual prisoners in Mariel Harbor.

9

Rescue and Assistance

Ours is a country of refugees. We'll continue to provide an open heart and open arms to refugees seeking freedom from Communist domination and from the economic deprivation brought about by Fidel Castro and his government.

President Jimmy Carter
League of Women Voters, 5 May 1980

SAM DENNIS SAT DOWN TO BREAKFAST in the kitchen of his quarters in Key West on the morning of 23 April 1980. Commander of the Coast Guard's Key West Group, he was responsible for three rescue stations along the Florida Keys, the 95-foot patrol cutter *CAPE YORK*, and a Group Office and Operations Center in Key West. A Lieutenant Commander, he was a relatively junior officer to be given responsibility for one of the Coast Guard's busiest areas. Commercial fishing and heavy recreational boating activity in the waters surrounding the hundreds of islands of the Florida Keys kept the Coast Guard Group's 140 men and women extremely busy with rescue work. Marine environmental protection efforts to keep the pristine waters of the Keys free of pollution was another important mission. In 1980, drug trafficking into South Florida was on the increase, placing an additional burden on the Coast Guard Group as it stepped up armed law enforcement patrolling.[1]

When LCDR Dennis glanced out his kitchen window, he noticed rows of boats on trailers lining up at the public launching ramp—an exceptionally large number for a Wednesday morning. Taking a closer look, he could see the lines growing as more and more trailered boats arrived. Even more unusual, the boats were not being launched—the boaters were standing about in small groups engaged in animated conversations. Dennis called the Group duty office and asked, "What's the story on all the boats at the launching ramp?" The young watch officer said he had heard about the boats arriving but didn't know why—he had no information about a major fishing tournament or regatta. He reported that Customs and local city officials and other Federal agencies in Key West also wanted to know why boats were lining up at other launching ramps as well. The Monroe County Sheriff's Department reported boats being trailered in a steady stream south through the Keys, along the length of US Route 1.

Dennis reported the influx of boats to the Coast Guard's Seventh District Headquarters in Miami, and learned Miami's large Cuban-American community had been rife with rumors for the past few days about Castro letting families come to Cuba to pick up relatives. After a great deal of talk about sailing for Cuba, the Cuban-American community apparently had decided to do more than talk. Dennis hurriedly left for the Group office, anticipating a long and busy day.

The Exodus Begins

Later the same day, 280 more refugees arrived by boat at Key West from Cuba, and another 68 in Miami. A Spanish-language radio station in Miami broadcast the news of the arrivals to the Cuban-American community, which was anxiously awaiting confirmation of rumors. Castro was letting families leave Cuba, the station announced, if their relatives would come to the island

by boat to get them. The Coast Guard's Miami Operation Center began receiving hundreds of phone calls seeking advice on the trip to Cuba. The callers were cautioned about the dangers of the 100-mile open-sea voyage; they also were warned not to attempt to make the trip unless their boats were of an adequate size, "seaworthy," and well equipped. The following routine safety advice was provided:

- Guard against overloading because of the dangers of rough seas.
- Take enough life preservers for everyone expected to be on board.
- Have a radio on board in case calls for help have to be made.
- File a "float plan" with family or friends, giving a description of the boat, the route planned, and emergency equipment on board.[2]

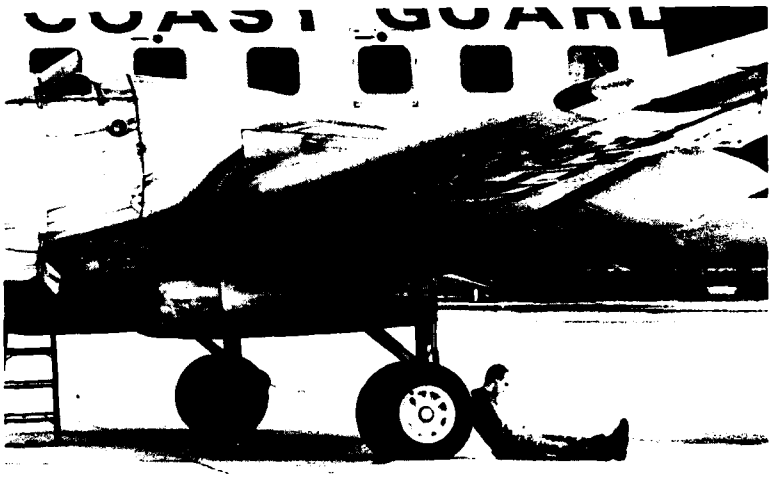
The US Customs Service in Miami also was deluged with inquiries and hundreds of requests for Customs clearances for overseas trips; these requests were routinely granted, consistent with past practices in Miami. The agencies did not mean to imply that giving information and granting overseas clearances would constitute US Government permission to go to Cuba and bring back undocumented aliens. However, information passed by word of mouth, unclear media reports, and a strong emotional desire helped strengthen the notion that the US Government was granting permission, or, at least, was looking the other way. A US State Department announcement of 23 April was given little heed; the statement said:

> Those boat owners and captains who are taking people out of Cuba and trying to land them in the United States are playing into the hands of the Cuban authorities.... While we are deeply sympathetic with those in this country who want to expedite the departure from Cuba of those who are seeking freedom from Castro's regime, we cannot condone this procedure. The transportation of undocumented persons to this country is contrary

> to US law and policy. It is a felony to bring to the United States any alien not duly admitted by an immigration officer and is punishable by penalties of up to five years in prison, fines of $2,000, and the forfeiture of the vessel.[3]

As more Cuban refugees arrived from Mariel, confirming the new position of the Cuban government, the news rapidly spread among Cuban-Americans waiting in Key West—Castro indeed was letting boats come to Cuba to pick up relatives. A continuous parade of trailered boats choked the two-lane highway leading to Key West; boats waiting in line at ramps began to launch and head for the open sea—and Cuba. Boats in the first wave to leave from Key West generally were smaller pleasure craft, designed for inshore use and not the rigors of open seas. The seaworthiness of these boats was questionable and the operators obviously were inexperienced. Many of the boats had no more than a small magnetic compass for navigating the 100 miles to Mariel. Larger, better-equipped boats were leaving for Cuba directly from Miami.

A friend called Captain Ed Crusoe, Key West's Harbor Pilot, to tell him Cuban-Americans from Miami had been crowding into his marine supplies store all morning; they had bought out his entire stock of Gulf Stream charts, along with all sorts of boating supplies. When he put down the phone in his small waterfront office, Crusoe walked to the door and looked across Key West harbor. He saw dozens of small boats speeding down the ship channel heading for the open sea. The boaters were in festive moods, waving to each other from their small open boats, which were ill fitted for the long journey. Crusoe could see garbage cans in the stern sections of some of the boats; he learned later the cans were filled with gasoline. When no more portable fuel tanks could be purchased in Key West, the boaters bought garbage cans and filled them with fuel. Some of the boat operators were so unfamiliar with navigating that when they



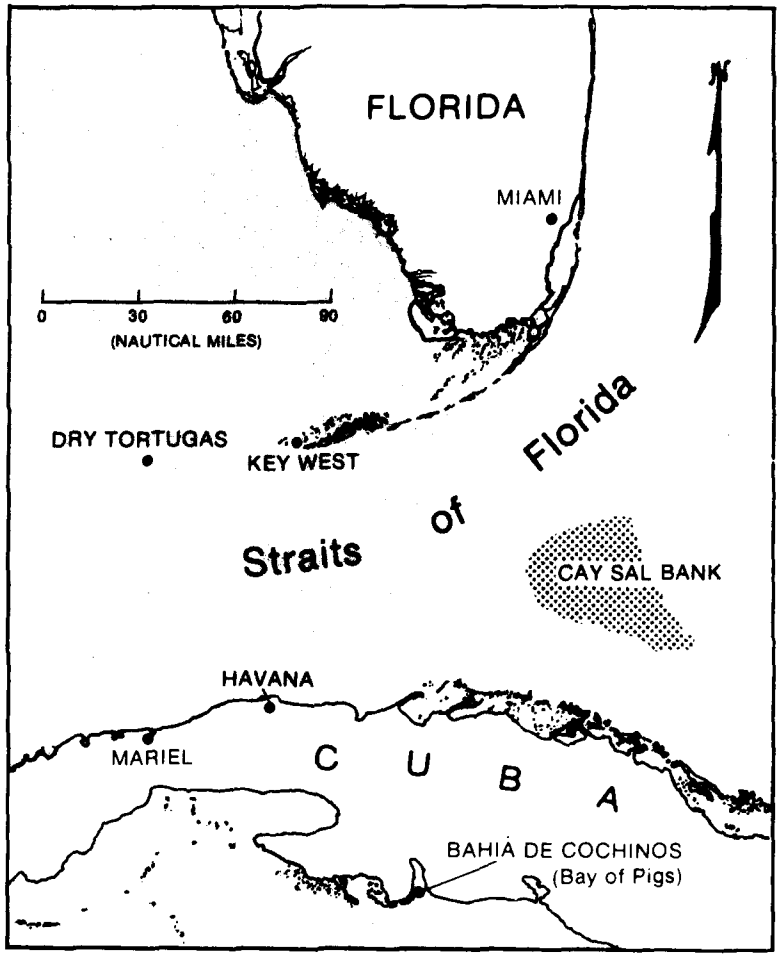
AP/Wide World Photos

Coast Guard Pilot R.R. Bowers rests against the wheel of a C-131 transport aircraft at Key West Naval Air Station on 4 May 1980, after a surveillance flight. The pilot said he logged more hours in the air during the past two weeks, patrolling the Florida Straits during the Cuban Boatlift, than at any time since his days in Vietnam.

reached the end of the ship channel they had to ask other boats, "Which way to Cuba?"[4]

Initial Response

When Coast Guard Group Key West reported the arrival of more refugees and the launching of many boats, Rear Admiral Benedict L. Stabile, Coast Guard District Commander in Miami, ordered daily surveillance flights between Key West and Cuba to monitor vessel activity. Long-range C-131 aircraft from the Coast Guard's Air Station at Miami commenced patrols over the Florida Straits to report boats in trouble and gather data for evaluating the situation. In coordination with other Federal agencies, the Coast Guard began transmitting



Florida Straits

Urgent Marine Information Broadcasts in English and Spanish on 23 April, warning boat operators going to Cuba to pick up passengers that they would be violating US law, and that they could be arrested and fined, and have their boats seized.[5]

The warnings did little to deter the boaters in the emotional situation: Cuban-Americans were seizing the opportunity to reunite their families after many years of separation.

Group Commander Dennis directed Lieutenant (junior grade) Jim Decker, commanding officer of the 95-foot Coast Guard Cutter *CAPE YORK*, to interrupt his in-port maintenance period on Wednesday, reassemble all equipment, and assume a "Bravo-Two" standby status (ready to get underway within two hours of notification). Fortunately, a second cutter, *CAPE SHOALWATER*, a sister ship of *CAPE YORK*, also was available to the Group. The Seventh District had temporarily assigned *CAPE SHOALWATER* to Key West from Port Everglades, Fla., for offshore rescue coverage during *CAPE YORK*'s maintenance period. With escalating boating activity, the Group Commander anticipated both cutters would be needed for offshore rescue work. *CAPE YORK* and her crew of 13 sailed on her first rescue mission on the morning of Thursday, 24 April, and was underway continuously for the next several weeks.[6]

By Thursday night, 24 April, 11 boats had safely made the return crossing from Cuba, bringing more than 700 refugees to Key West and Miami. Two Coast Guard Medium Endurance Cutters of the 210-foot *RELIANCE* class—*DAUNTLESS* (WMEC-624) and *DEPENDABLE* (WMEC-626)—were diverted from drug interdiction patrols in southern waters to the Straits of Florida, between the Florida Keys and Cuba. While only *DEPENDABLE* had an HH-52 helicopter embarked, both ships had flight decks and were capable of operating with helicopters. The cutters were assigned to patrol the transit route from Mariel to Key West and help vessels in distress.[7]

US Navy Photo

The 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter *DEPENDABLE* (WMEC-626) enters Key West for fuel and supplies during the Cuban Boatlift operations.

The 210-foot cutter *DILIGENCE* (WMEC-616) was undergoing major mechanical work in her home port of Key West when the refugees began to arrive. On Friday, 25 April, the District Headquarters ordered Commander Homer Purdy, her commanding officer, to prepare the 1,000-ton ship to get underway. *DILIGENCE*'s engineers returned the ship to a "ready for sea" status on Saturday morning, but had not been able to complete installation of a new evaporator; she sailed without the ability to make fresh water, limiting her underway endurance. In Key West, Purdy observed boats, operated by Cuban-Americans, lined up to buy fuel from a local marina Friday afternoon. The boaters paid for gas and supplies with cash; they appeared to have large amounts of money with them, anticipating the need for hard currency in Cuba. A mounting sense of urgency was felt as the boatlift picked up momentum. "At the rate we're going," the attendant pumping gas told Commander Purdy, "we'll be out of gas by morning and we're not supposed to get any more until the first of the month." With all the rumors in Key West, crew members of *DILIGENCE* were not surprised when they received a message directing the ship to get underway and help search for a boat loaded with refugees reported in trouble off the coast of Cuba.[8]

By Friday afternoon, reports from Key West and surveillance flights indicated the situation was out of control, or nearly so. A quick review of available resources revealed the High Endurance Cutters *DALLAS* (WHEC-716), with a captain as commanding officer, and *INGHAM* (WHEC-35) were undergoing refresher training with the US Navy at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As neither ship was assigned to the Seventh District, an immediate request to the Coast Guard's Atlantic Area Commander for operational control of the cutters was made and granted. The two vessels were ordered to proceed to the waters between Cuba and Florida, where their presence would significantly improve the Coast Guard's capabilities afloat in the vicinity of the transit route.[9]

That same day, key members of the Seventh District staff who evaluated the situation prepared an operation order to mobilize resources needed for an immediate response.

At Sea

The 378-foot, 3,000-ton cutter *DALLAS* returned to her moorings at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on Friday afternoon, 25 April 1980; a busy week with the Fleet Training Group had ended. The ship was scheduled to tie up only long enough to debark the Training Group "ship riders," take on supplies and passengers, and depart for a well-deserved mid-training two-day break at Montego Bay, Jamaica. As *DALLAS* was making her final approach, her commanding officer, Captain William J. Brogdon, Jr., saw the Coast Guard liaison officer, Commander Michael B. Dunn, running down the pier toward the ship. When the gangway went over, Dunn headed straight for the bridge and reported to Captain Brogdon that Commander Atlantic Area would be ordering *DALLAS* and the 327-foot *INGHAM* to get underway immediately for the Florida Straits, and to CHOP (Change Operational Control) to Commander Seventh Coast Guard District (CCGD7).[10]

The only reason Commander Dunn could offer for the immediate orders was sketchy information about a big rescue operation near Key West, with lots of Cubans involved.

Loading last-minute supplies when the message was received from Commander Atlantic Area, *DALLAS* and *INGHAM* were underway in less than 30 minutes. The white cutters increased speed as they passed Leeward Point, rising and falling gently to the northwesterly swell of the open Caribbean. When *DALLAS* secured from "Special Sea Detail," Captain Brogdon told the 175-man crew over the 1MC address system that the rest of their training and their weekend R&R (rest and recuperation) in Jamaica had been canceled. They had

been ordered to waters south of Florida, he said, for a rescue mission of undetermined length—he would keep them informed. Onboard *INGHAM*, Commander Marty Moynihan had his crew check all boats, deck equipment, and medical supplies in preparation for rescue work. As the ships turned north, through the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti, Brogdon wondered why two cutters would be ordered from Guantanamo Bay for a rescue operation near Florida—surely closer cutters were available. The ships made their turn on the lighthouse at *Cabo Maisi* and steered northwest for the Old Bahama Channel, the narrow passage between Cuba and the Grand Bahama Bank. On Saturday morning, the ship "rogered for" a message Operations Order (CGD7 OPORD 30-80) directing *DALLAS* to assume duties, on arrival in the operating area, as On Scene Commander for all Coast Guard resources.

Sunday Storm

As *DALLAS* and *INGHAM* moved into position on Sunday, 27 April, a fierce thunderstorm raged through the Straits of Florida, spawning squalls and winds of hurricane force. The storm wreaked havoc among the boats heading for Cuba, anchored in Mariel Harbor, and preparing to leave Key West. The furious storm left scores of boats capsized, disabled, or sinking. Coast Guard units at sea and in Key West received hundreds of distress calls. The Group Operation Center in Key West received 22 "May Days" from vessels in serious trouble in a five-minute period. Coast Guard cutters and helicopters responded first to people clinging to capsized hulls and debris in the water, or to boats filling with water and in danger of sinking. Dozens of boats and yachts were abandoned as Coast Guard units raced from one distressed vessel to the next, pulling people out of the water or off the disabled boats. Coast Guard crews were too busy saving lives to worry about saving property. More than a dozen

people reportedly died in the storm, while hundreds more were saved from immediate danger. Surveillance flights later sighted Cuban fishing boats towing abandoned vessels toward Cuba.[11]

Earlier on that Sunday morning, *CAPE YORK* was heading back to Key West with three disabled boats in tow when the storm hit. The disabled boats, strung out behind the cutter in a tandem tow, were between 16 and 26 feet long; four men were in the first boat, three in the second, and four in the third. The barometer dropped suddenly; the sky turned black and driving winds sent sheets of rain beating against the hull and deckhouse of the small cutter. Visibility dropped to zero and the center of the radar glowed green with rain interference and sea return, as the unpredicted frontal system ripped through the area. The crew of *CAPE YORK* could do little more than hold on as the captain tried in vain to hold the vessel's bow into the wind. The rains were so heavy the men on watch in the pilot house could not see the stern of the cutter, nor the boats in tow. The storm lasted only 15 to 20 minutes, Lieutenant Decker estimated, but the hurricane-force winds stirred up angry eight- to ten-foot seas.[12]

As the storm passed and the winds let up, the *CAPE YORK* crew finally caught sight of the boats they had been towing: The first boat had capsized and the four men were clinging to the hull; the second boat was low in the water and sinking; and the third boat and its four-man crew were gone. The Boatswain's Mate alertly chopped the nylon tow line with a fire axe so *CAPE YORK* could come about and rescue the men in the water and search for survivors. With no sign of the missing boat, people, or even debris, and a survivor from the first boat suffering a heart attack, *CAPE YORK* headed for Key West. As the cutter increased to full speed, Decker alerted the Group of the medical emergency and requested an ambulance at the pier.[13]

Another Coast Guard patrol boat later found the third boat from *CAPE YORK*'s tow; she was adrift with her crew of four safely on board. The wind had broken

USCG Coast Guard Photo

A 95-foot Coast Guard Cutter heads for Key West with a string of disabled boats in a tandem tow astern.

the boat free of the tow line, ripping the cleat out of the foredeck. Decker described the Sunday storm as the most terrifying experience he had ever encountered at sea. Captain Purdy agreed the Sunday storm truly was frightening and his worst experience during the entire Cuban operation. "So many people were in such bad trouble in such a short time," he said, "it was overwhelming. There were continuous pleas for help on the radio but no one could say where they were—they just knew they were somewhere between Florida and Cuba and they were sinking." People on some of the boats said that they could see persons from other boats struggling in the water, but couldn't get to them because their engines were dead. The storm caused confusion and hysteria among the small boats transiting the Straits. Radio circuits were so jammed with screams for help in Spanish and English, they were virtually unusable. As soon as the winds died down, the Coast Guard had every available helicopter airborne. Fixed-wing aircraft provided positions on capsized hulls and boats in trouble to patrolling cutters.

Admiral Stabile's prompt action in concentrating rescue resources in the area helped save many lives. The immediate availability of so many Coast Guard cutters and aircraft helped keep the death toll to a minimum, in what easily could have been a major calamity. According to aircraft sightings over the previous two days, approximately 500 boats were at sea between Key West and Mariel when the storm hit. The vicious storm also took its toll in Mariel Harbor, where dozens of boats were sunk or grounded as winds ravaged the anchorages. In the storm's wake, the tempo of rescue work made accurate record keeping nearly impossible—everyone was just too busy saving lives. At one point, for example, the cutter *INGHAM* had five vessels in tow and survivors of another four or five abandoned vessels on board. As cutters removed people from abandoned, capsized, and disabled vessels, crew members splashed paint on the hulls so search aircraft could identify them as derelicts, not new distress cases. *DILIGENCE* returned to Key West with six boats in tow, escorting two other boats with problems and transporting 23 survivors from still another vessel.[14]

Fortunately, when the storm struck, most boats affected were enroute to Cuba and had not yet picked up refugees. Limited communications with Cuba, however, made accounting for boats underway for Cuba almost impossible—no mechanism existed for confirming if a boat had arrived safely at Mariel, or was lost at sea. The fierce storm clearly had shown the potential for a major maritime disaster, created by the Cuban-orchestrated sea lift.

While the storm had been a sobering experience for the rescuers, it did little to discourage the Cuban-Americans from setting out for Mariel in small boats to bring back family members. Nor did it keep the Castro government from encouraging small boats to sail to Mariel. Surveillance aircraft reported few boats transiting to Mariel the day after the storm. But by Tuesday, the number of small boats transiting was back in the hundreds. Coast Guard officials made immediate plans to

send additional rescue units to the area, and initiated talks with the Navy about augmentation with naval assets.

On 2 May, more severe weather was predicted for the Straits of Florida. The Seventh District sent a TELEX message to the Cuban Border Guard, saying "United States Weather Bureau reports a massive thunderstorm 200 miles West of Key West. The storm, with strong winds and hail, will pass between Key West and Havana in the next 6 to 10 hours. Strongly urge you advise United States vessels in Mariel of storm and to remain in port until storm passes." As agreed in earlier talks between the Coast Guard and the Cuban Border Guard, Coast Guard messages were transmitted in English and Border Guard messages in Spanish.* The Cuban reply, an indication of initial cooperation, was translated as follows:

> In relation to your TELEX dated 2 May 1980 at 1400 GMT [Greenwich Mean Time]. We inform you that pertinent measures have been taken in the Port of Mariel. I inform you that between 0615 and 0900 hours of today between 8 and 12 vessels have

* Negotiations between the US Coast Guard and the Cuban Border Guard in Havana in 1978 and Washington in 1979 helped establish a direct communications link between the Services of the two countries. TELEX messages, primarily concerning search and rescue matters, routinely had been sent between Seventh Coast Guard District Headquarters in Miami and Border Guard Headquarters in Havana before the Boatlift.

The link had proven to be extremely useful in determining if overdue vessels or aircraft had been forced to land in Cuba because of storms or mechanical difficulties, helping avoid extensive and costly searches. The communications link also was used to inform the Cubans of Coast Guard aircraft searching for distressed vessels close to the Cuban coast, avoiding intercepts by Cuban MIGs.

As a result of the Washington and Havana meetings, Coast Guard aircraft had received authority to transit air corridors across Cuba for rescue missions south of the island. As Chief of Search and Rescue in Miami, the author participated in the negotiations and served as an escort for the Cuban Delegation.

US Coast Guard Photo

Commanding Officer of the US Coast Guard Cutter *DALLAS*, designated as On-Scene Commander, coordinated activities of all Coast Guard cutters operating between Mariel and Key West during the Cuban Exodus.

> departed. Our units have been alerted for them to help if it becomes necessary. We appreciate your information.[15]

Cutters on Scene

Under the Seventh District's Operations Order (OPORD), *DALLAS*, with Captain Brogdon in command, assumed On-Scene Commander (OSC) status when it arrived on Sunday, 27 April, and other cutters already on scene immediately "chopped" to his control. The designation of the senior cutter's commanding officer as OSC in a joint operation was a routine procedure for Coast Guard ships. As the cutters and aircraft finished up urgent rescue operations generated by the Sunday storm, Brogdon

assessed resources for accomplishing his assigned mission of protecting boats transiting to and from Mariel. Group Key West would handle operations in the inshore areas along the Florida coast, and the captain of *DALLAS*, as OSC, would be responsible for high-seas search areas established by the District OPORD. These search areas spanned the entire transit route up to 15 nautical miles from the Cuban coast. In addition to the High Endurance Cutter *INGHAM*, Brogdon had three 210-foot medium endurance cutters, all helicopter-capable, on scene, with more enroute.[16]

While the United States did not recognize Cuba's claim to a 12-nautical-mile Territorial Sea, US Coast Guard cutters routinely respected the zone and avoided operating in contested waters. To lessen the probability of confrontations with Cuban naval ships in the zealously guarded waters near Havana, the Coast Guard District Commander added an additional three-nautical-mile buffer, restricting nonemergency operations to waters more than 15 nautical miles from Cuba. For emergencies, the District Commander could have authorized operations closer to Cuba.

Captain Brogdon deployed his forces for maximum assistance to transiting vessels, with particular consideration given to refugee vessels coming out of Cuba. His first concern was knowing when and how many vessels carrying refugees departed Mariel; names, descriptions, and conditions of boats was important. Based on reports from Key West, northbound boats were dangerously overloaded. With good identification, their northward progress could be monitored and air searches initiated if they failed to arrive in Key West. The larger cutter *INGHAM* was assigned a station 15 miles off the entrance to Mariel Harbor to keep track of departing boats, with instructions not to leave station for rescue work except for emergencies. Smaller helicopter-capable ships were strung out in stations along the transit route, while *DALLAS* backed up the "Mariel Station." *DALLAS*'s capability to locate and identify transiting vessels was greatly enhanced when she received an

HH-52 helicopter on board on Monday, 28 April. At night, the cutters spaced at intervals between Mariel and Key West would energize their flashing blue law-enforcement lights for the boats to steer to. Cutters would give the transiting boats the course to follow to the next ship. The cutters initially were directed to assist the boats in making safe transits in either direction despite the publicized threats of seizures and fines for making the trip to Cuba.[17]

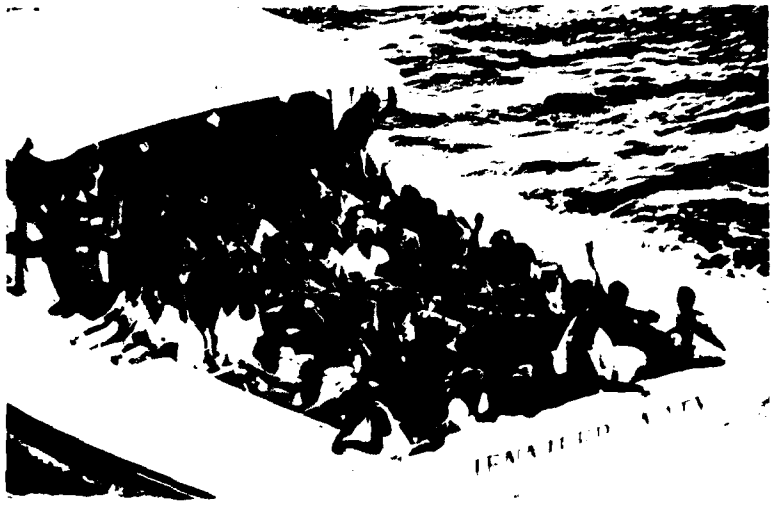
The Cubans generally had the loaded boats leave just before dawn, when winds were light and seas usually calm. Some boaters wondered if the Cuban government arranged the pre-dawn departures so the overloaded boats could be sent out unobserved, or if the early sailings were for the safety of the vessels. Depending on speed and accuracy of navigation, the transit normally took from 12 to 16 hours. By leaving in the early hours, most of the 100-mile journey was made in daylight, when vessels in trouble could be located more easily. Unfortunately, the boats usually were half way across when winds would increase in early afternoon. By late afternoon, seas would build and the overloaded boats would have difficulty completing the journey. In rougher waters, engines often would not operate properly and the vessels frequently became disabled, requiring a tow the rest of the way to Key West.[18]

At the beginning of the 1980 Cuban Boatlift, Cuban Navy SO-1-class patrol craft escorted the refugee boats on their journies northward. The 138-foot Cuban ships were zealous in not relinquishing their escort to Coast Guard cutters until they had reached their destination, the half-way point at Latitude 24° North. The Cubans, especially in the beginning of the exodus, possibly were afraid that the Coast Guard cutters would attempt to turn the boats back to Cuba; aggressive actions may have been intended to show their resolve. By 3 May, the Coast Guard had increased the ships patrolling the offshore waters between Key West and Mariel to two high endurance cutters and six 210-foot medium endurance cutters. *VIGOROUS* had arrived on scene from New

London, Connecticut, on 29 April, *VALIANT* from Galveston, Texas, on 1 May, and *VIGILANT* from New Bedford, Massachusetts, on 3 May; all three had helicopters on board. A helicopter also had been assigned to *DAUNTLESS*, one of the original cutters to respond. The additional ships, with their 69-man crews, greatly increased the Coast Guard's ability to protect boats using the transit route. By the end of the first week of boatlift operations, 12,867 people had made the voyage across the Florida Straits into the United States. The Coast Guard had assisted 363 vessels—52 either had sunk or had been abandoned. Only six fatalities had been confirmed.[19]

As the Cuban Exodus moved into high gear, Coast Guard ships and crews faced a volume of rescue work never before encountered. Thousands of boats were attempting the voyage to Cuba, with hundreds becoming lost or disabled, or sinking in the rough waters of the open sea. The On-Scene Commander (OSC) had little opportunity to meet with the commanding officers of the newly assigned cutters and discuss the work to be done. The only time a ship could be spared to leave its station and go into port was when it had to take on fuel or major supplies. Helicopters routinely delivered personnel and repair parts to the cutters.

To improve coordination among the cutters, and to share lessons learned each day, Captain Brogdon initiated a radio conference each evening on the International Search and Rescue frequency, 5680 KHZ. At 7 p.m., all cutters, Group Key West, and aviation support personnel would come up on the radio frequency. The conferences proved extremely valuable. The units discussed logistics requirements, improved methods for towing, emergency medical procedures, and better rescue techniques. The vessels reported their operating status and capability, and shared ideas for more effective joint aviation and surface operations. The informal conferences were in addition to daily message reports to the OSC, who in turn submitted a nightly Summary Situation Report to the District Commander.[20]

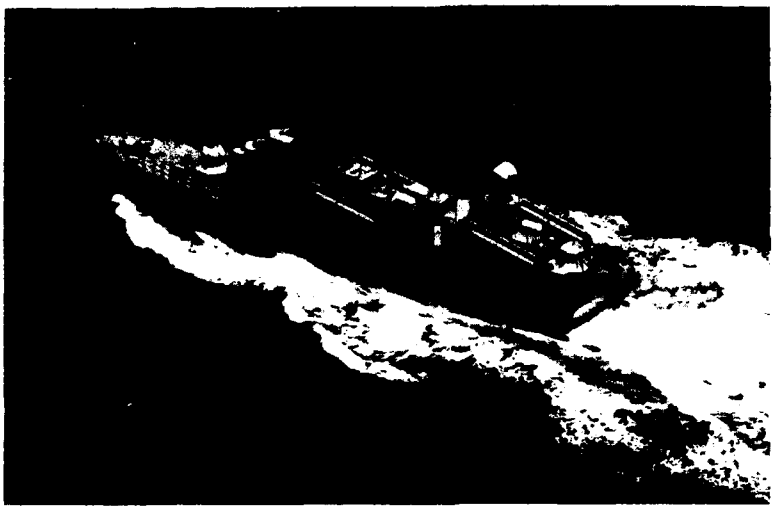


US Coast Guard Photo

Boat loaded with Cuban refugees from Mariel heads across the Straits of Florida.

Cuban Forces Afloat

During the second week of the Boatlift, with the Coast Guard buildup in the Florida Straits and increased operations close to Cuba, the cutters experienced a series of low-level confrontations with Cuban naval vessels. The Cuban ships harassed the cutters by "embarrassing" them into last-minute maneuvers in "meeting situations." The Cubans would create a situation, for example, in which a cutter would be the "privileged" vessel, under the International Rules of the Road, which govern the conduct of ships underway near other ships. While having the right-of-way, the "privileged" vessel was strictly required to maintain a steady course and speed. The Cuban ship, as the "burdened" vessel, was obligated to maneuver and keep clear. The Cuban vessel, however, would stay on a collision course



US Coast Guard Photo

Soviet-built Cuban Navy missile patrol boat was photographed from a US Coast Guard helicopter only 35 miles from Key West on 29 April 1980, during the beginning of the Cuban Boatlift.

until the last minute, in an effort to make the US ship maneuver and violate the rules. These displays of Cuban *machismo* heightened tensions among the operating forces, and increased the potential for serious incidents through misjudgments. At night, the Cubans frequently shined searchlights at the pilot houses of Coast Guard cutters, destroying the night vision of the people on watch.[21]

The incidents involving Cuban vessels were openly discussed during the OSC's evening conference calls, which were broadcast in the clear on an international frequency; monitoring by the Cubans was expected. Captain Brogdon used the uncovered transmissons to indirectly send messages to the Cubans, while providing guidance to the ships' commanding officers. He directed the cutters to exercise discipline and not provoke incidents, but not to back down from intimidating maneuvers by Cuban vessels. They were to announce their intentions on the radio in Spanish and adhere to the

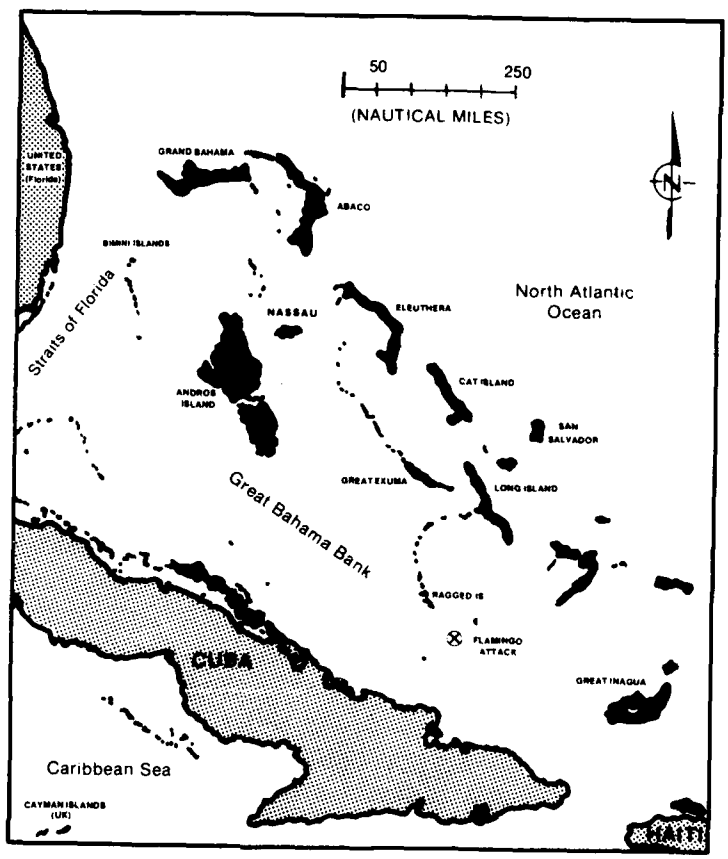
International Rules of the Road. The cutter *COURAGEOUS* experienced a Cuban provocation while drifting in a southern sector close to Cuba. When she observed a contact closing at a high rate of speed, the cutter took up a course to clear the path of the approaching ship, identified as a Cuban SO-1-class patrol vessel. The cutter maintained a steady course as the Cuban ship adjusted to keep on a collision course. The Cuban refused to answer radio calls in Spanish on international frequencies. Because of the threatening actions of the Cuban ship and the uncertainty of its ultimate intentions, *COURAGEOUS*'s commanding officer, Commander Al Miller, requested air cover from *DALLAS*. Aircraft were scrambled from Homestead Air Force Base south of Miami to support the cutter. As collision became imminent, Miller backed his engines and turned *COURAGEOUS* into the oncoming ship to present a bow aspect to minimize damage if a collision occurred. With that action, the Cuban ship backed down hard and came dead in the water. The two ships sat bow to bow facing each other. The Cuban ship then turned and left the area.[22]

Inconsistent and irrational Cuban actions were most perplexing. On 1 May, two Cuban MIG jet fighters made passes on an unarmed Coast Guard twin-engine C-131 search aircraft. The aircraft, number CG-5801, was searching for a disabled boat reported adrift well north of the Cuban coast. While the plane's search pattern took it into Cuban-controlled air space, the proper international notification had been made through the Federal Aviation Administration's Miami Center with Havana's Air Traffic Center. After the two Cuban jets "buzzed" the Coast Guard plane, it immediately cleared the area. The danger of an incident between Cuban and US forces was always present, as ships and planes from both countries continued to work in close proximity. While *DALLAS* frequently detected high-speed fighters on her air-search radar, no incidents of Cuban jets harassing the armed Coast Guard cutters were reported. Occasionally, however, *DALLAS*'s air-search radar was "jammed."[23]

The Navy was assigned on-scene responsibility for rescue work in the northern half of the Florida Straits. Navy ships and aircraft operated from the midpoint, 24° North, north to the coastal waters of Florida, and Coast Guard units patrolled from 24° N south to the coastal waters of Cuba. The assignment of responsibilities lessened the likelihood of a potentially explosive confrontation between US Navy ships and aircraft and Cuban military units.

While the Cuban sea lift was in progress, a serious incident occurred between Cuba and the Bahamas. In an unusual display of armed might, two Cuban MIGs attacked a Royal Bahamian Defense Force patrol boat with rockets 400 miles east of Mariel on 11 May. The Bahamian patrol boat *FLAMINGO* had seized a Cuban fishing boat in Bahamian waters, and was towing it toward Ragged Island, a small populated Bahamian island, when the MIGs appeared. After a recognition pass, the Cuban MIGs fired their rockets and sank the patrol boat, killing many of the crew; survivors sailed the Cuban fishing boat to Ragged Island.[24] Cuban planes later provided cover as Cuban helicopters carrying troops landed on Ragged Island in an effort to reclaim the fishing boat. The attack was a blatant act of aggression by the Cuban government, and highly inconsistent with Castro's efforts to develop improved relations with the black island nations of the Caribbean. The incident caused considerable concern for the predictability of Cuban military units confronted daily by Coast Guard cutters and planes.

At the time of the Cuban attack on the Bahamian patrol boat, Admiral John B. Hayes, Commandant of the Coast Guard, and Rear Admiral Stabile, District Commander, were in a Coast Guard helicopter enroute to *DALLAS*, patrolling just north of Cuba. When the pilot reported to Admiral Stabile that the District Operations Center had recalled the helicopter to Key West, the Admiral said, "This better be important!" After the Commandant and the District Commander were briefed on the Cuban attack on the Bahamian patrol boat, and



Cuba and the Bahamas

reviewed the implications, the admirals continued their flight to *DALLAS* without incident.

In the wake of the *FLAMINGO* sinking, Bahamian government officials appealed to the Coast Guard to search for survivors from their patrol boat, because no Bahamian search resources were available in the Ragged Island area. An H-3 helicopter was dispatched from the Coast Guard Air Station at Borenquin, Puerto Rico. While the helicopter was conducting a low-level search (200 feet) for persons in the water, a Cuban MIG suddenly swooped below the helo from aft. Cutting in its afterburners, the MIG pulled up directly in front of the helicopter; the two startled pilots struggled to bring the shuddering helicopter under control in the jet's violent turbulence. Fortunately, a US Navy destroyer was transiting the Old Bahama Channel not far away. The unarmed Coast Guard helicopter made a dash for the Navy ship and went into a low hover over her fantail until the two MIGs returned to Cuba. The search for *FLAMINGO* survivors was terminated, and the helo landed at Mathewtown, Great Inagua Island, to check for damage before returning to Puerto Rico. Cuban Foreign Minister Isideoro Malmierca expressed regrets for the actions of the Cuban planes in an oral apology on 15 May to Wayne S. Smith of the US Interests Section in Havana. The Cuban Foreign Minister promised that such incidents would not happen again.[25]

Three Cuban SO-1-class ships, numbers 256, 308, and 311, frequently were seen patrolling the transit route south of Latitude 24° North, along with several Spanish-built "F"-class steel-hulled, 90-feet-long Cuban fishing trawlers. The ships apparently were stationed along the route from Mariel to Key West to help refugee boats on their northern transit. Two larger Cuban ships also frequently were involved in the Boatlift—*LAS MERCEDES* and *TUMA*. Both looked like coastal freighters, 200- to 300-feet long, but obviously were "public vessels" of the Cuban government. *TUMA*, the older of the two, appeared to be in charge of Cuban at-sea operations. At first, the Cuban ships, including missile patrol boats, occasionally approached Florida, but

later they stayed generally south of Latitude 24° North. Cutters patrolling closer to the Cuban coast frequently saw Soviet-built Cuban *Zhuk*-class fast patrol boats, about 75 feet long. Approaching *DALLAS* with a boat in tow on 4 May, *TUMA* called on 2182 KHZ, the international distress and calling frequency. She asked in perfect English for *DALLAS* to accept the tow. *DALLAS*'s captain expressed his appreciation to the Cubans, hoping the action might be a signal of improved cooperation.

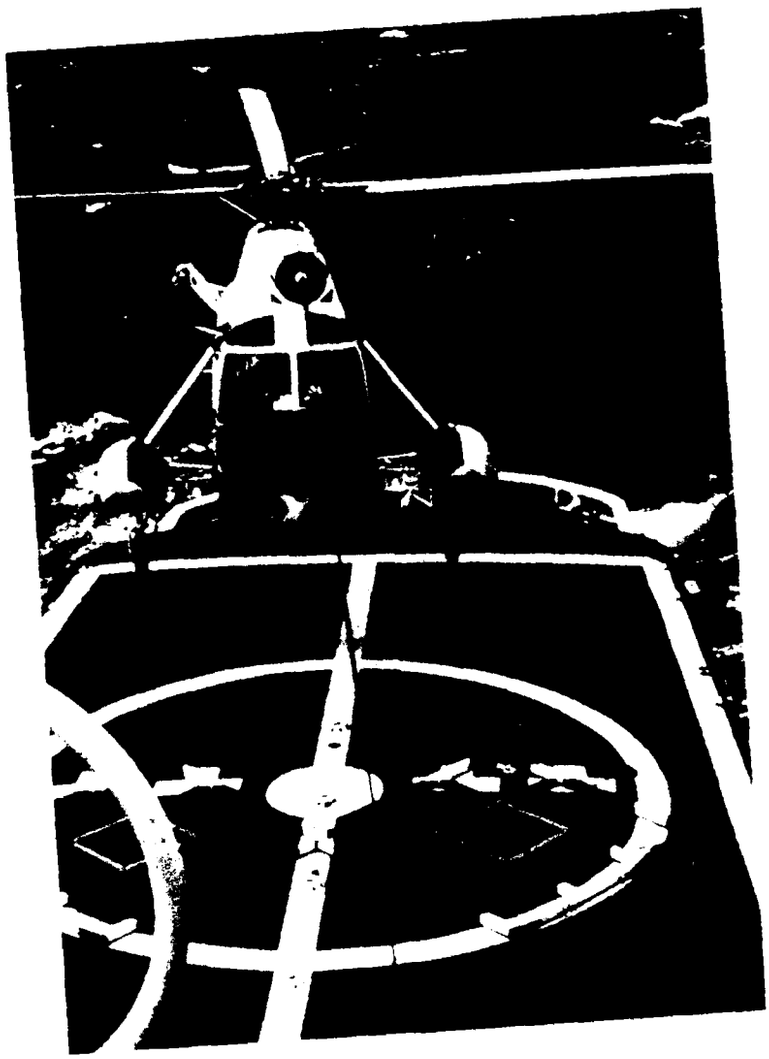
Cuban ships, though rarely armed Cuban naval vessels, were very cooperative on other occasions. Commander Miller reported that one night, as *COURAGEOUS* drifted in a southern area, she was approached by an "F"-class Cuban trawler with a disabled boat in tow. The trawler, in a superb display of ship handling, passed close under the stern of *COURAGEOUS*, coming up on the port side. At the precisely correct second, the trawler cast off the shortened tow, enabling the disabled boat to come dead in the water a few feet from the hull of *COURAGEOUS*. The Boatswain's Mate on the cutter's deck merely had to hand bow and stern lines to people on the boat. The Cuban skipper waved from the dimly lighted pilot house as the trawler passed close aboard down the cutter's starboard side, from bow to stern, and disappeared into the night.[26]

The crew of *DALLAS* was surprised to see displays of friendship between the crew of one of the larger Cuban trawlers and refugees from a disabled boat. A patrolling helicopter from *DALLAS* spotted the trawler, with the disabled boat alongside; when the helicopter was recovered, the cutter proceeded to the position of the drifting trawler. *DALLAS* slowly approached the Cuban ship, attempting to communicate by radio. The radio calls went unanswered, but activity was observed on board the trawler. The refugees from the disabled boat, including women and children, were being assisted back into the boat. Coast Guardsmen watching the operation through binoculars from the bridge of *DALLAS* could see the refugees shaking hands with the trawler

crew and exchanging friendly farewells. The Cuban crewmen gently handed small children down to the waiting arms of people on the boat, and also handed down small packages, possibly food, to the refugees. Much waving was seen as the refugee boat was cast adrift, to be taken in tow by one of *DALLAS*'s small boats. No animosity was seen between the crew of the Cuban vessel and the refugees, who were forsaking their homeland. Members of the trawler's crew possibly would have been happy to join the refugees, if not for their families back in Cuba.[27]

On the night of 24 May, the Coast Guard Cutter *ACUSHNET*, commanded by Commander Gary Nelson, was drifting on station off the Cuban coast when a Cuban SO-1-class ship, Number 308, began to circle close aboard, shining a searchlight into the cutter's darkened wheelhouse. *ACUSHNET*'s commanding officer was protesting the action of the Cuban ship on the radio, when the radar operator picked up a second surface contact closing, and then a third; Nelson requested support from the Squadron Commander. Dispatching *COURAGEOUS*, the closest cutter, Brogdon got *DALLAS* underway herself at full speed toward *ACUSHNET*, and called for US air support. With *COURAGEOUS* and *DALLAS* converging on the scene, the Cuban ships broke off their harassing tactics and departed the area. *COURAGEOUS* and *DALLAS* continued to patrol the southern sector with *ACUSHNET*.[28]

Whether the harassing tactics of the Cubans would have resulted in open conflict if US forces had not backed up the units is difficult to say. The provocative Cuban actions may well have been a reflection of the heightened anti-American propaganda campaign Castro was waging at the time of the exodus. The Cuban government was using newspapers, Radio Havana, and local Committees for the Defense of the Revolution to stir up hatred toward the refugees and the United States. The threatening actions at sea, possibly the acts of individual ship commanders, were dangerous and could not be taken lightly. The inconsistencies in the



US Coast Guard Photo

Coast Guard HH-52A helicopter lifts off from the flight deck of a medium endurance cutter. The versatile single-engine amphibious helicopters were used for both rescue and law enforcement work during the Cuban Boatlift.

Cuban actions were unnerving, and the irrationality of the Cuban attack on the Bahamian patrol vessel was not easily forgotten.

OLO YUMI Tragedy

COURAGEOUS was patrolling 30 miles north of Havana early on the morning of 17 May. At 7:30 a.m. her helicopter was launched for a possible medical evacuation mission; the cutter had received a report that a refugee on board a northbound vessel had suffered a serious head injury. The helicopter flew to the reported position but was unable to locate a boat of the description given. Unable to confirm the report or the position, *COURAGEOUS* directed the helo to search the area and, if the vessel was not located, to return to the ship, surveilling northbound boats enroute. After an unsuccessful "sector search" about the reported position, the helicopter started back to the ship, checking the loaded refugee boats along the way.[29]

"Flight Quarters" were set on board *COURAGEOUS* when the helicopter was sighted a few miles out. The flight-deck crew was adjusting "tie downs" and the Helicopter Control Officer was getting ready to start the landing checklist, when the pilot suddenly interrupted the routine. "Just a minute," he radioed. "I want to take a look at something in the water over here. I'll get right back to you." The pilot's next terse transmission said, "People in the water—a partially submerged boat. I'm going down to assist." The helmsman put the rudder hard over and *COURAGEOUS* heeled to starboard as she increased to full speed on a course for the hovering helicopter. The pilot's voice sounded over the speaker again: "I need assistance. There are many people in the water. I will hoist as many as I can." The crew of *COURAGEOUS* went to rescue stations at 0830.[30]

Enroute, *COURAGEOUS* alerted *VIGOROUS* in the next station of the situation and requested

assistance. When *COURAGEOUS* arrived "on scene," the crew observed a terrible sight: Dozens of people were struggling to stay afloat among drifting debris, oil, and face-down bodies. Survivors, many without life preservers, were clinging to flotsam and each other, crying and screaming for help. The bow of the capsized *OLO YUMI* was just visible above the surface of the blue-green water—and then it was gone. *COURAGEOUS* launched its two 26-foot motor-surf boats and, dropping rescue nets from the rail, began recovering survivors. Swimmers helped survivors struggle up the side of the ship. *COURAGEOUS*'s commanding officer requested medical assistance from his Squadron Commodore on board *DALLAS*. Helicopters from *COURAGEOUS* and *VIGOROUS* shuttled the more seriously injured survivors to USS *SAIPAN* (LHA-2), on station only 40 nautical miles to the north with a complete medical team on board.

A 210-foot medium endurance cutter, transiting the long narrow Key West ship channel enroute to a port call for fuel and supplies, overheard the distress traffic from *COURAGEOUS*. The cutter's crew immediately went to flight quarters and launched the embarked helicopter while the ship continued to navigate the narrow channel. After covering more than 50 miles of open water at maximum speed, the helicopter arrived on scene in time to assist in the rescue and transportation of surviving refugees.[31]

Cuban guards had loaded *OLO YUMI*, a 35-foot pleasure craft, with refugees from the Peruvian Embassy in the pre-dawn hours of 17 May. Cuban authorities sent the boat out of Mariel Harbor overloaded with 52 people; the boat contained life jackets for only half the passengers. A few hours out of port, one of *OLO YUMI*'s two engines stopped. The boat had difficulty steering in the four- to five-foot seas and frequently was "beam-to" in the trough parallel to the waves. As the boat began rolling more heavily, the frightened passengers crowded aft to see what was wrong with the steering. Losing freeboard, the boat

began to ship "green water"* over the transom; she swamped and then capsized in a matter of seconds. *COURAGEOUS* and its small boats and helicopter picked up 38 survivors; 10 bodies were recovered and four persons never were located. Many survivors suffered from shock after spending two or three hours in the water. Broken arms and collar bones and lacerations probably were inflicted by the passengers, as they panicked, pushing and shoving to get free when the boat capsized. One 15-year-old girl lost both parents, both sisters, and a grandparent in the sinking.[32]

Admiral Hayes condemned the Cuban government's complicity in the tragedy and "the continued lack of regard for human life by Cuba." Cuba was violating its treaty obligations, as a party to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, he pointed out, in letting thousands of refugees leave the country in overcrowded and unsafe vessels. The Admiral already had appealed to the Cuban government before the *OLO YUMI* incident, urging the Cubans to adhere to their responsibilities and treaty obligations for safety of life at sea. Rear Admiral Stabile in Miami sent the following TELEX message to the Cuban Border Guard:

> This marine tragedy happened because too many persons were put on board the small boat. The Coast Guard again urges the Border Guard to prevent future disasters by not allowing boats departing Mariel to go overloaded. To permit boats to go to sea in an unsafe condition is inconsistent with our mutual concern for safety at sea.[33]

In response to US concerns for the safety of the thousands of men, women, and children leaving Mariel in overcrowded, unseaworthy vessels, Cuba replied with the following editorial in *GRANMA*:

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* Solid wave of water coming aboard a ship (green sea). Freeboard is the distance between the water level and the upper edge of the side of a small boat.

> The Mariel route has proven to be efficient, responsible, and safe. At times there were 1,800 boats in port, but it could have not been more orderly. All claims to the contrary are pure demagogery. We did not violate any law of any kind: entry to and departure from the port is unhampered.[31]

Extraordinary Efforts

Detailing all the heroic rescues accomplished during the Cuban Operations would be impossible. What would have been extraordinary efforts under normal circumstances became routine tasks. An example was the evacuation by the cutter *DAUNTLESS* of 274 persons from the catamaran *AMERICA* on the high seas midway between Cuba and Florida on 10 May. The 100-foot red, white, and blue *AMERICA* had been forced to sail with 700 refugees. The vessel literally was sinking under the weight of its passengers. The evacuation was accomplished without a single injury. In another case, with the assistance of a naval landing craft on 21 May, *DALLAS* evacuated 120 people from the sinking *MISSY*. The 53-foot boat was in such poor condition that the rotted planking crumbled against *DALLAS*'s pneumatic fenders.

The statistics speak for themselves. (See table 2 for a summary of fatalities.) A total of 125,000 Cuban refugees made the transit across the open waters of the Straits of Florida on thousands of boats of all descriptions during the 158 days of the Cuban Operations; more than 110,000 refugees made the voyage in a five-week period. Only 27 persons perished at sea, a tribute to the skill and dedication of the operating forces. Juan M. Clark, Jose I. Lasaga, and Rose S. Reque praised the humanitarian aid rendered by the US Coast Guard and the Navy during the 1980 Cuban Boatlift in their report, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect*. "As with the Camarioca exodus in 1965," they said,

Table 2
Summary of fatalities

Date	Persons	Vessel	Located By	Position
4/28/80	2	Pleasure Craft (P/C) *FL 7081 BT*	Motor Vessel (M/V) *Moby II*	25-24 N 79-50 W
Deceased located inside drifting boat. Cause of death unknown.				
4/29/80	2	Unknown	USCG C-131	Unknown
Two bodies sighted by Coast Guard C-131 aircraft, but could not be relocated.				
5/4/80	2	Unknown	P/C *LUCY I*	23-55 N 81-18 W
P/C *LUCY I* saw a small green boat sink. The two persons on board were not seen to escape the boat as it sank. Search of the position by cutter, helicopter, and Navy aircraft could not locate the people.				
5/11/80	1	P/C *FL 9895 AN*	P/C *FL 8995 AN*	24-15 N 82-05 W
Person was killed when P/C *FL 9895 AN* ran into the tow line between two other vessels.				
5/14/80	3	P/C *SUNSHINE*	P/C *SUNSHINE*	24-23 N 81-49 W
Three people in forward cabin died of carbon monoxide asphyxiation.				
5/17/80	14	P/C *OLO YUMI*	USCG *COURAGEOUS*	23-14 N 82-16 W
The overloaded vessel swamped and sank in heavy swells when one engine became disabled.				
5/25/80	1	P/C *CHRISTOPHER*	USS *ELUSIVE*	24-06 N 81-47 W
P/C *CHRISTOPHER* reported four sick people aboard. Two people were evacuated by helicopter. USS *ELUSIVE* towed boat to Key West. One person was dead when boat reached port.				
8/21/80	1	P/C *SECOND WIND*	USCG H-3	23-56 N 82-03 W
P/C *SECOND WIND* reported person on board in convulsions. Helicopter evacuated unconscious person to Key West. Person died in Key West Hospital shortly after arrival.				
8/29/80	1	P/C *FRANCISCO*	USCG H-3	24-07 N 82-03 W
P/C *FRANCISCO* reported sick people on board. Ten-year-old girl evacuated by helicopter, died enroute to Key West.				

(Source: Commander Seventh Coast Guard District Report, *Cuban Sealift Operations*)

there is a consensus regarding one aspect of the government's performance which should be highly praised and which Cubans have not forgotten, but receives little, if any, press coverage. These two entities (the US Coast Guard and the Navy) contributed significantly to the saving of hundreds of lives... Their sailors showed, through their concern, that the American people cared for the welfare of the refugees.[35]

10

Coast Guard Operations

It (the Cuban Operation) was very invigorating for the whole Coast Guard. Overall it was a very exciting experience and the entire Coast Guard was proud of the job that was done. It upped the morale throughout but particularly for the people involved. There was a sense of accomplishment.... Hardware-wise, we used up a lot of resources for lack of proper maintenance.... It created a focus on the Coast Guard's responsiveness and improved the Service's reputation.

Vice Admiral Benedict L. Stabile, USCG
Washington, DC, 28 February 1986

CAPTAIN ROBERT C. BRANHAM, CHIEF OF STAFF FOR THE SEVENTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT, called the District's Chief of Search and Rescue at his suburban Miami quarters at 9:30 p.m. on Friday, 25 April. "Al, I hope you're not busy," he said. "This Cuban thing is getting bigger all the time. Get some of your staff together and come on down to the office. The Admiral wants to get an 'Op Order' out to Bill Brogdon on *DALLAS* right away."

Working through the night, the staff completed Commander Seventh Coast Guard District Operations Order (CCGD7 OPORD) 30-80 early Saturday morning.

CCGD7 OPORD 30-80 was sent by radioteletype to all Coast Guard units involved in the Cuban Boatlift operation.

Organization

Captain Raymond J. Copin, Operations Division Chief, returned from leave on Saturday, 26 April, and accompanied the District Commander, Rear Admiral Benedict L. Stabile, and the District Legal Officer, Commander John E Shkor, to a meeting of the heads of Federal agencies in South Florida. Seated at a large horseshoe-shaped table in the crisis operations room of the new Customs Building in downtown Miami, Federal representatives exchanged information about the Cuban refugee situation. They reported the latest news about arriving refugees, guidance from their Washington headquarters, and actions they had initiated in response to the situation.[1]

The 26 April meeting was the first of many to involve the refugee crisis during the next several months.

As the number of boats going to Cuba and returning with refugees rapidly escalated, the tempo of Coast Guard rescue activity increased dramatically. Alternatives were investigated for managing the sheer volume of rescue work being done and the necessary coordination of a growing number of resources; organization of a special staff at the Seventh District's Miami headquarters was considered. Uncertainties as to how big the operation would become, or how long it would last, led to a decision to keep the existing organizational structure. To keep pace with the increased workload, key participants deferred lower-priority duties, delegated as much work as feasible, and attempted to meet increasing demands by working as many hours as physically possible.

As activities continued to build, and less and less time was available for other duties, the creation of a

separate staff for the Cuban Operation was again considered. The proposal was rejected, however, because the Admiral and his staff felt continuity might be lost at a critical point in the high-tempo, volatile situation. The people most knowledgeable about refugee mission requirements were the personnel who continued to work with rescue problems on a day-to-day basis. They had the greatest familiarity with the area, resource capabilities, and the people involved. In retrospect, while some differences in opinions were expressed about particular facets of the organization, the overall conclusions basically were the same—the organization used was effective and got the job done.

District leadership generally agreed the same basic approach should be taken in a future situation: Use the existing command structure, expanding and augmenting it where necessary. The Seventh Coast Guard District's *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980* said of the issue:

> A lesson of the experience would seem to have been that it is preferable to augment existing staff components and operational forces within an already established organizational framework rather than create a new, different, and special organization.[2]

The organization that responded to the refugee crisis was effective, Admiral Stabile agreed. But he felt that an even better approach would have been an augmentation of the Operations Division with a special internal staff for the Boatlift. Such a staff would have functioned directly under the Chief of the Operations Division—calling on the expertise and local knowledge of the Division, but freeing key personnel from much of the routine workload. The staff would have kept the Operations Chief constantly informed, while relieving him of involvement in details. "The head of such a project staff," Admiral Stabile said, "probably should have been a captain with enough 'horsepower' to coordinate effectively with the other divisions."[3]

The decision to use the existing organization was sound, said Captain Copin, the District's Operations Chief, and he cautioned against the temptation for a major reorganization in a similar situation. Augmenting the existing structure provided the most effective response, he felt, contending that a reorganization in the middle of a crisis would have created more problems than it would have solved. He recommended strengthening existing staffs in a future operation of this magnitude, "staffing-up" with additional personnel to allow key people to delegate lesser duties and devote more time to making critical operational decisions. "This could be accomplished," Copin said, "by integrating individuals from the staffs of less involved units and districts into the existing organization to provide the capability to meet expanding workload demands."[1]

Support Operations

As activities in the Operations Division expanded, District support divisions and staffs also were mobilized to meet increasing demands generated by the influx of Coast Guard personnel and resources deployed to Florida on short notice from Districts throughout the Service. The buildup caused unique support requirements. District engineers worked around the clock developing innovative solutions to keep ships, aircraft, and boats operating. Augmenting personnel had to be fed and quartered, crews had to be briefed and provided with local publications and charts, and cutters and aircraft had to be replenished, repaired, and maintained

Many individuals and organizations were cited for excellence in responding to the challenge, "keeping things operating and getting the job done!" Hard-pressed District staff members absorbed the increased workload with a "can do" spirit that kept things moving. Examples of flexibility and "creative problem solving" were numerous. New methods for expediting the

massive volume of message traffic were developed, for example, and personnel processing procedures were streamlined. In one case, the Chief of the District's Comptroller Division flew to Key West with a briefcase full of cash to personally make special payments to personnel who had arrived without money and, in some cases, without records.

The demands of national and local media for Boatlift news and human-interest material overwhelmed the District's small public affairs staff; reporters clamored for access to stories of refugees fleeing oppression, emotional family reunions, and daring sea rescues. They wanted to get on board operating cutters and aircraft for first-hand stories and photographs. In one case, a helicopter hired by the press circled close above a cutter at sea taking pictures of refugees. Unfortunately, the hired helicopter almost caused an in-flight emergency by preventing a Coast Guard helicopter, low on fuel, from landing. Lieutenant Norris Turner, serving in a dual capacity as Chief of Public Affairs and Aide-de-Camp to the District Commander, spread his meager staff among assignments at Key West, on operating units, and in Miami. At first, only one full-time enlisted public affairs specialist was available to assist the Key West Group Commander with daily press conferences. But as the operation continued, Coast Guard public affairs personnel from all over the country augmented the District staff.[5]

To meet increasing administrative demands in the District, personnel assignments were modified. The District inspection program was phased back for the duration of the refugee operation. Captain Chuck Hahn, the District Inspector, was temporarily relieved of his duties to assist the Operations Chief in coordinating logistics for the arriving resources. He consolidated requests for personnel and supply support pouring in from various units and divisions.

Captain Alan C. Dempsey, Chief of the District's Aids to Navigation Branch, a senior officer with a surface operations background, was assigned as liaison

officer to the organization of Federal agencies in Miami; he represented the Coast Guard at meetings conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Lieutenant Commander Jim Sutherland, a Coast Guard aviator familiar with air operations in the Straits of Florida, was relieved of his duties as Assistant Operations Officer at the Coast Guard's Miami Air Station and assigned as special assistant to the District's Chief of Operations for scheduling and support of expanded air operations. Before the Cuban Operations were completed, aircraft and crews from every Coast Guard Air Station east of the Rocky Mountains provided aviation support.

Lieutenant Terry Hart was sent to Miami from the Coast Guard's Operations Law Enforcement Division (G-OLE) in Washington to serve as Captain Copin's administrative assistant. Hart also served as liaison with Coast Guard Headquarters, keeping appropriate staffs informed of developments in the Miami District.[6]

The volume of activity quickly overwhelmed the District Operations Center, routinely manned 24 hours a day by an officer and a senior petty officer. Watches in the Center had to be augmented by junior officers and petty officers brought in from other District staffs, Atlantic Area Headquarters in New York, and Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington. The continuously operating Communications Center also needed additional personnel to keep up with the heavy message traffic.

The limited capacity of the District's automated data processing system rapidly became apparent. The scope of the operation required the ability to process large volumes of data very quickly; Washington demanded continuous updates. Problems were encountered particularly during the later law enforcement phase of the Cuban operations. When the District had to maintain a readily accessible cross-reference file of names, descriptions, and owners of vessels cited for violations during the Boatlift, and the information had to be immediately available at Key West, an improvised

data link was established between Group Key West and the Miami Headquarters. "We could have used a 'blank check' to get things we needed quickly, like computers," said Operations Chief Copin. "We had no problem getting ships and aircraft, but ADP (automated data processing) p rsonnel and equipment was another story."

The Seventh District Commander requested more and more resources as the number of boats transiting the Florida Straits continued to increase. Rear Admiral John D. Costello, Chief of the Coast Guard's Office of Operations in Washington, said, "Initially, the Seventh District was very conservative in their requests for aid and additional resources. But, when they realized the scope and magnitude of the problem they were facing, they went 'whole hog'.... The Commandant early on understood how serious it was to respond quickly and gave me the 'green light' on providing resources."[7]

Chain of Command

Vice Admiral Robert I. Price, Commander of the Coast Guard's Atlantic Area, with headquarters in New York, was in the chain of command between Rear Admiral Stabile in Miami and Rear Admiral Costello in Washington. Admiral Price and Admiral Costello were well acquainted with each other, as Costello had served as Price's Deputy Area Commander before reporting to his Washington assignment. While senior to both officers, Price understood the need for rapid direct operational communications between the Seventh District Commander and the Chief of the Office of Operations in Washington. Price took himself out of the operational chain, with the proviso that he be kept fully informed of developments on a daily basis; Admiral Costello gave him daily verbal "situation reports." "Vice Admiral Price did an outstanding job of providing the needed resources," Admiral Stabile said. "The direct support of a 'three star' was invaluable to the operation."[8]

The Commandant of the Coast Guard also was careful not to stifle the free flow of information necessary for rapid coordination and decisionmaking. Consistent with his style, Admiral John Hayes rarely interfered with decisions of his Chief of Operations. Admiral Costello served as principal point of contact for the Coast Guard with the White House, other Federal agencies in Washington, and the Seventh Coast Guard District in Miami. "I would do it just the same way in the future," Admiral Stabile said of the coordinating system developed by the Coast Guard in Washington.[9]

Describing the Coast Guard's management of the crisis at the Washington Headquarters level, Admiral Costello said he devoted all of his time to the Refugee Operation while his deputy, Captain Bobby F. Hollingsworth, ran the Office of Operations. His working group, Admiral Costello said, "was basically an informal organization. It was very effective. The number of people involved was kept small." Captain Leo N. Schowengerdt, Jr., was in charge of the basic group, which included four officers; the group received legal advice from the Office of the Chief Counsel and support from the Public Affairs Staff, and routinely worked with the Coast Guard liaison officer with Naval Intelligence. In a future situation, Costello said he would

> go with a little more formal organization. Formally give it a project leader, a separate flag [Admiral], or to G-O [Chief of the Office of Operations], and relieve him of his duties so he could devote full time.... It is imperative that it be a flag officer because of the level of contacts that are necessary.[10]

As large numbers of personnel, cutters, and aircraft were diverted to Cuban operations during the first two weeks, the Coast Guard approached the limits of its ability to provide additional resources. Personnel and hardware were drawn from several geographical areas, seriously affecting the Service's capability to meet mission needs; drug interdiction operations virtually were halted, and search and rescue resources in many areas

were reduced to a minimum. Fortunately, no hurricanes struck the United States during the period and no major marine disasters occurred along the eastern or Gulf coasts.

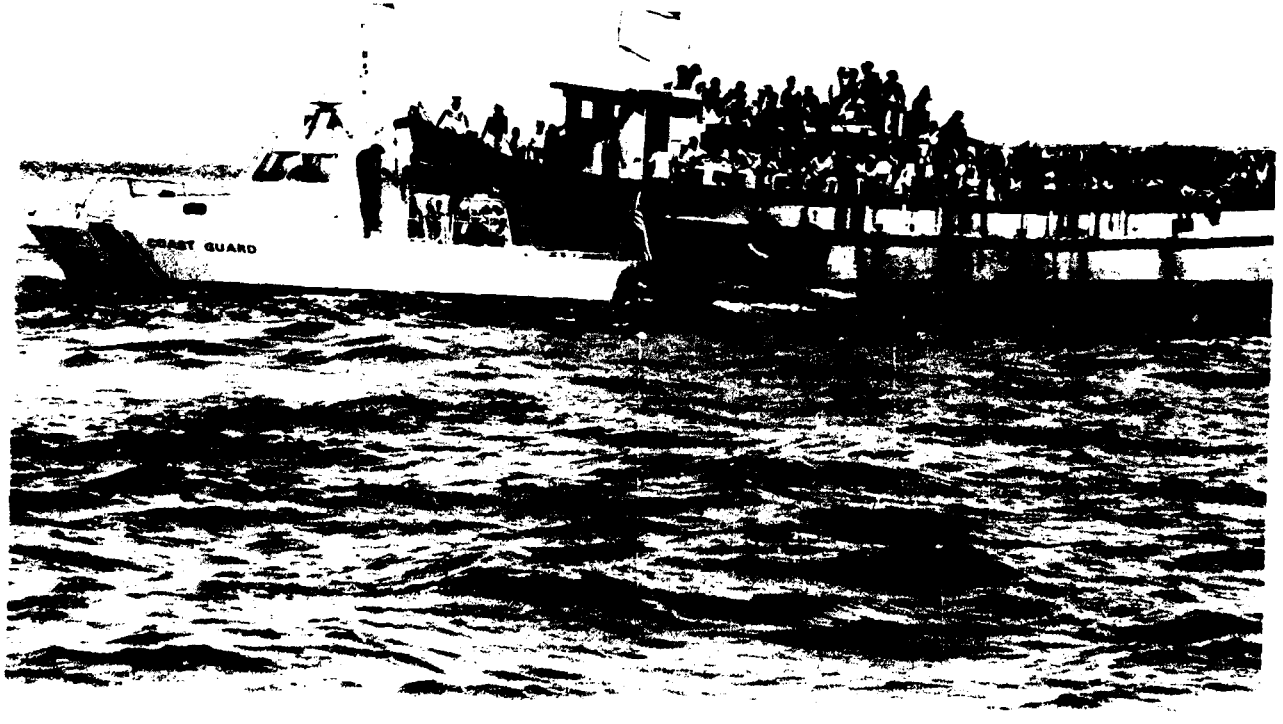
Of the Coast Guard's performance, Jack Watson, President Carter's Chief of Staff, said, "The President's respect for the Coast Guard could not have been higher than it was during the Exodus." Watson added,

> The response was outstanding, from the top of the organization to the boat operators on the scene ... 'Semper Paratus' was exactly right. The Coast Guard was ready and they had the flexibility to get the job done—they were creative in solving problems.... My relationship with the leadership of the Coast Guard, both direct and indirect, was extraordinary.[11]

Group Key West

An impressive array of resources and crews arrived at Coast Guard Group Key West to assist with rescue missions. Several Coast Guard 95- and 82-foot patrol boats (WPBs), HH-3 and HH-52 helicopters, and a large number of 41-foot utility boats (UTBs) came under the operational control of the Group Commander. The Group complement was more than quadrupled to 600 Coast Guard personnel, who arrived in a matter of days. Additional telephone lines were installed at the Group Operations Center; a Transportable Communications Center, was airlifted to the Group Offices at Station Key West. The buildup was so rapid that 90 percent of the Coast Guard's cutters, aircraft, and personnel assigned to assist with the emergency were in place by the second week of the Exodus.[12]

The 105-ton, 95-foot "Cape"-class patrol boats were commanded by lieutenants (junior grade) and carried crews of 14. The 82-footers of the "Point" class were



US Coast Guard Photo

The crew of a 41-foot Coast Guard UTB directs a refugee boat to an anchorage in Key West harbor.

manned by crews of eight and commanded by lieutenants (junior grade) or master chief boatswain's mates. During the Cuban operation, the Key West Group commanded nine 95- and 82-foot patrol cutters, assigned on a rotating basis from other Groups in the Seventh District and from other Atlantic and Gulf Coast Districts. The flexibility of these self-sufficient cutters, manned by a single permanent crew, was shown by their rapid deployment; independent of specialized or integral shore support, they commenced operations immediately on arrival in Key West.

Their flexibility also was shown when 26 82-foot WPBs were deployed to Vietnam in 1965.

Unfamiliarity with the unique waters of the Florida Keys initially curtailed the effectiveness of the newly arrived cutters and crews; even under the best of conditions, commanding officers and officers-in-charge and their crews needed time to learn the navigational features of a new area. With little time for familiarization cruising because of the high tempo of the Cuban operation, the cutters gained their local knowledge while carrying out operational missions at night and in bad weather. Lieutenant (junior grade) Jim Decker, in command of the Key West-based 95-foot WPB *CAPE YORK*, said, "If there had been time, my two years of experience operating out of Key West and the experience of my crew could have been used to brief the crews of the new WPBs who were not familiar with the Keys." They could have instructed the new crews on local currents, geographical points for radar navigating, and uncharted dangers.[13]

The cutters were too busy with rescue work, however, to take time for training. Newly arrived enlisted coxswains and crews of the 41-foot UTBs faced the same orientation problems. Crews from northern states such as Maine or New Jersey quickly found themselves routinely working in shoal waters among "coral heads" assisting grounded and disabled vessels. Because of the rapid buildup, cutters initially were assigned missions on a case-by-case basis. But as the newly arrived

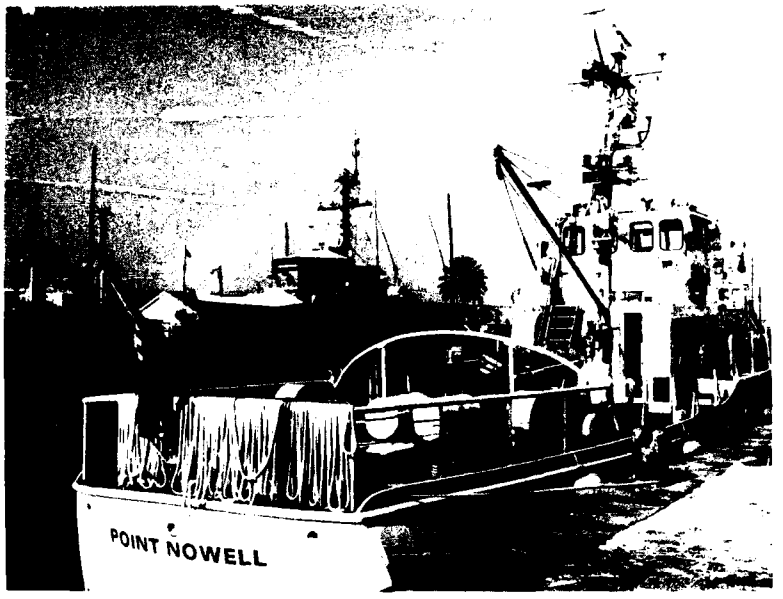
resources were integrated into the Group organization and operations became more stabilized, the Group Operations Officer assigned the boats to scheduled patrols in specific areas.

Group Key West performed rescue work along the coast out to 30 miles offshore, relieved the larger cutters of the tows of disabled boats, and directed returning refugee vessels to established arrival points. As the Cuban Exodus continued, the expanded Group took on new dimensions in providing major logistical support for the increased level of Coast Guard activity in the Key West area, while exercising operational control over more and more resources. The Group coordinated support for the high endurance and medium endurance cutters when they made port calls to take on fuel, supplies, and personnel. The Group also arranged emergency repairs for the cutters, and helicopter delivery of emergency repair parts to underway ships.

Daily press conferences quickly became a major task for the Group Commander, who frequently appeared on television. Fortunately, Lieutenant Commander Sam Dennis was experienced in public affairs, and was comfortable working with the media as a major spokesman for the Coast Guard. While augmenting the command with public affairs specialists was necessary, he said, he also felt that the local commanding officer with responsibility for operations should speak directly to the media. "It [this arrangement] was good for the Coast Guard and it was good for the media," Dennis said. Complimenting Dennis on his "good public affairs sense," Admiral Stabile said,

> It was essential that he (the Group Commander) have direct and immediate access to the District Commander. It proved to be extremely important in making sure he knew the latest policy decisions in dealing with the immense media pressure.

Commander Dennis also cited the need for access to higher authority to ensure accuracy in dealing with the media and other agencies. Throughout the entire



US Navy Photo

The 82-foot Coast Guard Cutter *POINT NOWELL* is moored at Station Key West, after returning to port with a tow. A light towing hawser dries on the taff rail.

Cuban incident, the media was given accurate and timely data on an equitable basis. The rapport of Group Commander Dennis with the media and his credibility helped ensure a favorable overall image of units involved in the refugee operations.[14]

Reflecting on problems associated with the rapid buildup, Dennis stressed the following needs:

- Operationally experienced watch officers, preferably with familiarity of the local area, to augment the Group Operations Center.
- Expanded communications capability, such as provided by the Transportable Communications Center, for control over the large buildup of operational units.
- Financial management assistance, particularly in contracting.

• More general administrative and clerical support; not necessarily specific experience, but general capability.

In retrospect, Dennis said he would build on the organization in place in a future situation. Personnel with local contacts and knowledge should be the nucleus for getting the job done, he said, and they should be provided with moral and material support.[15]

Commander Dennis, then a lieutenant commander, described a situation that developed because of the differences in Coast Guard and Navy terminology. He was working in his office one morning during the height of the Boatlift, when his yeoman excitedly announced that six or seven Navy captains with their staffs were in the outer office, requesting to report to Group Commander Dennis! A "Group" in the Navy, such as a Battle Group or an Amphibious Group, is larger than a "Squadron" and would be commanded by an admiral. In the Coast Guard, the term "Group" defines a geographical group of stations and facilities ashore and often is commanded by a relatively junior officer. Dennis cracked the door to survey the situation—then made for the telephone when he saw the accumulation of gold stripes. Using his direct access to the District Commander, he quickly explained the situation to the Admiral.

To avoid embarrassment, Admiral Stabile spoke to the senior Navy Captain on a phone in the outer office. He explained the situation and the Navy entourage quietly departed without seeing the "Group Commander."

Reserve Activated

As the tempo of the Cuban operation continued to increase, and Coast Guard personnel resources became more heavily taxed, Admiral Stabile looked for help from units of the Coast Guard Reserve. Several District Reserve personnel were sent to Key West during their

annual training periods to participate directly in the refugee operations. Reservists also provided backup crews at rescue stations while the regular boat crews were deployed to the Keys. During August and September, as the pool of active-duty personnel was fairly well depleted, five complete Coast Guard Reserve boat crews were made available at Group Key West units. The Reserve boat crews, fully qualified to carry out all Coast Guard missions, were used primarily for rescue work and law enforcement in stopping southbound boats. Air Station Miami called on several members of the Air Station's Reserve Unit to assist with flight operations and maintenance. Reserve officers and enlisted personnel also relieved District personnel of administrative duties when regulars were diverted to projects involving Cuban operations.[16]

As increasing numbers of active-duty personnel were deployed from operational units along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts to respond to the Cuban refugee influx, the Coast Guard Commandant requested authority to involuntarily call up Coast Guard Reservists to fill billet vacancies created by the emergency. William J. Beckham, Jr., Acting Secretary of Transportation, sent a "*PRIORITY*—MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT" to the White House requesting the involuntary call to active duty.[17] The White House's terse reply of 2 June to Secretary of Transportation Neil Goldschmidt said,

> The President has approved the request as outlined in Jim McIntyre's (Office of Management and Budget) memorandum of 30 May on the above-referenced subject. The President noted, however, 'First, consult with Congress leaders—Expedite.'

Only one other time in recent history has an involuntary callup of Coast Guard Reserves been authorized. (In April 1973 during the flooding of the Mississippi River Basin, Coast Guard Reserves were called up to help evacuate people from their homes.) "President Carter approved the callup of 900 Coast Guard Reservists,"

The Miami News reported on 4 June 1980, "to replace active-duty Guardsmen involved in the Cuban refugee sealift. A total of 300 each two weeks for six weeks."[18]

Auxiliary Assistance

Not only did the Coast Guard Reserve support the hard-pressed regulars, civilian volunteers of the Coast Guard Auxiliary also were involved from the very beginning of the refugee operation. On 23 April, the day after the first two refugee boats arrived in Key West, Lieutenant Commander Dennis requested the assistance of the Captain of Auxiliary Division XIII, which included the seven Coast Guard Auxiliary flotillas in the Florida Keys. The Auxiliary provided private boats and crews "to handle *all* SAR (search and rescue) missions while the Group was totally involved with the Cuban refugee effort." The flotillas provided 24-hour-a-day rescue protection throughout the Keys. Auxiliary boats also maintained a barrier patrol along the southern edge of the reef line and the heavily trafficked inlets.[19]

As Cuban refugees continued to arrive at the Florida shoreline throughout May, officials became aware that more Auxiliary resources would be needed than Division XIII could provide. The Seventh District requested 52 boats and 165 members from the Auxiliary District Commander to augment the Keys operation. The plan, named "Operation Keyring," called for 24-hour-a-day patrols with rotating crews at 13 strategic locations; it was approved on 27 May and orders were issued for volunteers to be in the Keys as soon as possible. The Seventh District Comptroller contracted for crew housing, fuel, and dockage for patrol vessels at various locations in the Keys. Three days later, on 30 May, the volunteers established an Auxiliary Operations Center in an Auxiliary member's residence on Big Pine Key to control the operation. This separate operations center enabled the Auxiliary to conduct search and

rescue operations with as little regular Coast Guard support as possible—allowing Group Key West to concentrate on the refugee crisis. Three primary Auxiliary radio stations also were put into operation in the Keys, freeing up Coast Guard circuits and enabling Auxiliary members to operate as independently as possible.

By 2 June, the first privately owned boat of the Auxiliary augmentation was on patrol; three days later, 11 of 13 stations were being continuously patrolled. Newly arrived Auxiliary members had difficulty patrolling at night in the unfamiliar and dangerous waters of the Keys; patrols were rescheduled from sunrise to sunset, with local Keys-based Auxiliary members on standby to respond to nighttime search and rescue incidents. As the number of Cuban refugee arrivals dwindled in June, "Operation Keyring" was placed in a standby status on 17 June. Auxiliarists remained ready to respond if the tempo of the continuing Boatlift increased. During the operation, Auxiliary members and facilities from as far as Atlanta and Charleston took part. "Operation Keyring" participants were ready to provide sustained operational support to Group Key West through August, if needed.

The backup support of the Coast Guard Reserve and Auxiliary helped the Service provide a surge response of personnel and resources to cope with the Cuban refugee crisis. The Coast Guard regulars greatly appreciated the professionalism and dedication of the Reservists and Auxiliary members involved in the Cuban Boatlift—"Semper Paratus" (Always Ready) was more than a motto.

Air Operations

Aviation resources were critical to the Federal response to the Exodus. Coast Guard twin-engine C-131 Convairs from Air Station Miami flew the first surveillance flights early in April, when the first boats were enroute to Mariel. These flights provided data to help evaluate the

developing situation. As the pace increased, additional HH-52 helicopters were deployed onboard the increasing number of Coast Guard cutters performing search and rescue missions in the Florida Straits. Additional long-range aircraft also were deployed to Air Station Miami for surveillance flights. Initially, Coast Guard Air Station Miami provided all maintenance and material support for the additional aircraft, and coordinated all air operations.[20]

On 5 May, as part of the Navy's agreement to assist the Coast Guard, aircraft from Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville began augmenting Coast Guard surveillance flights over the Straits of Florida. The Sea Services flew five surveillance flights each day, four by Coast Guard C-130 and C-131 aircraft from Coast Guard Air Stations at Miami and Clearwater and one by long-range Navy P-3s from NAS Jacksonville. (See figure 2.) The Navy planes flew patrols north of the 24th parallel, the limit of Cuban-controlled air space. Coast Guard flights covered the area from the Florida Keys to 15 miles from the Cuban coast and Cay Sal Bank.*[21]

To assist with coastal rescue and surveillance work, and provide support for the forces afloat, Coast Guard helicopters were assigned to Group Key West. An HH-52 and two HH-3 helicopters were deployed to NAS Key West from Coast Guard Air Stations Miami, Clearwater, and Elizabeth City. Additionally, from three to five HH-52s were deployed onboard flight-deck-equipped cutters operating in the Florida Straits. As operations continued with no end in sight, the Group Commander, burdened with increasing responsibilities, needed assistance in coordinating operations and maintaining air

* Cay Sal Bank is an uninhabited triangular group of reefs and small islands between the Bahamas, Cuba, and the United States. While the bank generally is recognized as Bahamian territory, Cuba also has made claims to it. The bank historically has been a haven for smugglers, pirates, and revolutionaries. The island group was an obvious place for boats transiting to or from Cuba to seek concealment. During the Cuban refugee operation, the Bahamian government authorized Coast Guard aircraft to fly surveillance flights over Cay Sal Bank and cutters to enter the waters.

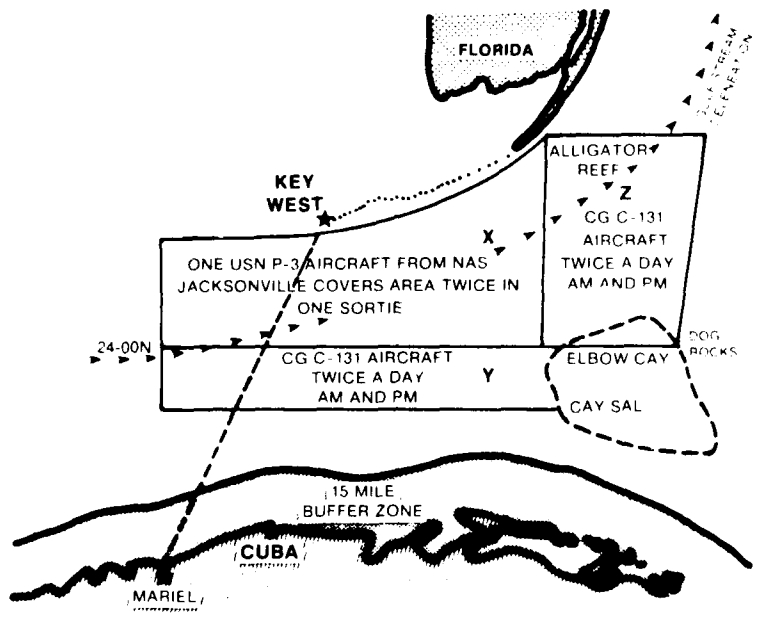


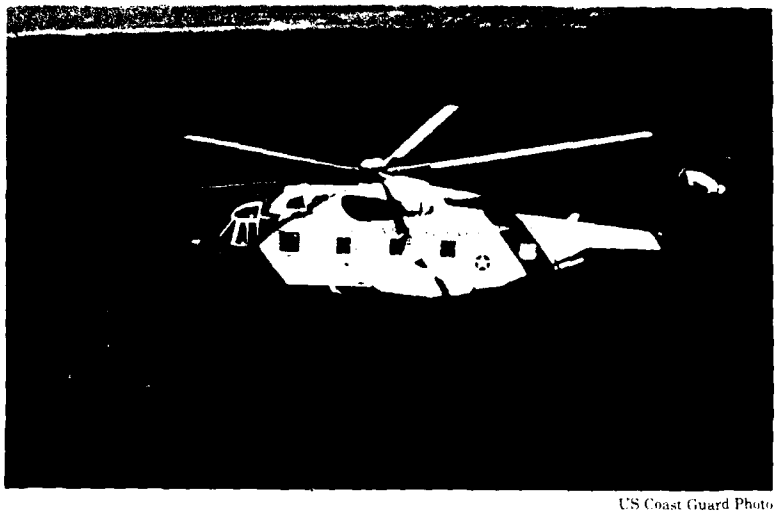
Figure 2. Air operating areas and aircraft patrol assignment plan, 7 May 1980

(Operating areas extended to the east because of the Gulf Stream.)

Source: U.S. Transportation Department, Coast Guard, Flag Plot, *Incident Memo 04-01K*, 6 May 1980, p. 5.

assets at his disposal. In reflecting on the establishment of a detachment, Captain Copin, the District's Operations Officer, said, "We should have established an aviation detachment earlier, and moved the helos south."

Coast Guard Aviation Detachment (AVDET) Key West was established on 20 May 1980, with Lieutenant Commander Mont J. Smith, Jr., assigned as "Aviator-in-Charge." The detachment consisted of an aircraft maintenance officer, an enlisted maintenance supervisor, four HH-3 flight crews, three HH-52 flight crews, and three seven-man maintenance support sections. NAS Key West provided ramp space, an office next to the Navy SH-3G Search and Rescue Detachment, flight meals, and messing for Coast Guard personnel. AVDET personnel and flight crews were berthed in a contracted



US Coast Guard Photo

Larger Coast Guard HH-3 helicopters were used for patrolling and rescue work along the Florida Keys.

motel in Key West, along with other Coast Guard personnel augmenting Group Key West. In addition to support, detachment helicopters provided rapid operational rescue response for coastal work.

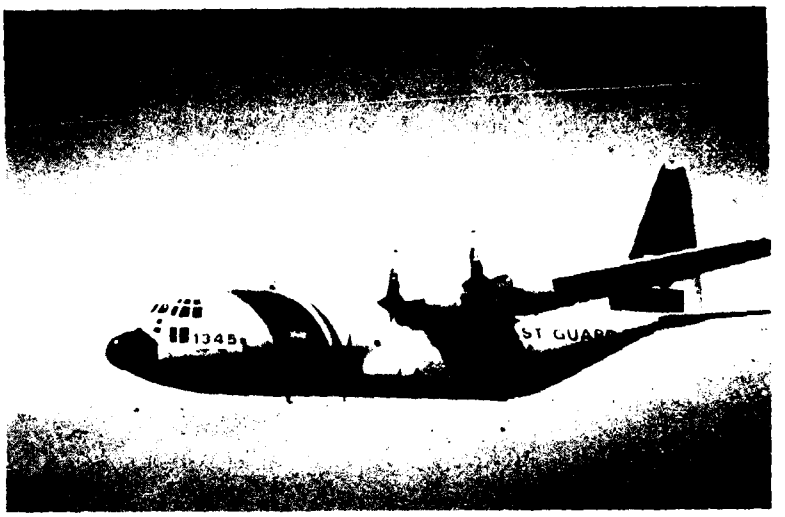
A rescue in late May demonstrated the detachment's capabilities: At 2 a.m. a boat overloaded with refugees was reported aground on a reef south of Boca Chica in the Keys and breaking up in the seas. The three AVDET helicopters hoisted more than 50 people to safety in the darkness.

Ground support equipment and a Transportable Communications Center were airlifted to NAS Key West from Air Station Clearwater on 17 May. The Coast Guard Aviation Repair and Support Center (AR&SC) at Elizabeth City, N.C., established a supply network for replacement parts from inventories at Air Stations Miami and Clearwater. Major repair parts were provided by overnight shipment direct from the AR&SC. To complete the aviation organization in Key West, Lieutenant Commander James T. Marcotte was assigned to the Group Commander's staff as Aviation Liaison Officer.[22]

Admiral Stabile cited the outstanding support provided to the Coast Guard by Captain Ivan Lewis, USN, Commanding Officer of NAS Key West during the Cuban Exodus. "Captain Lewis's 'can-do' attitude," Admiral Stabile said, "got the job done under difficult circumstances." The excellent cooperation between the Services enabled timely aircraft responses to the many emergencies at sea, keeping fatalities to a minimum. NAS Key West cheerfully and professionally accommodated the rapid buildup in Coast Guard aviation activity. Admiral Stabile commented that during an inspection trip to NAS Key West, he and Admiral Price saw more Coast Guard aircraft coming, going, and lined up in one place than either Admiral had ever seen before in their entire careers.[23]

The Aviation Assistant assigned to the District operations staff coordinated long-range fixed-wing surveillance flights and served as a point of contact for aviation matters for the Miami Coast Guard District Office. The aviator on the staff of Group Key West coordinated rotary-wing coastal missions and scheduled shipboard deployments for HH-52s. At NAS Key West, known as "Boca Chica," the Aviator in Charge served as liaison to the Navy and provided maintenance, supply, and personnel support for Coast Guard aircraft operations at Key West. Air Station Miami was the initial point of arrival for aircraft and crews deployed from along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. At the Air Station, arriving crews were briefed and given publications and radio frequencies for local operations, while arriving aircraft were given maintenance checks. The division of responsibilities for air operations provided consistency and continuity, while meeting mission requirements.[24]

Aviation liaison officers and the Aviator in Charge monitored nightly radio conference calls with underway cutters to learn of aviation problems and exchange information, enabling aviation support personnel to quickly resolve on-scene problems involving scheduling and maintenance.



US Coast Guard Photo

Coast Guard long-range C-130 aircraft flies a surveillance flight over the Florida Straits. These aircraft also provided logistic support for Coast Guard forces engaged in the Cuban Operations.

C-131s deployed from various Atlantic Area Air Stations flew their long-range surveillance missions from Air Station Miami; Coast Guard C-130s operating from Air Stations Clearwater and Elizabeth City flew reconnaissance flights and also transported parts, supplies, and passengers into Key West. During darkness, Group Key West kept an HH-3 and an HH-52 on "Bravo-Zero" readiness for rescue work. Having a "ready" helicopter on standby during the day was unnecessary, because of the level of day-time aviation activity in the immediate area. "All the planes were run very hard," Commander Sutherland said of aircraft maintenance during the Cuban Operations,

> but safety was not compromised. The safety items were done. It was the preventive maintenance, like the corrosion prevention program, that was neglected. Eventually we paid the price in higher maintenance cost.

With the exception of the need for better communications—more telephone lines and direct very high frequency communications with aircraft—Sutherland said the aviation end of the Cuban operation went very smoothly. Despite the hectic pace of activity, all assigned missions were performed. He recommended air operations be handled the same way in a future situation; the organization was established quickly and the division of responsibilities was logical and well-defined.

For air operations in the Cuban-controlled air space south of latitude 24° North, procedures routinely used by the Seventh Coast Guard District were continued. Flight plans were filed with Cuba's Havana Center through the US Federal Aviation Administration's Miami Center the night before the planned operation. Cutters at sea initiated messages for their attached helicopters, and Group Key West filed flight plans for helicopters transiting to the cutters. Air Station Miami and the Miami Operations Center filed for "fixed-wing" surveillance flights south of latitude 24° North. US military facilities also were alerted to planned Coast Guard flights near Cuba. When the Navy's amphibious assault ship USS *SAIPAN* (LHA 2) was on station, she controlled military air activity in the area between 30 nautical miles from the coast of Florida south to latitude 24° North. For safety, altitude separations between types of aircraft were established: HH-52s normally operated below 1,000 feet, HH-3s between 1,000 and 1,500 feet, and fixed-wing surveillance flights above 2,000 feet.[25]

During the entire Cuban operation, involving thousands of flights, dangerous rescues under severe weather conditions and at night, and pilots unfamiliar with local area and conditions, no serious injuries or aviation accidents were reported.[26] This remarkable feat is a tribute to the skill and professionalism of all personnel involved: aviators, flight crews, flight deck crews, and maintenance personnel.

As the flood of Cuban refugees continued to make the dangerous 100-mile open-sea voyage to Florida, the Coast Guard questioned whether it had adequate resources to protect the thousands of people transiting the Straits. The increasing number of vessels waiting in Mariel Harbor, the overloaded condition of the boats returning to Florida, and the potential for sudden violent storms in the Florida Straits created an extremely dangerous situation.

At the end of April, the Coast Guard and the Navy developed a joint plan for tasking US Navy assets to augment Coast Guard surface and aviation units working in the Florida Straits.

11

Navy Augmentation

Yes, I think it [the Cuban Operation] was an appropriate mission for the Navy.... Navy resources were assigned under the Tactical Control of the Coast Guard admiral who was charged with the overall mission. It was proper, the way it was done.... Ideally, I would like to have had a Coast Guard detachment on each ship much the way it was done during the Missile Crisis. This did not happen.

Admiral Harry D. Train, II, USN, Ret.
Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, 1980
Washington, DC, 25 April 1986

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS WERE NOT EAGER TO ASSUME a leadership role in responding to the Cuban Exodus. They were sensitive about taking responsibility for operations that did not appear to be defense related. The Department, however, was very responsive in assisting the Coast Guard in rescue and relief missions. The Coast Guard requested Navy assistance when it realized additional ships and aircraft would be needed in the Florida Straits to control the escalating refugee situation. The volatile nature of the Exodus, and its uncertainties, made accurate assessments of the final need for resources difficult.

The continuing stream of southbound boats was an obvious indication the problem was growing. Personal

contacts, and the continuing Coast Guard-Navy dialogue in Washington, determined the Navy had the ships and aircraft the Coast Guard needed—and was willing to provide them.[1]

The Coast Guard was moving more ships and aircraft into the Florida Straits area, Rear Admiral John D. Costello, Chief of the Coast Guard's Office of Operations in Washington, told Presidential Assistant Jack Watson, in a Briefing Paper dated 26 April 1980. He added that "arrangements have been made for US Navy units to assist if required."[2]

Reinforcements

In late April, about a week after the Cuban Boatlift began, the Coast Guard's Seventh District was informed that the Navy would commit significant assets to assist with rescue operations at sea and aerial surveillance of the Florida Straits. Availability of resources would determine the types of ships to be sent. At the time, amphibious ships were the most appropriate vessels that could be diverted on such short notice.[3]

Preparations were made immediately in Miami to integrate Navy forces into the Coast Guard operation. Some initial confusion existed over the term "Operational Control." In the Coast Guard, "Operational Control" is the indispensable authority a commander exercises over attached units to accomplish an operational mission. The Navy, however, calls that authority "Tactical Control" and considers "Operational Control" to have much broader implications. Rear Admiral Benedict L. Stabile, Commander of the Coast Guard District in Miami, initially was concerned when he learned that he would not have "Operational Control" over Navy ships and aircraft that would be assisting him. The situation was quickly clarified: "Tactical Control" of Navy units was assigned to Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District, while the Navy retained "Operational Control," which was passed to Navy Rear Admiral

Thomas H. Replogle, in command of the Joint Caribbean Task Force in Key West.

At the recommendation of Admiral Replogle and to facilitate the integration of operational units of the two Sea Services, guiding directives and operating orders were kept as uncomplicated as possible. Coordination details were worked out on the weekend of 3-4 May and a revised operations order, *OPORD 30A-80*, was prepared, to include US Naval Forces. *OPORD 30A-80* was distributed to all involved Coast Guard and Navy units by message. Forces were assigned as follows, according to the Seventh Coast Guard District's *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*:

- US Navy surface and air forces were deployed north of latitude 24° North.
- Rear Admiral Warren C. Hamm, Commander, Amphibious Group Two, served as On-Scene Commander for Navy forces, responsible for OPORD missions in his assigned area, reporting for Tactical Control to Commander Seventh Coast Guard District (CCGD7).
- US Coast Guard surface assets (high endurance and medium endurance cutters) were assigned to areas south of 24° North, under the command of Coast Guard Captain William J. Brogdon, on *DALLAS*, who was designated On-Scene Commander.

Admiral Stabile thought the organization in the Straits of Florida and the division of authority between Coast Guard and Navy units was very effective. (See figure 3.) "The Navy liked the way the responsibility was broken out by operating areas," he said. "The Navy people really appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the humanitarian work."[4]

To assist in integrating the forces of the two Services, Commander Howard A. Newhoff, USCG, was temporarily relieved of his duties as District Readiness Officer and assigned as liaison officer from the Seventh District staff to the Navy Flag Ship, USS *SAIPAN* (LHA-2), reporting to Admiral Hamm. In turn, the Air Liaison Officer from Admiral Hamm's staff visited Admiral Stabile's headquarters in Miami to coordinate air operations and communications procedures.[5]

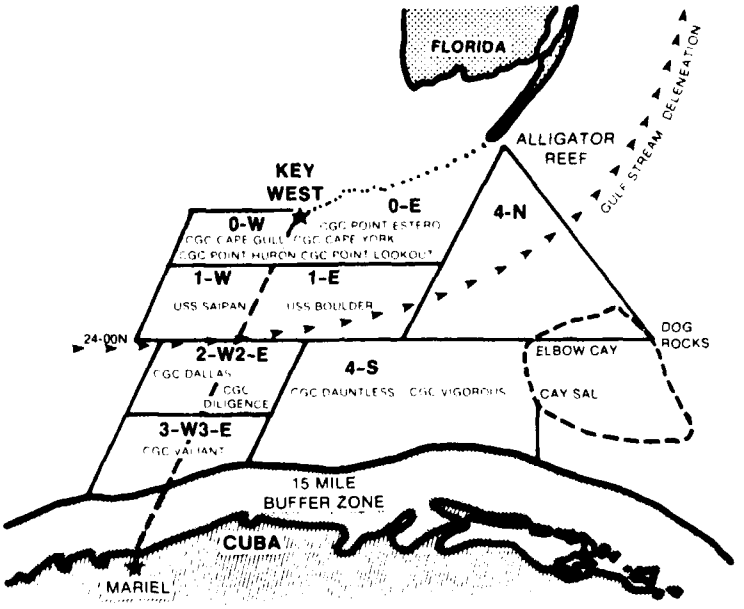


Figure 3. Surface operating areas and deployment plan for Coast Guard and Navy vessels, 7 May 1980
(Operating areas extended to the east because of Gulf Stream.)

(Source: US Transportation Department, Coast Guard, Flag Plot, Incident Memo 04-01K, 6 May 1980, p. 4.)

SAIPAN On Station

The Navy's Norfolk-based Amphibious Assault Ship USS *SAIPAN* was deployed by presidential direction from the Joint Forces Exercise *SOLID SHIELD 80* to assist the Seventh Coast Guard District in protecting refugees flooding north from Cuba. During her transit south, the 39,300-ton *SAIPAN* took on board three night-hover-capable Navy HH-46 helicopters from Composite Helicopter Squadron 16, deployed from Pensacola Naval Air Station (NAS), and eight CH-46, four CH-53, and two HU-1N helicopters from the Second Marine Airwing at New

US Coast Guard Photo

USS *SAIPAN* (LHA 2) arrives on station in the Florida Straits on 5 May 1980, to provide rescue support for the Cuban refugees.

River, N.C. A 200-man reinforced rifle company from the Second Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, N.C., also was embarked to provide security. In her well deck, *SAIPAN* carried two 145-foot LCU-type landing craft from Assault Craft Unit Two. A medical team from Second Force Support Group also was embarked to assist in medical treatment of the refugees.[6]

SAIPAN, along with USS *BOULDER* (LST-1190), took up station on 5 May in the Straits of Florida between Cuba and Key West. The two Navy ships, with their attached helicopters and landing craft, were well-received additions to the rescue operations in progress. The 820-foot *SAIPAN* was one of the first of a new class of amphibious assault ships. Manned by 902 officers and men, she had a large flight deck for the 17 helicopters attached to the ship, and a 268-foot floodable docking well for the two 145-foot landing craft and other small craft on board. A new ship, *SAIPAN* had the latest in sophisticated communications and command-and-control equipment. *BOULDER* was a 522-foot, 8,450-ton tank landing ship with a complement of 196 officers and men. The larger *SAIPAN* could feed and sleep an additional 1,900 persons, while *BOULDER* could accommodate another 430 people.[7]

SAIPAN unloaded the refugee boats in her docking well, safe from wind and seas. The refugees were processed in the hangar bay, where they were greeted by an American flag draped above a 25-foot-wide banner that read in Spanish *Bienvenidos a los Estados Unidos* (Welcome to the United States). As the Cubans were evacuated from overloaded or disabled boats, they were interviewed, medically examined, and fed, and then airlifted by helicopter to Key West. The ship's medical facilities, equivalent to a small-city hospital, included a 17-bed intensive care unit and a 48-bed primary care ward, with an overflow capacity for another 300 sick or injured.[8]

The Navy ships were welcome sights to Captain Brogdon onboard *DALLAS*; he had been serving as both commanding officer of *DALLAS* and On-Scene

U.S. Coast Guard Photo

Navy CH-46 helicopters from the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Fla., were deployed aboard *SAIPAN* for rescue work during the Cuban Exodus.

Commander for the Coast Guard cutters. Until the Navy ships arrived, he had been responsible for rescue operations along the entire route from Key West to Mariel. The huge volume of rescue work had taxed the cutters to their limits. During the nine days since the Cuban Boatlift began, cutters under Captain Brogdon's command had responded to 363 vessels needing assistance: 17 boats had sunk, 12 more had capsized, and 23 other vessels had to be abandoned. During the same period, 12,867 refugees safely made the transit from Cuba to the United States.[9]

Initially, some distinct differences were noted in the command styles of the two afloat commanders. All Brogdon expected from his units was a "Situation Report—One and Final" after a job was finished. He said, "They all knew their jobs, and besides, everyone was just too busy saving lives to send a bunch of reports." He told his ship captains: "Get the job done—don't call me unless you have an unmanageable problem."[10] Admiral Hamm,

on the other hand, was fully equipped and staffed for handling major operations. He could comfortably exert a much higher degree of control over his resources and wanted a higher level of detailed coordination.

On 7 May, Admiral Stabile and the author, who was serving as Chief of Search and Rescue for the District, landed onboard *DALLAS* as she patrolled north of the Cuban coast. After a brief meeting with Captain Brogdon, the Admiral expressed his appreciation to the crew for their long hours and hard work, and congratulated them for their many successful rescues. When the Admiral finished his talk, "Flight Quarters, Condition One" was sounded and crew members went to their stations to launch the Admiral's HH-52 helicopter. Captain Brogdon accompanied the District Commander and the author on a visit to *SAIPAN*, which was patrolling to the north.

The Admiral and the two captains walked aft along the starboard side of the 0-1 deck, past the Number One Fire Party, and onto the flight deck. The helmeted helicopter crewman in his orange flight suit helped the officers into their survival life jackets before boarding the aircraft. Speech was impossible above the high-pitched whine of the helicopter turbine. From their seats in the helicopter, the officers could see the tie-down men in their blue life jackets and blue helmets crouched in the nets along the sides of the flight deck. Wearing goggles and ear protectors, the tie-down men waited to release the nylon straps securing the helicopter to the flight deck. The ship steadied on a heading with a wind of 25 knots, 30 degrees on the port bow. When the pilot received the radio message from the Helicopter Control Officer, "You are cleared for takeoff to port," he gave the thumbs out signal to the Landing Signals Officer in charge of the flight deck. The tie-down men tripped the releases on the nylon straps and jumped back into the safety nets. The helicopter gently lifted off the deck grids, dipped its nose as it gained altitude, and picked up forward momentum into the wind. The Admiral's flag was hauled down from the mast and

an announcement was made throughout the ship: "Now hear this—Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District departing—*DALLAS* departing."

After lunch in the Flag Mess in *SAIPAN*, Admiral Stabile met privately with Admiral Hamm. While the two admirals talked, Captain Brogdon and the author were given a tour of *SAIPAN*'s Operations Center. The author, who also was in charge of the Coast Guard's Miami Operations Center, gained a good appreciation for the extensive command and control capabilities of the Navy ship. Difficulties with reporting systems and differences between Navy and Coast Guard procedures were clarified.

The value of the face-to-face meetings in developing a constructive rapport was obvious—once understood, issues quickly were resolved. Two days later, Admiral Hamm visited *DALLAS* for a tour of the ship and lunch with Captain Brogdon. The two meetings brought a much better understanding and relationship between operating units of the two Sea Services.

Navy Replacements

Captain John J. Kingston, USN, embarked in USS *PONCE* (LPD-15) as Commodore, Amphibious Squadron Four (COMPHIBRON FOUR), relieved Admiral Hamm of command of Navy forces involved in Cuban refugee operations on 22 May 1980. Under Captain Kingston's command was *PONCE*, a 570-foot amphibious transport dock, and the 522-foot USS *SAGINAW* (LST-1188), a landing ship, tank, that replaced *BOULDER*. Six Marine CH-46 helicopters were assigned to the squadron and operated out of NAS Key West. Helicopters from *SAIPAN* also had operated from the Key West Naval Air Station during her deployment. Helicopters were used primarily to ferry refugees from the Navy ships to Key West; Captain Kingston commented, "They were indispensable for the job."[11]

Also assigned to COMPHIBRON FOUR were four ocean minesweepers: USS *EXULTANT* (MSO-441), USS *LEADER* (MSO-490), USS *ILLUSIVE* (MSO-448), and USS *FIDELITY* (MSO-443). The 172-foot, 735-ton wooden-hulled minesweepers, manned by six officers and 70 enlisted men, provided rescue assistance for the refugees for two weeks, from 23 May to 5 June 1980.[12] The minesweepers "were a godsend!" Captain Kingston said. "I could have used more. They were the kind of resource that was needed. They were low in the water with a good counter for bringing people on board."

The Navy minesweepers were stationed along the north-south transit route, with *PONCE* and *SAGINAW* to the east and west. Captain Kingston's mission was providing search and rescue capability and reporting southbound vessels. Coordination between the Services was good, and the division of responsibilities by area continued to work well. He could have used more information on which boats were moving north, Captain Kingston said, and a more accurate description of their condition. He also would have liked a system by which overloaded refugee boats were escorted north by ships and handed off from one area to the next. He realized, however, that the ships were stretched very thin and often were unable to make sightings while diverted on rescue work, let alone do escort duty. His big fear was that one of the crowded boats would sink without being seen.

For Kingston, one of the most difficult parts of the whole operation was making the decision to break off one of his ships, sending it north with a tow or into port for logistics and leaving a gap in coverage. "There was always the chance that a big overloaded boat would go down without us knowing about it," he said. "I just didn't have enough ships to do the job the way I wanted to."

During *SAGINAW*'s two-week assignment to the Cuban refugee operation, she embarked more than 800 refugees, providing them with food, clothing, and medical attention. Nearly 60 helicopter landings were made to evacuate refugees to Key West.[13]

US Navy Photo

The Navy Ocean Minesweeper USS *DASH* departs Key West to return to station. The low freeboard aft made this MSO class of vessel particularly effective when offloading refugee vessels at sea.

The low freeboard and maneuverability of the 14-knot MSO-class minesweepers made them excellent ships for taking disabled vessels in tow. Lieutenant Commander R. J. Shade, USN, skipper of *ILLUSIVE*, reported in his "Command History" for 1980 that his ship was deployed to the Florida Straits with only three days of rest following the *SOLID SHIELD 80* exercise. The ship was tasked with "performing search and rescue operations," he said, "in support of President Carter's program for the orderly immigration of Cuban refugees." During the operation, *ILLUSIVE* assisted 36 vessels, 21 of which had to be towed, and evacuated 454 people from overloaded boats that were sinking or unseaworthy. In one incident, *ILLUSIVE* took 228 refugees aboard from a single vessel, treated their medical problems, towed the boat, and transported the refugees to Key West.[14]

Most impressive to Kingston was the attitude of Navy and Marine personnel:

> Once they saw the refugees and understood what was going on, there was no more talk about going home.... They all loved it. They always wanted to go the extra mile. They didn't hesitate to expose themselves to danger to help the refugees.... When it came time to go, they didn't want to leave.[15]

Kingston said, "It was right that the Coast Guard was in tactical control of the operation. They were the ones familiar with the mission." He added that the experience was personally very rewarding, and that the operation was extremely well run. If the Navy were tasked with similar duties in the future, he said that he would recommend providing a squadron consisting of the following:

- A command ship, with a commodore and staff onboard, large enough to have adequate communications for command and control, such as a tank landing ship, a dock landing ship, or a destroyer. A helicopter deck for evacuating refugees would be very helpful.
- A squadron of smaller ships with lower freeboards for rescue work and towing, such as minesweepers, fleet tugs, or small rescue and salvage ships. Enough ships to permit shuttling back and forth to port with tows would be needed, so the area would still be covered.
- An augmented medical team on the command ship.

Commodore Kingston and his staff transferred to USS *SHREVEPORT* (LPD-12) for the final portion of the Navy's augmentation of the rescue phase of the Cuban Operations. Completing the final week were the minesweepers USS *DOMINANT* (MSO-431), USS *ENGAGE* (MSO-433), and USS *FIDELITY* (MSO-443). The last of the Navy ships departed the scene on 10 June 1980.

In reflecting on the Navy's participation in the operations, Vice Admiral Costello said in a 1 April 1986 interview:

We were dealing with a generation of Navy and Coast Guard leadership who did not have a history of having worked together.... It (Cuban Refugee Operations) had a significant impact on maturing the relationship between the Coast Guard and the Navy.... It contributed to a closer cooperation between the Services and may well have led to the Coast Guard's increased involvement in the Maritime Defense Zone.

12

Castro's Ploy

Criminals have indeed left here, and we have said so repeatedly. We have publicly made it clear that a great majority of those who went into the Peruvian Embassy were not 'dissidents' but criminals. There are cries now that the United States does not want to become a garbage dump for Cuban scum.... The United States is solely responsible for having encouraged these elements to leave Cuba and go to that country. This is why so many of them feel they are entitled to U.S. hospitality. It would not be fair to let them down.

Editorial in GRANMA
Havana, 19 May 1980

LIEUTENANT KEN GRAY, STANDING IN THE SHADE OF THE OLD lookout tower on the end of the Navy pier, watched as the next boat approached, ready to discharge its load of refugees. The young Coast Guard officer was in charge of a detachment of Coast Guard marine inspectors. The inspectors, along with Immigration and Naturalization Service and Customs Service personnel, worked in round-the-clock shifts to board boats arriving at Key West. The late afternoon sun sparkled off the blue water of the harbor, forcing Gray to squint as he watched the shrimp boat approach the concrete pier.

As the boat drew closer, the people lining the rail and perching in the rigging became more visible; a disproportionate number of the refugees were younger men with their hair cut short. While rumors of convicts being sent out of Mariel had been heard in early May, they had not yet been confirmed. Aboard the white shrimper, her 80-foot hull streaked with rust from metal fittings, Gray also saw a small group of women, children, and older men by themselves, off to one side. When the mooring lines were made fast, the young men climbed off the boat smiling. They jostled each other for position as they quickly formed a rough line to be counted—a procedure they had routinely followed in prison.[1]

For Ken Gray, the rumors of convicts coming to Florida were confirmed.

Recoupment

Dr. Wayne Smith, Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana at the time of the Cuban Boatlift, said, "All major policy decisions were made or approved by Castro. The decision to remove the guards from the (Peruvian) Embassy was certainly his." Smith described the removal of the guards as "a rash and impulsive act on the part of Castro," adding, "He expected no more than a few hundred people would go to the Embassy, making life difficult for Peru.... He made a miscalculation and recouped, making the best of a bad thing."[2]

The great number of Cubans who flooded onto the Embassy grounds was completely unexpected; the situation was a serious embarrassment for the Cuban government. The foreign press eagerly reported the spectacle of thousands of men, women, and children crowded into the Embassy in an attempt to flee Cuba. With little food, shelter, or sanitary facilities, the plight of the people at the Embassy became more dramatic with each passing day, heightening international interest. When evacuation flights began landing in Costa

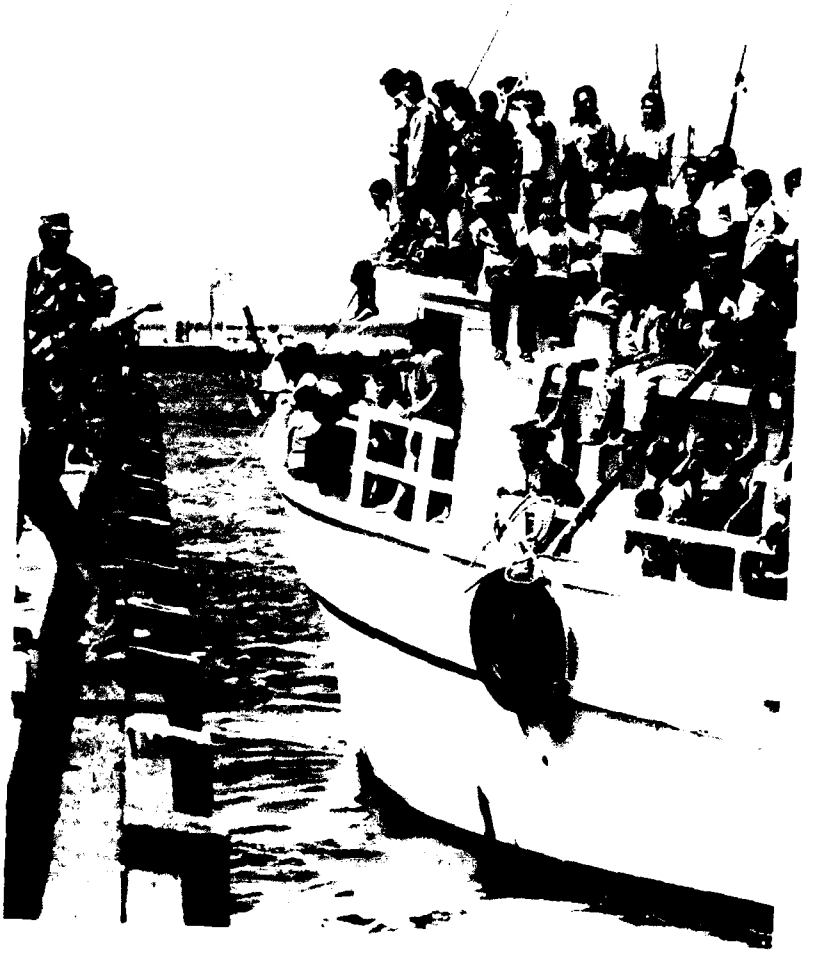
Rica, the Cuban government experienced further embarrassment. The international media covered the arrival of jubilant Cubans at Santamaria Airport in San Jose; stories with photos of Cuban refugees kissing the ground and being personally welcomed by Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo, were reported extensively. The highly visible demonstrations of internal unrest severely damaged the reputation of Cuba as a model society and Castro as a leader of the Third World. International refugee problems are not generally associated with progressive, developing nations.

During the more than two decades that Castro ruled Cuba, he routinely displayed an innate talent for reshaping negative situations to his advantage. Myles Frechette, the US State Department's Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, said,

> The Exodus was not planned. Castro got boxed in by the events at the Peruvian Embassy. He improvised to manipulate the situation to his advantage. The Latins have a gift for improvisation and place great value on the ability. Castro was very skillful in this area. The Cubans are very different from Americans in the way they address problems. We tend to plan before we act—Cubans tend to manage as they go.[3]

Castro manipulated the incident at the Peruvian Embassy to further Cuba's objectives, perceiving the thousands of people who fled to the Embassy as an effective catalyst for initiating a Cuban-controlled emigration. He reasoned that another migration of burdensome, nonproductive, and discontented Cubans would help relieve the country's mounting internal pressures. Life for the true revolutionaries, made difficult by increased controls, restrictions, and the austerity of a stagnating economy, could be improved.

Including convicts and other undesirables among the refugees not only would get rid of a social burden, Castro reasoned, but also discredit the motives and character of the asylum seekers at the Peruvian



US Navy Photo

A boatload of Cuban refugees arrives in Key West on 11 May 1980. US Marines stand by to help offload the people.

Embassy, Cuba's claims that the people were criminals, vagrants, and social deviates would be verified. Of equal importance, the emigrants, branded traitors and *lumpen*, would be a focal point for the contempt and hatred of the Cuban people. Once again, Castro would rally the revolutionary spirit of the Cuban people and direct their energy against a common enemy.

Motives and Plans

As the 1980s approached, public dissatisfaction over the shortage of housing, food, and bare essentials in Cuba became more manifest. Increasing incidents of crime and vandalism indicated the frustrations of the Cuban people—relief of internal pressures in Cuba through some type of mass migration clearly would be in Castro's interest. The advantages were obvious: In addition to easing the housing shortage and unemployment, a mass migration would remove dissidents and potential troublemakers and strengthen the revolution. At the least, the hope of emigrating would cause those Cubans unable to "integrate" with the revolution to identify themselves. As with the 1965 boatlift from Camarioca, when people seeking to leave were identified, the Cuban government could remove them from their jobs in favor of more deserving revolutionaries, give them special identity cards, and carefully monitor their activities. Castro also was aware that once people made known their intentions to leave the country, psychologically they gave up further thoughts of resisting the government and were more likely to conform to the rules, not wanting to jeopardize their chances for emigration.[4]

While the return of the Cuban "overseas community" for visits with relatives—100,000 "exiles" returned to Cuba for visits in 1979 alone—brought in badly needed US currency, it also aggravated problems caused by Cuba's low standard of living. The demonstration effect of affluent visitors made the comparative

poverty of the Cuban people all the more difficult to endure—tensions increased. Emigration had served successfully in the past as an instrument of Cuban national policy, relieving internal pressures and strengthening the revolution. Fidel Castro turned once again to a tactic of proven effectiveness. On 27 December 1979, he addressed problems of the Cuban economy in a speech to the National Assembly of the Cuban Communist Party. This so-called "secret speech," which was not published but was videotaped and circulated to members of the Cuban Communist Party, called for cutting back construction and reducing the country's labor force, escalating an already high unemployment rate. Castro compared the Cuban economy to a boat "sailing in a sea of trouble" and warned that "the shore is far away."[5]

"The Castro regime may again resort to large-scale emigration," the Cuban Analytic Center of the US Central Intelligence Agency predicted in an article published on 31 January 1980. The Center, responsible for assessing political, economic, and social conditions in Cuba, added that the emigration would help "reduce discontent caused by Cuba's deteriorating economic condition." The CIA Center based its assessment on the following premises:

First, strong evidence was shown in the sharp increase in the number of Cubans desiring to leave the island. The number of Cubans who left the island by illegal and often dangerous means, such as forcing their way into foreign embassies and by boat for the 100-mile open-sea voyage to Florida, increased from approximately 25 in 1978 to about 440 in 1979.

Second, the Castro regime relaxed its emigration policies in 1979. Havana authorized the exodus of an estimated 15,000 Cubans during 1979—more than five times the 1975-76 average.

Third, Cuba had used emigration on a massive scale before as a political and economic safety valve.[6]

Castro publicly raised the possibility of opening the port of Camarioca in a speech on 8 March 1980; the speech was publicized throughout Cuba in the 16 March

issue of the major Cuban magazine, *BOHEMIA*. Again, during the Peruvian Embassy occupation, *GRANMA* reported on 14 April, "Camarioca was, and can certainly again be ... the undefeatable proof of our generous immigration policy." The Cuban government, with obvious motives for opening a migratory safety valve, was being quite candid about its consideration.[7]

Msgr. Bryan O. Walsh, director of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Miami and actively involved in refugee matters in southern Florida for more than 20 years, said he repeatedly had warned the US Government for months about pressures building in Cuba and that another Camarioca was in the making.[8]

In his 1980 May Day speech in Havana, Castro warned the United States of the consequences of not taking action to prevent boats from being hijacked from Cuba to Florida. "We warned them—repeatedly," Castro said,

> through diplomatic channels. We also warned them publicly, because I spoke of this on March 8 (1980), International Women's Day, in the final session of the (Federation of Cuban) Women's Congress. We used every means to warn them of the consequences this could have and of the fact that Camarioca could be reopened.[9]

Castro, with his obvious signals, possibly was testing the United States to see what its reaction would be to such a possibility. In the absence of any strong protestations on the part of the Carter administration, he may well have been encouraged to act. While Castro was signaling the possibility of another Camarioca, Robert A. Pastor, a Latin American specialist with the National Security Council, reported the Carter administration failed to develop a policy to respond to such a situation for the following two reasons:

First, we simply didn't know what could be done. To stop the southbound boats would be costly and dangerous.

US Coast Guard Photo

Cuban refugees arriving in the United States wonder what their lives will be like in their new home.

Second, we thought that Castro would recognize that the costs of another Camarioca were at least as heavy for him as for the United States—as indeed, they were in 1965 and 1980. A Camarioca decision would not be rational, and governments have many things to do besides trying to anticipate and respond to irrational decisions.[10]

"We didn't turn the hurricane that began with the Peruvian Embassy toward the United States out of any caprice," Castro said in his May Day "Speech to the Fighting People." "Rather, the natural course of the hurricane was toward the United States." Defending Cuba's role in engineering and forcefully managing the Mariel-to-Key West Boatlift, Castro said,

> We weren't the ones who opened Mariel, Mariel was opened from over there, and we don't have any policemen over there. That's their affair, their job, over there—if nobody wants to obey their orders, that's their headache. We, however, have a legal right to do what we want within our own territory, and we may authorize the exit of all those antisocial elements who wish to leave. We aren't forcing anyone to go, not anyone at all! Let's make that clear. We never deported anyone. Ah, but we have the right to authorize the exit of the antisocial elements, and this is what we are doing.[11]

Refugees

Of the many purposes the Exodus served for the Castro government, the most basic perhaps was reduction of population pressures, ameliorating several of Cuba's socioeconomic problems in a relatively brief period. Thousands of housing units quickly became available, and unemployment was reduced. In many cases, preference for leaving the island was given to those who would be vacating houses that could be turned over to the government. Undoubtedly aware of the relationship between a country's economic well-being and its ability to control the expansion of its population, Castro brought about a beneficial demographic adjustment for Cuba. Not only did he bring apout a favorable numeric adjustment, he also successfully controlled the content of the human element exported. Of the refugees who left Cuba in the 1980 Exodus, 71 percent were urban blue-collar workers, craftsmen, machine and transport operators, and laborers—the very "proletariat" for whom the Cuban revolution held the greatest promise. These workers were disappointed by the failure of the totalitarian regime to live up to its promises, and disillusioned by a government based largely on international hostility and personalistic authority.[12]

The people who left from Mariel in 1980 were different from the refugees in the earlier 1965 Camarioca

Table 3
Ages and sex breakdown of Cuban entrants, 1980 Boatlift
(Percent of total population)

Age	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
0-4	2,745(2.2%)	3,119(2.5%)	—	5,364(4.7%)
5-12	4,492(3.6%)	5,116(4.1%)	—	9,608(7.7%)
13-17	2,870(2.3%)	3,868(3.1%)	—	6,738(5.4%)
18-24	5,739(4.6%)	16,470(13.2%)	—	22,209(17.8%)
25-35	8,110(6.5%)	30,945(24.8%)	—	39,055(31.3%)
36-64	10,356(8.3%)	24,456(19.6%)	—	34,812(27.9%)
65 +	2,496(2.0%)	2,121(1.7%)	—	4,617(3.7%)
Unknown	250(0.2%)	624(0.5%)	999(0.8%)	1,873(1.5%)
Totals	**37,058(29.7%)**	**86,719(69.5%)**	**999(0.8%)**	**124,776(100%)**

(Source: US State Department, Cuban-Haitian Task Force, *A Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force*, 1 November 1980, p. 80)

Boatlift and the "Freedom Flights" of the late 1960s and early 1970s. More than 70 percent of the Mariel refugees were men, compared with an earlier figure of 42.1 percent. The Mariel Boatlift brought more than twice as many single individuals to the United States as earlier migrations (33.7 percent versus 15 percent). (See table 3.) The large number of single men in the Mariel Boatlift indicated that the Cuban government was being less restrictive in preventing military-age males from leaving the country. During the 1980 Boatlift, roughly 50,000 men arrived without families—in a gross violation of basic human rights, the Cuban government forced an estimated 20,000 men to separate from their spouses and children and leave Cuba.[13]

Pressures generated by the desire for family reunification were fully appreciated by the Castro government as it sowed seeds for future migration opportunities.

After America's initial elation at seeing oppressed people successfully flee communist domination, the country felt consternation as the number of new Cuban refugees increased into the tens of thousands. Americans feared the new entrants, most having lived

US Coast Guard Photo

Cuban refugees arrive in Key West during the earlier 1965 Camarioca boatlift. A greater percentage of women and children were found among the Camarioca refugees, and they appeared to be from higher social strata.

their adult lives in a strict totalitarian state, would have difficulty conforming to the norms of behavior in the United States. Statistics now show such fears were partially justified; significant numbers of new Cuban refugees did have problems adjusting. Many refugees experienced high levels of job dissatisfaction and had difficulty staying employed. An estimated 15 percent of the Cubans who arrived from Mariel in 1980 experienced unusually high incidents of fighting, alcoholism, and depression. After surviving in a communist society

for 20 years, the emigres found the competitiveness and social freedoms of the American system a traumatic change.[14]

Most of the refugees were selected by the Castro government to leave the island because they were dissatisfied with life in Cuba and were defiant enough to make their dissatisfactions known through illegal activities or other nonconformities. Some 67 percent of the refugees, for example, had not belonged to any organizations in Cuba—where participation in organized activities virtually was mandatory. They were cynical, fearful, and suspicious of government authority in Cuba; 81 percent reported they had "outside" income, which, in Cuba, meant they were breaking the law.[15] They came to the United States with high hopes of good jobs, independence, and security. But life in the United States was not as easy as they had anticipated. They found that jobs for which they were qualified, because of their limited skills, usually were lower-paying with high levels of supervision. When frustrated in their expectations, the refugees tended to resent and resist authority; their socialization and adjustment to American ways of life required time. The majority of the Mariel refugees, with their expectations, individualism, and resistance to conformity, were not much different from the millions of earlier migrants who came to America. What was different, however, was that the wave of refugees from Mariel was tainted with dangerous criminals guilty of serious crimes—and the United States was powerless to control their arrival.

The Mariel refugees were unemployed in 1983 at a rate three times that of earlier Cuban exiles, according to a study conducted by Dr. Alejandro Portes, a professor of sociology and international studies at The Johns Hopkins University, and Dr. Juan M. Clark, a professor at Miami-Dade Community College. By 1986, however, their study reveals, the Mariel refugees had made dramatic advances: Unemployment had been cut in half, from 27 percent in 1983 to 13.6 percent in 1986, and median monthly income had increased from $718 to $800.[16]

US Coast Guard Photo

Large numbers of young Cuban men arrived in the United States during the Cuban Boatlift; these refugees have their new gray Cuban passports in their pockets.

Undesirables

Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY) had little doubt the Cuban Government took people directly from prisons and shipped them to this country.[17] The refugees were given "the choice of remaining in jail for extended periods," she said during a hearing of the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, on 4 June 1980, "or leaving the island." The Immigration and Naturalization Service reported that 1,761 refugees, 1.4 percent of the total arrivals, were classified as felons, convicted of murder, rape, or burglary. The Cuban government refused to accept the return of these

felons, who were consolidated at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. Another 23,927 former prisoners, 19.1 percent of the total refugees, were classified as "non-felonious criminals and political prisoners." An estimated 2,000 of this group were identified as having been imprisoned for political reasons. Of the "non-felonious criminals," a large percentage were convicted of offenses not considered crimes under US laws, such as dealing on the black market, which Dr. Clark suggests was "universal in Cuba and unavoidable for such things as the replacement of machine parts."[18]

The non-felonious former prisoners had prison records in Cuba, according to the *Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force*, dated 1 November 1980. "But," the report continued,

> the overwhelming majority had been in jail for crimes which would not have resulted in prison sentences in the United States, *could have* resulted in prison terms but not necessarily, or crimes which occurred many years ago. Examples of these convictions include counterrevolutionary activity, refusal to work, refusal to join the communist party, refusal to join the army, traffic violations, loitering, gambling, drinking, fighting, and petty theft.[19]

Refugees believed by INS to be dangerous criminals were held at the Atlanta Penitentiary. As time passed and the US Government still was not able to obtain documentation from the Cuban government to verify penal records of the imprisoned refugees, pressure mounted for the release of detainees held for unconfirmed offenses. Starting in July 1981, courts forced the Justice Department to release the imprisoned Cubans (refugees confined for mental illness and those guilty of serious crimes in prison were not released). The population of Mariel detainees in the Federal prison system swelled into the thousands as refugees were convicted of committing crimes since their arrival in the United States in 1980.[20]

Juan Carlos Leiva-Rivero told a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law on 13 May that Cuban prison authorities gave him a choice of signing a release and being sent to the United States, or being sentenced to an additional four years in prison on 19 April. Leiva-Rivero, with a past record of confinement for robbery, had been serving a 20-year sentence in *El Combinado* Prison in Oriente Province for burglary when the Boatlift began.

He signed the release, of course.

Of the 5,000 men imprisoned at *El Combinado*, Leiva-Rivero told the hearing that perhaps 4,000 left the prison with the same type of arrangement; he did not know how many were political prisoners. When asked about the crimes of the released prisoners, he said, "The only people (prisoners) who were not allowed to leave were murderers." He arrived in Key West on the private vessel *RODY* on 8 May 1980. Answering a question from Rep. Sam B. Hall, Jr. (D-Texas) concerning homosexuals, Leiva-Rivero said that of the 120 persons on *RODY*, about 30 were homosexuals.[21]

Of 21,710 minors who arrived during the Boatlift, approximately 2,000 landed without parents or guardians; less than half of these refugees had anyone waiting for them in the United States. Classified as "unaccompanied minors," the majority were older male teenagers (87 percent), three-fourths of them between the ages of 16 and 18. More than 40 percent of the "unaccompanied minors" reported the Cuban government had forced them to leave the country against their will; they had been identified by the neighborhood Committees for the Defense of the Revolution as troublemakers. Many wanted to return to their families in Cuba, but the Cuban government would not accept the return of any refugees. Some 37 percent of the "unaccompanied minors" had been institutionalized in Cuba at some point in juvenile jails, mental hospitals, orphanages, or some sort of detention facility. Of this group, 52 percent had dropped out of school before leaving Cuba.[22]

A former deputy assistant director for public affairs of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force reported serious doubts concerning the actual number of criminals who arrived in the Boatlift; the methods of compiling statistics were questionable. Refugees were interviewed and asked if they had spent time in prison in Cuba. Presumably, many criminals, particularly those guilty of the most serious crimes, would have lied to conceal their prison records. Persons confined for less significant offenses would have been more likely to admit having been imprisoned. Even when suspected felons were pointed out by other refugees, suspicions could not be verified without access to Cuban penal records. Felonious refugees possibly went free, while others who committed lesser offenses were incarcerated. Statistics clearly indicated the eventual negative impact of the criminal element of the Mariel Boatlift on American society.

Andrew J. Carmichael, Acting Associate Commissioner for Examinations for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, said that while statistics were gathered daily,

> the information was taken strictly on their [Cubans] admissions.... We will probably never know the truth about how many criminals arrived.... We know now that many of the criminals that arrived with the Boatlift were not detained because they were later arrested for serious crimes. It indicated a failure of the system.

Getting accurate data on the types of crimes for which the Cubans were imprisoned was difficult, Carmichael said,

> Some of the refugees intentionally exaggerated the nature of their crimes, thinking the worse the crimes were against the Cuban government, the better candidates they would be for acceptance [into the United States].... People would admit to being in prison for breaking and entering. Further questioning would reveal they broke into a warehouse to steal rice to feed their family.[23]

In the year following the Exodus, a third of the murders committed in Miami were charged to Mariel refugees, and robberies in the city more than doubled. Because of the serious crimes committed by Mariel refugees in the northeastern United States, New York City, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania formed a special task force in 1981 to deal with problems of the "Marielitos." From July 1980 to December 1981, refugees from Mariel were arrested and charged with 437 felonies and 389 serious misdemeanors in New York City alone.[24]

US officials asked a former member of the Cuban Intelligence Service if he were questioned about his background when he arrived from Mariel. "Sure they asked me," he told a Senate hearing on "Cuban Government Involvement in International Drug Trade" on 30 April 1983, "but those questions are so easy anybody can infiltrate." The witness, who had entered the United States by means of the Mariel Boatlift, told Senator Paula Hawkins (R-Fla.) "They did not make me swear, and even if they did make me swear, I still would not have told them the truth."

Cuba and Narcotics

A US Coast Guard cutter seized a speed boat carrying 2,500 pounds of marijuana on 29 November 1981 while the boat was enroute to Florida. The operator, 33-year-old Mario Esteves, had come to the United States during the Mariel Exodus. Faced with a long prison sentence for drug smuggling, Esteves agreed to cooperate with local and Federal law enforcement officials, in return for a reduced nine-month sentence and Federal protection. In a Federal District Court in Miami, he testified that he was an agent of the Cuban Intelligence Service and entered the United States by means of the Boatlift. He said he had been given a variety of assignments in the United States, including disrupting Cuban exile groups and performing economic espionage, but that his principal mission was the distribution of cocaine, marijuana,

and *methaqualone* tablets in New York, northern New Jersey, and Florida. He reported that he had returned approximately $7 million in cash to officials in Cuba, the proceeds of his drug dealings.[25]

A Federal Grand Jury in Miami indicted 14 persons on 5 November 1982 on charges of conspiring to import marijuana and *methaqualone* (a nonbarbiturate sedative and hypnotic) from Colombia to the United States by way of Cuba. Among the people indicted were two members of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee. The indictments, which marked the first time Cuban officials were formally accused of complicity in drug smuggling, were handed down as the result of a three-year investigation. While little hope existed of ever prosecuting the Cubans, the indictments were an effort "to draw attention to the role of the Castro government in drug trafficking in the Americas." Of particular interest was the indictment of Rene Rodriguez-Cruz, a senior official of the Cuban Intelligence Service; while president of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples, he had been instrumental in organizing the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. Also indicted were Aldo Santamaria-Cuadrado, a vice admiral in the Cuban Navy, and Fernando Ravelo-Renedo, former Cuban Ambassador to Colombia.[26]

Not only did Castro include criminals in the Mariel Boatlift, Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato (R-NY) told a hearing on "Narcotics Production and Trafficking by the Cuban Intelligence Service (DGI)," in New York on 14 April 1983, "he also infiltrated ... Cuban agents into the United States." Even more shocking, Senator D'Amato told the hearing, conducted by the New York Senate Committee on Crime, "is the recent disclosure that the network in this country is facilitating the trafficking of drugs." In response to questioning, Mario Esteves testified that an estimated 3,000 Cuban agents, specialists trained for different fields, "came on the boatlift from Mariel with me.... Individuals trained, paid, and loyal to the Cuban government." Esteves reported that 300 to 400 of these agents had been sent to smuggle drugs,

returning their proceeds to the Cuban government. Senator D'Amato said that the US Attorney's office in southern Florida reported that other sources had corroborated Esteves's testimony independently and "we find him an absolutely credible witness." [27]

The Castro government demonstrated its blatant disregard for basic standards of international conduct by exporting criminals and undesirables across international borders to an unreceptive country; such a government would have few qualms about engaging in the heinous, though profitable, business of trafficking in narcotics.

13

Carter's Dilemma

In the spring and summer I had to deal with a stream of illegal Cuban refugees who began coming to our country. We welcomed the first ones to freedom, but when the stream became a torrent, I explored every legal means to control the badly deteriorating situation. Even so, it was impossible to stop them all.... I sympathized with the plight of the refugees, but they were coming in illegally, and I was sworn to uphold the laws of our land.

Jimmy Carter
Keeping Faith, *1982*

THE MARINE GUARD SALUTED AND OPENED THE DOOR for Coast Guard Rear Admiral John D. Costello, as he entered the West Wing of the White House on Saturday, 26 April. Admiral Costello, Chief of the Coast Guard's Office of Operations in Washington, had been summoned to a hastily called meeting to address the rapidly evolving crisis of Cuban refugees arriving in Key West.* The Admiral was responsible for the Coast

* Also attending the meeting, chaired by Vice President Walter F. Mondale, were Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti; Secretary of Health and Human Services Patricia Roberts Harris; Deputy Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher; Under Secretary of Defense

Guard missions most likely to be involved in the refugee situation—search and rescue, and law enforcement. Escorted to the Roosevelt Room, he took a seat near the conference table. As the meeting participants were assembling, the Admiral noted the famous oil paintings, including Dumaresque's "Signing of the Declaration of Independence" and Tade Styka's equestrian portrait of Theodore Roosevelt, adorning the room.

The meeting was called to consider two principal issues: What immigration and general laws were applicable to the Cuban refugee influx; and what were the options for stopping the flow of refugees? The White House's objective from the very beginning, Admiral Costello said, was to stem the illegal flow of refugees. "They wanted it stopped," he said, "but feared riots in Miami if it was." As the meeting progressed, the Admiral became aware the Coast Guard would have a major role in achieving the administration's goal. Vice President Mondale adjourned the meeting after determining the specific information needed to support major decisions was not available. The agencies were directed to research their appropriate areas of concern and be ready for another meeting. Admiral Costello said Vice President Mondale and Presidential Assistant Watson "clearly appreciated the full magnitude of the events that were taking place. They were also very much aware of the potential for the situation resulting in a confrontation with Cuba."

Robert W. Komer; the State Department's Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, Ambassador Victor H. Palmieri; and the Acting Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, David Crosland. Also taking part were several key White House staff members, including Jack H. Watson, Jr., Presidential Assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs, and his Deputy, Eugene Eidenberg. Robert A. Pastor from the National Security Council kept the meeting record. Also present were representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the US Customs Service, and the Navy.[1]

Initial Steps

Conservative observers in the United States heralded the incident at the Peruvian Embassy as a rebellion of the Cuban people against communist repression. The Cuban press, on the other hand, rejected such claims, saying the incident did not represent widespread political opposition to the government of Fidel Castro, and only involved a small group of "trash, scum, vagrants, and prisoners" who went into the Embassy. The highly publicized incident, however, was clearly an embarrassment to Cuba. The US Government moved quickly to capitalize on the propaganda value of the situation, portraying it as a manifestation of growing dissatisfaction among the Cuban people. Five days after the Embassy gates were opened, on 9 April, President Carter said of the situation,

> We see the hunger of many people on the island to escape political deprivation of freedom and also economic adversity. Our heart goes out to the almost 10,000 freedom-loving Cubans who entered a temporarily opened gate at the Peruvian Embassy.[2]

Carter applauded efforts of the Andean Pact countries (Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia) to resolve the difficult situation at the Peruvian Embassy. With the concurrence of the Congress, the President agreed to admit up to 3,500 refugees into the United States. The White House was careful, however, to phrase the offer of assistance in the context of a contribution to an overall "international effort."[3] While the United States was carefully attempting to avoid a bilateral situation with Cuba, Castro clearly had other plans. An initial propaganda boon for the United States—as Cuba was censured for the plight of the thousands at the Peruvian Embassy—soon developed into a US domestic problem of immense proportions.

Political Considerations

Cuban President Castro communicated his offer to let Cubans leave the island directly to Cuban-Americans and their organizations in the United States, circumventing US efforts to keep the refugee situation an international, primarily Latin American, issue. A Radio Havana broadcast on 20 April, for example, announced that the Port of Mariel was open to anyone who wanted to come to Cuba to pick up relatives. The magnitude of "what was happening," said Myles Frechette, the State Department's Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, "did not 'hit home' until the Radio Havana broadcasts."[4]

The announcements, and reports of refugees arriving by boat at Key West, set off a mad dash to Mariel.

As the influx intensified, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with representatives of south Florida's Cuban-American community. The 26 April meeting, held in the State Department's seventh-floor conference room, was arranged by the administration to solicit cooperation in ending the Boatlift. The meeting, originally scheduled at the White House, was moved because media reports about arriving refugees were becoming more negative; the White House wanted to distance itself from the meeting and avoid publicity. At the meeting, Huber Matos and other Cuban-American leaders pleaded, unsuccessfully, for the United States to send ships and planes to Cuba to bring to the United States all the Cubans who wanted to leave. Christopher and Presidential Assistant Jack Watson, in turn, urged the Matos delegation to cooperate in bringing the boatlift to an end. The Cuban-Americans flatly refused and left the meeting smarting because their demands had not been met. "It was a disastrous meeting," said Robert A. Pastor of the National Security Council, who had arranged the meeting, adding,

> The dynamics were bad. Very little was accomplished and there was no willingness to cooperate in bringing the boatlift under control.... The meeting brought together competing factions of the

> Cuban community and unanimity and cooperation were remote.... But there was no time to handle it any other way.[5]

The refugee situation was an unanticipated and untimely problem for President Carter, who was seeking reelection in 1980. "In the real world, everything is viewed in a political context." said Watson. "There were huge political dimensions to the situation. Politically, it was a 'no win' situation for the President, no matter how it was handled—it was very detrimental."[6] During an election year, all major issue decisions received an additional overview in terms of political impact on the reelection effort. This overview process was true as options were considered for the Mariel refugees.

As Cuban refugees began landing in south Florida, the White House's attention was focused halfway round the world on the agonizing Iranian hostage situation. On 28 April, tragedy struck in an Iranian desert: In an effort to resolve the painful issue of American hostages in Tehran, the President had approved a top secret rescue mission. The mission was aborted when the rescue helicopters encountered equipment failures. As the rescue units were withdrawing from Iran, eight American soldiers died in a nighttime collision of a helicopter and a C-130 transport on the ground after a refueling operation. The mission, a courageous effort and a calculated risk, had failed. The failure was a blow to US prestige and the President—it shook the confidence of the administration.

The Iranian mission had further ramifications on US foreign policy: Secretary of State Cyrus Vance resigned in protest over the rescue attempt. Vance said of the rescue mission, in his hand-written resignation letter to the President, dated 21 April and made public 28 April, "I know how deeply you have pondered your decisions on Iran. I wish I could support you in it. But for the reasons I have discussed I cannot."[7]

In the political arena, the President had to exercise even greater caution against further setbacks.

Initially, the Cuban events were considered as foreign affairs and fell within the purview of the National Security Council. The position of the President's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, White House Counsel Lloyd Culter, and the State Department was that strong efforts should be initiated immediately to halt the flow of refugees.[8]

Impediments To Action

Acting State Department spokesman Tom Reston read a release to news correspondents on 23 April that condemned the action of the boats going to Cuba. Bringing undocumented aliens into the United States was a felony offense, Reston said, punishable by severe penalties. On the same day, the Security Council staff drafted a decision memorandum from National Security Adviser Brzezinski to President Carter, recommending that Federal agencies be used to stop southbound boats. The recommendation, approved early the next day, was reversed later when Attorney General Civiletti declared that the Government did not have the legal authority to stop outbound vessels.[9]

Legal authority was to be a significant issue in the Cuban refugee situation.

LEGALITY After leaving the Saturday meeting with the Vice President on 26 April, the Attorney General and Admiral Costello went to the offices of the Justice Department and researched legal means to stop boats going to Cuba. They looked into the possible enforcement of customs laws and laws against aiding and abetting the enemy; the Attorney General did not consider any of the laws appropriate to the situation. A presidential declaration of "martial law" would have been needed to invoke the Magnuson Act—closing the harbors and ports of south Florida. Reluctant to recommend such drastic action, Civiletti was unable to find a single law that he considered effective for stemming the flow of Cuban emigrants. While strong in his resolve to stop the uncontrolled arrival of refugees, the Attorney

General concluded that the influx would be difficult to treat as a law enforcement problem.[10]

In the early stages of the events, officials responding to the situation could not perceive the eventual magnitude of the Cuban Exodus.

FEAR OF VIOLENCE Even if adequate statutes had been available, an early decision probably would not have been made to enforce them. The White House considered the possibility of violence in the Cuban-American communities of south Florida to be a real danger if the boatlift were stopped—an unacceptable prospect. "If the United States said no initially," Jack Watson said,

> there was a very definite risk of civil disobedience of a very large magnitude. We were dealing with a situation where families were trying to be reunited—children with their parents, brother with brother, sister with sister. There were strong family ties among the Hispanic community and it was a very emotional situation. The decision not to halt the exodus immediately was not through oversight. It was a thoroughly investigated, well discussed judgment. It was based on the best available advice of the Governor of Florida (D. Robert Graham), the Mayor of Miami (Maurice Ferre), and community leaders. It was a well considered decision. At the time, the situation was too inflammatory to take immediate action.[11]

During one meeting that addressed the potential for violence if the boats were stopped, 29 law enforcement officials from south Florida expressed their unanimous opinion that "if we tried to stop those people from taking their boats to Cuba, we'd have bombings and riots in Miami."[12] Emotions were running very high, recalls Msgr. Bryan O. Walsh, Director of Refugee Affairs for the Archdiocese of Miami:

> The incident at the Peruvian Embassy revived a dormant sense of 'Cuban identity.' It was an emotional time that united the Cuban community. 'Little Havana' was very active with people in the streets and cars blowing their horns.

In his opinion, violence would have occurred if the Federal Government had tried to stop the boats from going to Cuba at the beginning of the Boatlift. When the Cuban community realized that the people arriving with the Boatlift were not whom they expected, Walsh said, they were much more willing to cooperate with the Carter administration.[13]

Dr. Juan M. Clark, a member of the Miami Cuban-American community, and co-author of a report on the Mariel Boatlift, did not agree that violence was probable. He said, "The possibility of violence was grossly overexaggerated." From the viewpoint of his research, he felt "faulty advice was given to the President.... The White House was not very astute in talking to the Cuban community." In Clark's opinion, "What was required was a firm stand."

Agreeing with Clark, Guillermo Martinez of *The Miami Herald* Editorial Board, said, "There would have been demonstrations but no violence. There is no history of violence in demonstrations with the Cuban community."[14]

In 1982, the Department of Justice assigned Leon B. Kellner, US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, to be in charge of an interagency group preparing a Federal *Mass Migration Plan*. Representatives of the State of Florida, local municipalities, and Federal agencies took part. Having reviewed all aspects of the 1980 Cuban Boatlift, particularly the law enforcement issues, Kellner said,

> There would not have been any violence, if the boats had been stopped from going to Cuba. The Cubans are very patriotic, law-abiding Americans. This would have been particularly true if they had been told that to get people from Cuba was helping

> Castro. Cuban-Americans are very anti-Castro, anticommunist, and would not have wanted to be perceived as helping Castro.[15]

Eugene Eidenberg, Jack Watson's deputy on the Intergovernmental Affairs staff, was the White House's liaison to the Cuban-American community in Miami. "Violence was certainly a factor," he said, "but I did not have the impression that decisions to act or not act were made based primarily on the fear of violence in the Cuban [American] community." Eidenberg continued,

> There was a high emotional content in the Cuban-American community.... The political leadership in Florida was very concerned.... The Governor [of Florida] and Mayor of Miami were concerned that if there was opposition to the Cubans going to get their family members, there would be serious consequences.... If it were stopped, there may have been some violence but it would not have been massive.[16]

Other reasons why the administration did not stop the Boatlift immediately, according to Eidenberg, included the following:

- The possibility of establishing a negotiated flow of refugees—people would be screened (by the US Government) in Cuba and airlifted to the United States.
- A sincere interest in facilitating family reunifications.
- A concern not to jeopardize the safety of thousands of US citizens on boats in Mariel Harbor.

"There was the expectation at the White House that there would be a repeat of the Freedom Flights," Eidenberg said. The feeling was that the incident would evolve, like the 1965 Camarioca Boatlift, into a situation in which the US Government would approve Cubans for entry into the United States while they still were in Cuba. Then, they would have been safely transported by plane to this country. Such an alternative would have been nonconfrontational and safer.

FEDERAL WILL "The intent from the beginning was to stop the Boatlift," said Pastor, National Security Council project officer during the influx. "The question was how?" Along with the two principal factors against early Federal action to stop the southbound boats—was it legal? and would there be violence?—was the additional fear that Cuban-Americans in Federal agencies, including the Coast Guard, would refuse to implement the order. "There were problems with people in the field," Pastor said, adding:

> They reported it [boatlift] could not be stopped. They said the people of Cuban-American descent in the agencies would not obey the orders.... The NSC initially took a hard line but was told by the people in the field that it could not be stopped.... We did not think the people on the scene would implement the orders. It was a serious concern.[17]

The Coast Guard's organizations in Miami and Key West, which would have been called on to enforce such an order, never considered that the small number of Cuban-Americans in the Coast Guard, well below 5 percent of the complement, would have failed to obey orders to stop southbound boats. The author, as Chief of Search and Rescue at the Coast Guard's Headquarters in Miami, was program manager for cutters, stations, and aircraft responding to the Boatlift. He visited the units often and was in frequent communication with commanding officers and officers-in-charge. His impression was that no one at the operational level even thought of such a possibility—of units failing to implement all orders and directions from higher authority. The Security Council's perception of a problem, the author felt, must have resulted from faulty communications or possibly was created by the generalized fear of large-scale civil disobedience in Miami.[18]

In April 1980, the Justice Department's senior representative in Miami was Atlee W. Wampler, III. Appointed as acting US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida a few months earlier, Wampler was faced

with the crisis of the escalating boatlift and the potential for mass civil disobedience if it were stopped. Despite the potential for violence in Miami's "Little Havana" and other Cuban-American communities in south Florida, Wampler said, representatives of Federal agencies on the scene were not dissuaded from recommending to Washington that prompt, firm action be taken to stop the Boatlift. Wampler said,

> I could not fathom why the people at the top would not do what was reasonable to prevent what was happening. It was a frustrating situation. We recommended strong actions but none were taken. The probability (of violence) was reported by the people (federal agencies) in Miami but we did not recommend that actions be delayed. It was a highly emotional time.... Nobody knew the extent of what would have happened.... Locally, no one recommended letting the boats go to prevent violence.... We should have accepted the possibility of civil disturbance to prevent the influx.[19]

The Federal agencies discussed plans that considered using the Florida National Guard to control the potentially inflammatory situation. They also called in a crisis action team trained to deal with ethnically tense situations to reduce the potential for violence. "We recognized early," Wampler explained, that the key to controlling the situation "was stopping the southbound boats." The following actions were recommended to Washington:

- Stop the availability of fuel for boats at all marinas along the southern coast of Florida, from West Palm Beach on the Atlantic Ocean around to Tampa on the Gulf of Mexico.
- Blockade highway US Route 1 to prevent boats from being trailered south into the Florida Keys.
- Have the Florida National Guard prevent boats from leaving for Cuba from all south Florida marinas and launching ramps.

The only way the Boatlift could have been stopped was with swift, decisive action on the part of the Federal

Government at the very beginning. If a Federal will had been shown, a legal solution could have been found. The real reason the boatlift was not stopped quickly, Pastor said, "was that the political and humanitarian cost of stopping the flow at the beginning—the only time it could really be done—was judged too high by the President and his advisers."[20]

Uncertainty

A lack of constructive direction from Washington to the Federal agencies in south Florida delayed effective measures to prevent the flood of refugees. While agencies issued warnings to boaters, they received no instructions from Washington to initiate any actions against boat operators. The agencies carried out their normal functions, issuing clearances and assisting boats in their southward journeys. The administration attempted the nearly impossible task of discouraging the emotion-driven boatlift by merely cajoling and threatening the people involved.

The acting US Attorney met with representatives of major Federal agencies early in the Mariel refugee situation to discuss developments in the Cuban-American community.* Wampler indicated his disinclination to act without specific guidance from the Attorney General, deciding on a "let's wait and see" attitude.[21] Had the new US Attorney been able to gain more experience before being faced with the refugee crisis, the Federal agencies possibly would have been less hesitant and taken more aggressive actions; more forceful recommendations might have been made to Washington. Of his

* Attending these meetings with US Attorney Atlee W. Wampler, III, were representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration Service, Coast Guard, Customs Service, and south Florida's law enforcement organizations. They met in Wampler's office in the Federal Courthouse in downtown Miami.

reluctance to take prompt and vigorous legal action against the boats going to Cuba, Wampler said,

> If existing laws had been applied without additional direction from the Justice Department, they would have been below the 'probable cause' standards. The cases would have been below the US Attorney's guidelines.... We did not have the authority to go below accepted standards and the Attorney General was not giving any guidance.... The situations were below the guidelines for making arrests.[22]

Through its ambivalent response, the United States abetted the Cuban President in his plans for an uncontrolled migration to the United States. President Carter, always vocal on human rights issues, faced a dilemma—how to be responsive to the humanitarian needs of the Cuban refugees and still act in the best interests of the United States? The administration's vacillating position was evident in two opposing statements of the President and Vice President. On 27 April, the Vice President appealed to Cuban-Americans to "respect the law and avoid these dangerous and illegal boat passages." Many thought the President countermanded this position when he said on 5 May, in a highly publicized statement, "We'll continue to provide an open heart and open arms to the refugees."*[23] Of the President's apparent "Statue of Liberty" position in his 5 May statement, Wampler explained,

> The administration from the beginning of the developing situation was trying to project an overall image of 'The Statue of Liberty Theme.' We (the United States) were trying to impress the rest of the world. President Carter's 'Open Arms' statement was a disaster for us in south Florida.

* Eugene Eidenberg said the highly publicized statement of the President was taken out of context and was a misrepresentation. The President intended to convey that those refugees who did arrive in the United States would be treated with dignity in their processing, not that the President welcomed the arrival of more refugees.

An apparent compassionate bias in the approach of the White House further complicated the situation. The administration was sympathetic to the small private boats going to Cuba to pick up individual family members, but was adamant about stopping the commercial operations of larger vessels. Lack of a clear position by the White House and the US Government caused a confused response by Federal agencies in Florida, resulting in misunderstandings among boat operators going to Cuba to pick up refugees. Residents of Miami and Key West heard tough talk about enforcement of US laws concerning illegal aliens, but no concerted Federal, State, or local enforcement actions were being taken. The Coast Guard and the Navy continued to assist boaters in completing their voyages to Cuba. Coast Guardsmen in Key West did not receive orders to stop anyone, but were told to continue providing rescue assistance to boats. Cuban-Americans and Key West boat operators "heard what they wanted to hear" in the announcements from Washington. "On the Key West waterfront, the general message was that the Federal Government was 'looking the other way,'" said Captain Ed Crusoe, Key West's Harbor Pilot. "It was OK for the boats to hire out. They cleared with Customs before going to Cuba."[24]

Federal Response

After the initial meeting chaired by the Vice President on 26 April, daily interagency meetings were held in the West Wing conference room, chaired by the President's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. As the situation became more of a domestic problem than diplomatic, the task of coordinating the White House's emergency response to the refugees officially was transferred from the Security Council to the office of Jack Watson on 2 May. Disaster response normally was the responsibility of Watson's Intergovernmental Affairs

staff, which was familiar with problems involving aliens. They had been active in organizing financial support for south Florida, to offset costs incurred by the arrival of the Haitian "boat people."

REFUGEE RELIEF Outside of the White House, a competitive situation developed between two of the principal agencies involved in the Cuban refugee situation. The State Department's Office for Refugee Affairs felt it should handle refugee problems, while the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) considered the refugees a domestic emergency within its purview. The White House designated FEMA as lead agency for coordination of on-scene federal response to the refugee emergency on 27 April, and Tom Casey, FEMA's Deputy Associate Director, was assigned as Federal Coordinating Officer. President Carter directed Jack Watson on 2 May 1980 "to work with Ambassador Victor Palmieri, US Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, in managing the Federal Government's overall response to the emergency."[25]

Watson, who described himself as the administration's "Domestic Crisis Man," undoubtedly based his decision to use FEMA on his favorable impression of FEMA's handling of emergency situations in the wake of Hurricane David and the Buffalo snow storm. FEMA also had extraordinary fiscal powers, under the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, Public Law 93-288, to act in presidentially declared emergencies; a capability for expeditious funding was of crucial importance in the rapidly evolving crisis. The newly established Office of the US Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, on the other hand, had not been tested in large crisis situations; in just its second year of operation, the office was not yet fully staffed or funded, nor did it have the necessary authority, appropriations, or manpower. Furthermore, instead of being directly responsible to the President, as Congress had intended under the Refugee Act, the Refugee Affairs Office remained in the State Department, with the coordinator responsible to the head of the State Department's Refugee Bureau.[26]

Despite the official designations, the White House still exercised an exceptionally high degree of control over detailed decisions throughout the crisis. Watson said,

> Practically, the White House had to do the coordination because of the large number of departments and agencies involved. There was no political gain in having a senior aide to the President handle the situation, yet it had to be—to get things coordinated. Politically speaking, in the future, it (a similar situation) should be kept out of the White House.[27]

The President declared a State of Emergency in Florida on 6 May, and authorized $10 million in refugee emergency funds to reimburse volunteer organizations for expenses incurred in assisting the arriving Cubans, and for costs of transporting the refugees. The declaration triggered a number of Federal responses, involving 17 diverse departments and agencies, including the Departments of State, Defense, and Health and Human Services, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, General Services Administration, US Park Police, Federal Aviation Administration, US Marshals, Social Security, as well as agencies normally involved in immigration and refugee situations.[28]

ENFORCEMENT As early as 28 April, the Customs Service had begun taking actions against returning boats, and actually had seized three commercial vessels when they arrived in Key West with refugees on board. Customs agents had begun serving the masters of all vessels carrying refugees with notices of intent to fine them $1,000 per passenger.

The Coast Guard also initiated an enforcement program, issuing citations for "grossly unsafe" boat operations, intending to discourage boats from leaving for Cuba. Enforcement actions, however, rapidly escalated tensions in the emotional situation. The Coast Guard's

29 April *STATUS REPORT—CUBAN SITUATION* said, "Coast Guard Group Commander in Key West reports evidence of increasingly negative Cuban-American reaction to law enforcement efforts. This will have to be carefully watched."[29]

FEMA Director John W. Macy, Jr., expressed concern for the mood of the community in a memo to Jack Watson, dated 30 April. "Law enforcement and boat seizures have been and continue to be sensitive issues," Macy said. "Boat seizures have been suspended." The memo went on to point out that enforcement could "cause a diversion of arriving boats from designated ports of entry. Thus, refugees avoid reception and processing centers."[30]

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCEMENT By 2 May, more than 5,000 Cubans had arrived in Key West in 170 boats. The Coast Guard estimated that as many as 2,000 more boats were loading passengers in Mariel, were enroute to Mariel, or were returning to the United States with passengers. Attempting to gain control over the escalating situation, Jack Watson outlined the following actions that the Government would take:

- Establish a refugee processing and screening center at Eglin Air Force Base on the Gulf Coast of Florida, to supplement facilities at Key West and Miami.
- Expand facilities in Key West, including Public Health Service medical teams, to accommodate a daily flow of up to 3,000 refugees.
- Assign FEMA on-site coordination of all Federal Government activities. More than 1,000 personnel from eight Federal agencies were responding to the situation with State, local, and voluntary organizations.
- Expand Coast Guard rescue and assistance capabilities between Florida and the Cuban coast. US Navy vessels were being made available to assist the Coast Guard with rescue operations.
- Screen all arrivals carefully, because Cuba was including criminals among the refugees. Refugees who represented a threat to the country were subject to arrest and detention, and eventual deportation to Cuba.

• State Department to work with national voluntary organizations, providing resettlement assistance to Cubans, Haitians, and other groups seeking political asylum.[31]

Actions officially outlined by Watson, however, made no mention of efforts to discourage or stop the exodus. Fear of violence apparently had precipitated a decision not to use sanctions against boats that transported refugees, despite government warnings that penalties would be imposed. For the first time, the White House included "Haitians and other groups seeking political asylum," expanding the scope of problems being addressed.

Alternate Plans

As the 1980 Cuban Boatlift continued to build, Federal agencies in Washington reviewed various alternatives to control the increasing flow of refugees:

• Using large passenger ships offshore from Cuba as collection points for refugees.

This alternative, however, was unreasonably hazardous, the Coast Guard said. "The transfer of persons between vessels at sea is at best dangerous and at worst catastrophic," Admiral Costello explained in a 26 April briefing paper for Jack Watson:

> When the persons range in age from infants to the very elderly and encompass a broad range of physical conditions, it becomes a virtual certainty that accidents will happen and lives will be lost. If the large vessel option is pursued further, I urge it to be done on the basis of embarkation in a Cuban port.

• The possibility of closing the harbor of Key West to vessels departing for Cuba, through the Magnuson Act.

Assuming necessary presidential declarations, the Magnuson Act would authorize the Coast Guard to close

US harbors to preserve national security. Practical considerations, however, weighed against such a decision, according to the Coast Guard briefing paper, because of the inability to distinguish between boats leaving the harbor to go to Cuba and vessels engaged in other legitimate activities. Geographical features of the Florida coast, with hundreds of islands and inlets from which boats could be launched, also complicated the problem. To sort out and effectively control the movements of all vessels would have required a long-term commitment of very large numbers of personnel from the Coast Guard and other Federal agencies.

- The use of a US Coast Guard cutter in a Cuban port as a temporary processing and screening facility.

When Admiral John Hayes, Coast Guard Commandant, proposed this alternative on 28 April, he envisioned that refugees accepted by immigration, law enforcement, and medical personnel would be transported to the United States by US Government or leased vessels. The Coast Guard withdrew this proposal after the violence at the US Interests Section in Havana on 2 May, because a US military ship in a Cuban port would have been an obvious target for another such incident.

- A procedure similar to that used with the Camarioca emigration in 1965.

This proposal would have involved fast passenger vessels chartered to transport the refugees, under Coast Guard control. INS personnel would have processed the refugees enroute. Coast Guard control would ensure safety and prevent overloading of reception facilities.[32]

Pastor said that the White House considered a whole range of options to bring the situation under control. A state of emergency enabling drastic Federal actions to stop the departing boats was rejected. A blockade of the south Florida coast to interdict southbound boats was ruled out because of the cost. Military actions against Cuba were dismissed in view of likely casualties and diminished political support at home. "To do nothing" was the only option not considered. Pastor

said. "It was a disastrous experience. There was a feeling of helplessness—we could not get a handle on the situation."[33]

The most frustrating aspect of the attempts to resolve the situation was the Cuban government's total lack of cooperation. "Diplomatic efforts were made through official and unofficial channels," Jack Watson said. "Every effort thought possible to work something out with Castro was explored." Castro was in complete control of the Exodus and intended to take full advantage of the situation.

14

Foreign Policy Issues

The governments of Peru and Costa Rica, working with international refugee organizations, have made clear to the Cuban government their willingness to receive all the persons who sought refuge in the Peruvian Embassy....

We the United States strongly urge that the illegal transit of undocumented persons by boat from Cuba be suspended and that the Government of Cuba permit the resumption of flights to Costa Rica or other countries immediately.

Statement to News Correspondents
US Department of State, 23 April 1980

THE SMALL AIRPLANE CONTRACTED BY THE US GOVERNMENT CLEARED THE FLORIDA COAST and headed south for Cuba. On board were two representatives of the Carter administration on a secret mission to Cuba. President Carter had sent Robert A. Pastor of the National Security Council and Peter Tarnof, a special assistant to the Secretary of State, to talk to Fidel Castro; the President hoped to negotiate an end to the flood of Cuban refugees arriving in Florida.

As the plane flew over the warm waters of the Gulf Stream toward Havana, Pastor and Tarnof were cautiously optimistic they would be successful in bringing an end to the Boatlift. When the plane landed at Jose Marti Airport in Havana, the two men were met by

officials of the Cuban government and taken to a large residence in the suburbs of the city. The house, once owned by a wealthy Cuban family, had been appropriated by the revolutionary government; it served as quarters for distinguished visitors. The Americans, fluent in Spanish, had made previous trips to Cuba to negotiate other sensitive issues.[1]

Unexpectedly, Castro, for the first and only time, refused to meet with the two emissaries of President Carter. Instead, representatives from the Cuban Foreign Ministry, the Cabinet, and the Communist Central Committee were sent to talk with Pastor and Tarnof. After the initial meeting, the Americans realized the negotiations would not be fruitful. Pastor said, "The Cuban officials with whom we negotiated were wooden at that time, while they had been very candid and open before and afterward. They had been given no latitude to negotiate." The Cubans insisted "diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba would have to be normalized first before serious negotiations could take place." While the United States was amenable to negotiating all immigration issues, not just the Boatlift, the Cubans' position was firm—they wanted all issues brought to the table.

Pastor quickly perceived the Cubans had no intention to engage in any serious negotiations. "They had responded to the US request to meet but in fact could not negotiate because they had received no instructions," he said. After one of the sessions, one of the Cubans commented to Pastor in candor that "Castro simply had lost control at the beginning of the situation and was not yet prepared to address the issue." Pastor's opinion was that the inflexible position of the Cuban negotiators reflected the degree to which Castro was out of control—the Cuban leader was unable to face the issue of tens of thousands of people fleeing Cuba. Pastor said,

> The boatlift had not been a rational decision based on grievances with the United States.... It was a reaction to a terrible embarrassment—first, when

> 10,000 rather than 75 Cubans fled to the Peruvian Embassy, then the Costa Rican reaction, and finally the US taunts.

During his brief stay in Cuba, Pastor visited the Peruvian Embassy, where he was told that during "the first days of the crisis, he (Castro) literally begged the people on the inside of the embassy to leave and go home, asking them what he had done wrong."

Having made no progress in negotiating a resolution to the ongoing Boatlift, Pastor and Tarnof flew back to Washington. The trip was kept so secret that not even Gene Eidenberg, who had been fully involved in the White House's response to the Cuban situation, was aware of the Pastor-Tarnof visit.[2]

Initial White House Meetings

The first boats arrived in Key West from Cuba on 21 April 1980. Within two days after the first refugees landed, Pastor said, the National Security Council (NSC) had a good sense of the potential magnitude of the problem and the critical need for prompt action. The NSC quickly began meeting with Federal agency representatives to initiate actions to control the situation. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officials were first called in to discuss what could be done to stem the flow of vessels enroute to Cuba to bring back refugees. When the Security Council determined that INS lacked authority to take preventive action, the US Customs Service was contacted. In the meeting with Customs, Pastor was shocked to learn the service still was issuing routine "outbound clearances" to US boats destined for Mariel.[3]

The procedure was immediately halted; plans were made to take firm action to stop boats from going to Cuba.

Ambassador Victor H. Palmieri, the State Department's Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, chaired a

meeting during the initial stage of the Boatlift. The meeting, held in the Situation Room below the West Wing of the White House, addressed the scope of the problem of arriving Cuban refugees. Gene Eidenberg* of the White House's Intergovernmental Affairs Staff attended as a representative of Jack Watson's office to gain insight concerning potential domestic impacts that might result from the influx. Eidenberg coordinated the activities of Federal agencies responding to domestic issues; he also maintained communications with State officials such as Florida's Governor, D. Robert Graham. Cuban affairs specialists from the Department of State, Defense Department and Central Intelligence Agency representatives, and National Security Council staff members also took part in the meeting.

Eidenberg recalls that the agenda included a discussion of the potential magnitude of the exodus, in terms of the number of refugees who might leave Cuba, and a review of the earlier Camarioca Boatlift of 1965. The Security Council staff took the position that a "Camarioca Boatlift-Freedom Flight" solution should not be raised with Cuba, because it would be seen as rewarding Castro for his actions. Eidenberg said the purpose of the session

> was to discuss the parameters of the situation. We talked about possible extremes.... The numbers being considered were very high. There were estimates as high as several million. The figures were based on intelligence estimates.... It was exploratory. We went around the table asking each representative what they knew about the situation.... It was a 'what do you know?' meeting.[4]

The first meeting of senior representatives of Federal agencies was held at the White House on Saturday,

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* This time was particularly difficult for Gene Eidenberg, who was facing a personal crisis. His mother in New York was suffering from a terminal illness—he was making frequent commutes between Washington and New York to be with her.

26 April, and chaired by Vice President Walter Mondale. In the absence of the Vice President, the President's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, conducted the next meetings of the interagency group. Later, as the situation evolved into a domestic crisis, rather than a foreign policy matter, Jack Watson, Presidential Assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs, chaired the daily meetings. In general, all participants at the various meetings agreed the uncontrolled exodus from Cuba had to be stopped; questions remained, however, as to actions to be taken and policy implications of such actions. The groups wrestled with such questions as:

- What were Castro's ultimate objectives in initiating the Boatlift?
- How many refugees would he release?
- Would the Boatlift turn into an airlift, as with Camarioca?
- Could large ships be used to transfer people more safely?
- Could Boatlift vessels be diverted to Costa Rica?
- How could the situation be used by the United States for propaganda purposes?
- If US agencies tried to stop the boats, would they arrive clandestinely at other places along the Florida coast?
- And, finally, a consideration that weighed heavily in the decision: Would Cuban-Americans in south Florida riot if the boats were stopped?[5]

"There were competing points of view about the significance of the Boatlift," Eidenberg said. "The NSC was viewing it as possibly some new form of warfare."[6]

The Defense Department immediately established a Crisis Action Team to look into possible military ramifications of Cuba's actions. The Department was concerned about Castro's ultimate intentions and whether the actions were defense related. The Coast Guard was represented on the Crisis Action Team by the Chief of the Law Enforcement Division of the Office of Operations, Captain Leo N. Schowengerdt. Schowengerdt said DOD wanted to find out what was

going on, but was reluctant to get involved in non-defense-related refugee relief operations.[7]

US Interests Section

Wayne S. Smith, Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana at the time of the Boatlift, took the position from the beginning that "the whole situation could have been handled in a more orderly way." He thought the response was mishandled by Washington and the issue could have been negotiated. Smith said, "The Cubans can be reasonable in their negotiations, but normal negotiations become difficult when relations between countries become emotional."[8]

For Castro, the issue indeed had become emotional. Daily anti-American reports on Radio Havana and in *GRANMA* incited the Cuban people. The government organized the largest mass demonstrations in Cuba's history to condemn the United States and degrade the people who sought to leave Cuba. An estimated million Cubans paraded in the "March of the Fighting People" on 19 April 1980.

On May Day, Castro addressed an equally large gathering of Cubans crowded into Havana's Plaza of the Revolution, where he gave his "Speech to the Fighting People." He spoke to the crowd of the "monstrous crime of Barbados,"* the sinking of Cuban fishing boats off Peru by the Peruvian Navy, and the cancellation of fishing agreements and construction contracts by Peru. "Behind all of these acts of provocation was the (US) CIA," Castro said. He described the US military exercise scheduled for Guantanamo Bay as "a flagrant rehearsal for an invasion of our country," adding, "The Eastern Army had been mobilized and reinforced to hold

* A Cuban airliner was blown up by a bomb in 1976; 73 people were killed in the explosion, set off by a Venezuelan terrorist group.

AP Wide World Photos

Cubans crowded outside the US Interests Section in Havana on 2 May 1980 later were attacked by supporters of the Castro government. The men who attacked people in the crowd with clubs and chains arrived at the scene in Cuban government buses.

Cuban maneuvers to confront the Yankees." The massive crowd shouted, "For sure, Fidel, give the Yankees hell." Castro expressed his solidarity with the Iranians holding the American hostages, to which the people applauded.[9]

The day after Castro's May Day speech, violence erupted in Havana. About 1,000 former political prisoners and their families had gathered in a parking lot outside the US Interests Section to protest delays in processing their applications for emigration to America under the new Refugee Act of 1980. As the protesters quietly demonstrated, a mob of 300 Cuban men wielding clubs suddenly set upon them. The attackers had been brought to the scene in buses from the Cuban Institute for Friendship to Peoples, an agency of the Cuban government. While Cuban police were present, they took no action to interfere with the attackers.

When officials from the US Interests Section reported the incident to the Cuban Foreign Ministry, additional police were sent to the scene; they cordoned off the area, but still did nothing to stop the beatings. About 400 victims of the attack escaped into the US Interests Section building. Doctors, who had been among the peaceful demonstrators, cared for the more seriously injured people. While some of the windows of the Interests Section were broken, no injuries to US personnel were reported. Wayne Smith, head of the US Interests Section, protested the attack to the Cuban government, and requested that "Cuban authorities disperse the crowd immediately, guarantee the safety of those who sought sanctuary inside our mission, and issue an expression of regret for the incident."[10]

Describing a video tape report of the violence at the US Interests Section, the Cuban National TV News reported that the video tape

> showed how the Yankees and the antisocial elements (Cubans waiting for emigration) organized a street meeting in front of the US Interests Section, how the meeting went on for two hours, how the Yankee officials harangued the antisocial elements, and how the latter responded by applauding the remarks of the head of the US Interests Section.
>
> They showed not only how the antisocial elements attacked the people (men from the ICAP (Cuban Institute for Friendship to People)) but also how they ran up and down the steps in front of the US Interests Section to attack the people outside and how they ran like cowards into the US lair when the people responded to the attack.
>
> Clearly recorded in the film were the arduous efforts made by the authorities and the leaders of the mass organizations to prevent the people from storming the building and wiping out the lumpen elements. And that was only a beginning. Without revolutionary self-control the incident would have led to bloodshed.[11]

Center for Cuban Studies

Mass demonstration march on 17 May 1980 repudiates Cubans who took refuge in the US Interests Section during the 2 May attack.

The brutal attack, described by President Carter as "mob violence instigated by Castro himself," was a further indication of the revolutionary government's efforts to arouse the emotions of the Cuban people against those who would emigrate to the United States.*

Another mass demonstration on 17 May 1980 repudiated the Cubans who had taken refuge inside the US Interests Section. The demonstration, originally organized to protest US maneuvers at Guantanamo Bay, was redirected against the 400 Cuban refugees when the maneuvers were canceled. "The May 17 march became virtually a repetition of the one at the Peruvian Embassy a month before," Smith said. "Close to a million people passed by the Interests Section that day."[12]

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* During the 1970s, violent demonstrations of political will had all but disappeared in Cuba, in contrast with the violence of the 1960s, when Ramiro Valdes was Minister of the Interior. In December 1979, after an absence of several years, Castro again had appointed Valdes as Interior Minister, with the responsibility for internal security.

The flood of arriving refugees obviously was out of control in early May; action was clearly required to restore order. Unfortunately, President Carter and the State Department found themselves in a difficult position. In April, the United States sought to avoid bilateral negotiations with Cuba and continued to treat the refugee situation as a multi-national problem. The administration had strongly supported the Costa Rican President's call for an international conference in San Jose to address the Cuban refugee problem. If the United States peremptorily had taken unilateral action before the conclusion of the proceedings and the implementation of recommendations agreed to at the 8 May conference, the 22 nations and seven international organizations represented at the meeting would have been embarrassed and insulted. "We were taking a beating in the press for not doing anything," Ambassador Palmieri said, "but we couldn't." The Carter administration felt obliged to let the conference run to its futile conclusion.[13]

San Jose Conference

The situation was particularly frustrating for President Carter, since Castro already had denounced the conference before it began: He warned that he would reject any international effort to end the Mariel-to-Key West Boatlift. An editorial in *GRANMA* said,

> The San Jose meeting will be another try to reach an agreement on the distribution of the scum. The curious thing about all this is that Cuba will not be at the meeting. Our government told the Government of Costa Rica that this was a matter to be discussed between the Governments of Cuba and the United States alone. There is nothing to discuss with third countries. The Mariel route goes to Florida not Costa Rica.[14]

As a result of the San Jose conference, a trilateral group (the United States, Great Britain, and Costa Rica) requested Cuba to open discussions on an orderly departure of the refugees. The Cuban government denounced

the proposal, accusing the San Jose conference of "an attempt at multilateral interference in Cuba's internal affairs." Cuba's reply to the proposal went on to say,

> Cuba's migration policy pertains exclusively to the sovereignty of the country and is not subject to negotiations with any other.... In no event does Cuba consider the possibility of forcing its citizens, under its jurisdiction and protection, to leave for any other country (other than the United States) as a result of bilateral agreements that would place the fate of those citizens at the mercy of the decisions—be they fair or unfair but whatever arbitrary—of governments that decide to negotiate.[15]

Cuba's refusal to accept the note did not discourage Ambassador Palmieri, however. He indicated that he did not believe the "concept" of orderly departures had been rejected—in consultation with Great Britain and Costa Rica, the United States would continue efforts to negotiate with Cuba. "Whether or not Cuba is willing to meet with us in a constructive manner is for them to decide," he said. "But given that all governments are influenced by international opinion, we intend to pursue these efforts even though they may be rebuffed initially."[16]

The United States, working within the context of an international group, was attempting to avoid bilateral negotiations with Cuba that could possibly be expanded to other sensitive issues. Castro was anxious to negotiate the following contentious issues with the United States:

(1) The economic embargo, which had been in effect since 1962.

(2) The US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay.

(3) US surveillance flights over the island.

These issues were addressed repeatedly in *GRANMA* editorials, and were graphically depicted in political cartoons about the Boatlift.

Castro, with his "global view" and self-image as a world statesman, was proud of his reputation as a Third World leader and Cuba's active role in international organizations. In a memorandum to Presidential Assistant Jack Watson, dated 7 May, the Coast Guard's Commandant, Admiral John B. Hayes, noted the Cuban President's strong interest in furthering Cuba's international image. He pointed out Cuba's continuing efforts to demonstrate its status as a mature member of the community of nations by participating in a broad range of international agreements and conventions. In general, Castro had shown a propensity to adhere carefully to the letter of treaty obligations.

United Nations

Admiral Hayes proposed that pressure might be effectively applied in the forum of the International Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) of the United Nations to convince Castro to cooperate in resolving the chaotic situation that had developed. "Castro's behavior in encouraging the transit of small vessels, frequently overloaded, with refugees is totally inconsistent with Cuba's treaty obligations, at least in spirit," Hayes said, "and may provide the international leverage to force his cooperation.[17]

The obvious potential for disaster created by the thousands of small, overloaded boats making the open-sea crossing from Cuba to the United States was raised in the United Nations on 16 May 1980. The US delegation to the Maritime Safety Committee of IMCO accused Cuba of actions "in conflict with the purpose of the Organization." The "Note by the United States" to the Committee raised the following points:

1. The United States is experiencing an influx of thousands of persons being carried on vessels which are not inspected or certified to engage in international passenger service.

2. The ships are ... embarking numbers of passengers far in excess of that which would classify them as passenger ships under the International Convention

for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1960. These vessels are then permitted to depart the port State (Cuba) in violation of the provisions of the SOLAS Convention relating to life-saving equipment, overloading, structural subdivision, stability, and fire protection. The United States is greatly concerned for the safety of both the passengers and crews of these vessels.

3. By permitting these vessels to knowingly depart the port State in violation of the requirements of the international convention to which it is a party, the port State's actions are in conflict with the purposes of this Organization and ... the SOLAS Convention.

4. Grounds clearly exist for believing that the conditions of the ships and their equipment do not comply with the provisions of SOLAS. In such cases the port State is obligated to take such steps as will ensure that the ship will not sail until it can proceed to sea without danger to the passengers or the crew.

5. The United States has communicated its concerns to the authorities of the port State but has thus far received no cooperation.... The port State is not meeting its obligations under the SOLAS Conventions and is not acting as a responsible member of the International Maritime Community.

6. To prevent future occurrences world-wide the United States considers it of the utmost importance that the Committee agree to a resolution which shall remind Contracting Governments of the intent and purpose of the SOLAS Convention and the need to ensure that its measures are adhered to, in order to provide for safety of life at sea.[18]

After a delay for consultations with Havana, the Cuban delegate, Captain Cancio, delivered a rebuttal to the US Note on 22 May 1980. Cuba accused the United States of a "hypocritical preoccupation with the strict interpretation of the Convention" and a distortion of the facts. "The Florida-Mariel-Florida maritime bridge," the Cuban statement said, "was the intelligent response of the Cuban residents in the United States to the hypocritical policy of the US authorities." (The note referred

to Cuba's accusations of US delays in issuing entrance visas.)[19] The Cuban statement attempted to place the responsibility for the flagrant violation of the SOLAS Convention—improperly equipped and grossly overloaded boats transiting the Florida Straits—on the United States. The Cuban statement continued:

> The arrival and departure of boats along the Florida-Mariel-Florida route is not unknown to the United States Government, and it has accordingly set up encampments and drawn up migration procedures to deal with the situation. This means that the United States has accepted the fact that these boats set off from Florida bearing the United States flag to carry passengers on the above mentioned route, and has permitted them to do so, for which conduct they should have had to comply with the rules drawn up under the SOLAS 60 Convention, especially point 4, which covers the requisite procedure for such cases.

The Cuban delegation, however, failed to explain why the vessels, which had gone to Cuba to pick up small numbers of family members, were systematically forced by armed guards to load large numbers of strangers, well beyond their safe capacity, or why armed Cuban vessels prevented the boats from leaving Mariel Harbor unless they were fully loaded.*

The Cuban delegation attempted to dismiss the gross overloading of the boats by saying the approved safety standards were too conservative, "because of the very nature of the ships and to ensure maximum

* In the opinion of Myles Frechette, the State Department's Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, the Cuban government probably did not force any of the US boats to take refugees out of Mariel. The crews of the larger commercial and fishing vessels reported, however, that they were forced or coerced into taking on board hundreds of strangers before leaving Mariel Harbor. The people on the boats were told, "Take these people now and when we locate your relatives we will send them on another boat." The boat operators knew that if they refused, their relatives would not be sent later; they took the people the Cuban government assigned.

security, the boats have always carried about 50 percent of what they were capable of carrying." The Cubans said they not only complied with the principles of the SOLAS 60 Convention, but that they

> also have adopted measures which exceed the said provisions and have been able to achieve, in the face of the irresponsible and hypocritical attitude of the United States authorities [inveterate violators of the safety of human life] all the measures to ensure that no boat puts to sea when there is a possibility that people's lives may be in danger. The Cuban authorities have always acted, in this exceptional situation which was not of their making, completely in accordance with the rules of the SOLAS Convention.

Because of the US Note and the Cuban rebuttal, the Committee convened a small working group* to draft a resolution addressing port state responsibilities under SOLAS. To satisfy an objection of the Soviet delegate, the Resolution was amended before final acceptance to include "flag state" (the United States) as well as "port state" in the responsibilities addressed. The compromise resolution called on member states to comply with their safety responsibilities for passengers and crews in broad and general terms. The vaguely worded resolution had little effect on Castro, as Cuba escalated the exodus. The final paragraph of the revised resolution read,

> The Maritime Safety Committee therefore strongly recommends that all IMCO Member Governments and all parties to the 1960 and 1974 SOLAS Convention make every effort to safeguard life at sea by the responsible application to vessels leaving the ports of the flag state and/or the port state control

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* This group included representatives of Cuba, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and observers from the International Chamber of Shipping, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

US Navy Photo

More than 700 Cuban refugees, mostly men, arrive in Key West in May 1980 on board the M/V *DR. DANIELS*

> provisions of the SOLAS Conventions, which establishes uniform principles and rules intended to provide for the safety of life at sea. (Note: Underline added to denote amended portion.)[20]

Foreign Vessels

As the exodus continued into late May, information revealed that Cuban exile groups and families were planning to use small cargo ships, capable of carrying more than 1,000 persons, to transport refugees to Florida. The ships, not registered in the United States, most likely would be Panamanian, a common "flag of convenience" for merchant shipping in the Caribbean.* After the US State Department conferred with the Panamanian government, Panama prohibited the use of ships of its registry for the transportation of Cuban refugees.

On 3 June, the Panamanian-registered Motor Vessel (M/V) *RED DIAMOND* arrived from Mariel with 731 Cuban refugees. President Carter was so concerned about this new development—the use of small merchant ships to transport refugees—that on the day *RED DIAMOND* moored in Key West, he publicly threatened that

> any shipowner, captain, or crew member agreeing to travel from the United States or other foreign port to Cuba to take refugees to the United States

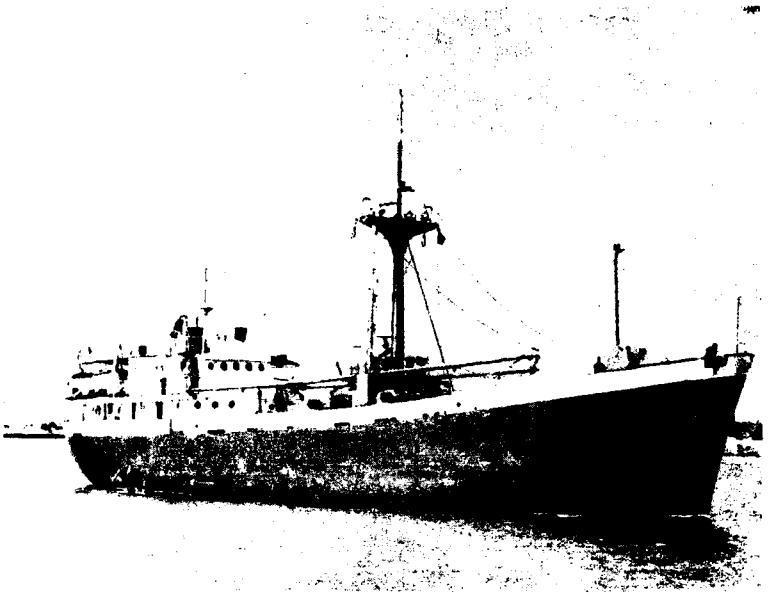
* The owners of a ship in one country may choose to register the vessel for international commerce in another country. Panama, because of convenient conditions for documentation, frequently was used as a "flag of convenience." A ship registered in Panama was required to comply with the laws of that country, regardless of the nationality of ownership or crew. Regulations of one "flag state," including safety requirements and labor practices, may be less stringent or costly, and more convenient, than in another. Along with Panama, in Atlantic and Caribbean waters, the Liberian flag also was a common "flag of convenience."

> in violation of American immigration law will face the most severe penalties under the law. Ships engaged in such efforts will be seized regardless of the nation of registry. Ship captains will face criminal prosecutions and maximum civil fines. Those who charter boats for these purposes also will face criminal prosecution.
>
> There should be no misunderstanding of my intentions. Illegal boat traffic in refugees is unacceptable to the United States. It will be stopped. Those who attempt to evade this order will pay very severe penalties under our laws.[21]

The next day, another merchant ship flying the Panamanian flag, M/V *RETURN TO PARADISE*, sailed from Cuba to the United States with no refugees on board. When the ship docked in Key West, crew members reported the Cuban government had not allowed them to load any refugees. When the 276-foot M/V *RIO INDIO* went to Havana to load refugees, the Panamanian government cancelled its registration. *RIO INDIO* subsequently departed Cuba without passengers, a further indication of Castro's compliance with Panama's desire not to be involved in the continuing confrontation. Castro respected the wishes of Panama, a country with which he enjoyed good relations.[22]

Pastor, who coordinated the National Security Council's response to the Cuban Boatlift, said the United States took its strongest stand during the influx in the cases of the larger cargo vessels. The Castro government apparently intended to use cargo vessels to revive the dwindling exodus. Pastor said,

> We came closest to implementing the military action option in the case of the *BLUE FIRE*. We were going to use naval warships (Coast Guard Cutters) to stop the *BLUE FIRE*. It was the closest I had ever seen the White House come to ordering military action during my tour.... The NSC actually sent the military options up to the President for his approval. The word was passed to Castro through various channels that the United States



US Coast Guard Photo

The freighter *BLUE FIRE* brought the confrontation between Cuba and the United States to the brink during the 1980 Cuban Boatlift. The United States was prepared to take extreme measures to prevent *BLUE FIRE* from arriving in Key West with refugees.

> had the 'GRAVEST CONCERNS' for the situation with the *BLUE FIRE*. This was very strong language telling Cuba that the United States was ready to take action. Castro backed off.... It was the closest we had ever come to military action.[23]

Appreciating the gravity of the *BLUE FIRE* situation, the new Secretary of State, Edmund N. Muskie, instructed US Interests Section Chief Wayne Smith to deliver a letter to Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. Smith stressed to the Cuban Vice President the serious dangers of sending refugees on *BLUE FIRE*. Muskie's letter said the two countries should keep open the possibility for dialogue; but if *BLUE FIRE* reached Florida loaded with refugees, that possibility could disappear completely. After reading the letter, Rodriguez told Smith, "You can tell the Secretary I will see what I can do."[24]

Fortunately, Castro also appreciated the resolve of the United States and the gravity of the situation: *BLUE FIRE* sailed from Cuba without refugees on board, avoiding a confrontation.

Negotiations

All diplomatic attempts to negotiate an end to the Boatlift were futile. The Castro government blatantly refused to comply with anything that would ease the situation for the United States. Pastor said, "The White House tried to get to Castro to end the Boatlift in every way possible.... We tried to reach Castro to resolve the situation through direct negotiations and through individuals who had influence with Cuba."[25]

The more difficulties the Carter administration experienced in dealing with the exodus, the bolder the Cuban President became in his actions and vitriolic statements. The increasing numbers of criminals and undesirables being shipped as the Boatlift continued were evidence of the progressive degree to which Castro exploited the situation.

As the Exodus moved into its fourth week, and greater numbers of undesirables were arriving, the Carter administration knew it had to act to bring the Boatlift under control.

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Carter's Decision

Tens of thousands of Cubans are fleeing the repression of the Castro regime under chaotic and perilous conditions. Castro himself has refused to permit them a safe and orderly passage to the United States and to other countries who are willing to receive them....

In keeping with the laws and traditions of our country, the United States has provided safe haven for many of these people who have arrived on our shore....

But now we must take additional steps to end Cuba's inhumane actions and to bring safety and order to the process that continues to threaten lives.

Jimmy Carter
Remarks to Reporters, 14 May 1980

PRESIDENT CARTER MET WITH HIS KEY ADVISERS* at a 7:30 a.m. breakfast meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House on 14 May 1980. During the hour-long

* At the meeting were Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti and his deputy, Charles Renfrew; National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski; Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher; Stu Eizenstat, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy; and Jack Watson, Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Watson's assistant, Eugene Eidenberg.

meeting, the President's advisers told him the time had come to halt the influx of Cuban refugees and that Coast Guard and Navy resources were in position to stop the transiting boats. Of critical importance was the assurance of Gene Eidenberg, who was in frequent communication with the Cuban exile community in Miami, that no violence would occur if the Boatlift were halted. The Cuban-American community had become painfully aware that Castro had manipulated their emotions and used the Exodus for his own objectives. Not only had they been victimized by profiteers (boat operators charging exorbitant fees to go to Mariel) and forced to bring back undesirables, they were frustrated in their efforts to reunite with their families.

With little debate, the President accepted a plan to halt the southbound boats and develop an orderly airlift or sea lift to transport prescreened Cubans to the United States. "I want to go (with the plan) this afternoon," Carter said. "I want to move quickly and aggressively."[1]

Presidential Action

By the second week of May, thousands of refugees were landing in Key West each day—the number of daily arrivals was greater than the 3,500 total the President originally had agreed to accept from the Peruvian Embassy. More than 40,000 Cubans from Mariel deluged Key West in an unending stream: Not only was the volume of refugees alarming (see figure 4), but reports of criminals and vagrants landing in the boats caused a growing backlash. The sense of outrage in the Anglo and black communities of south Florida was spreading rapidly to the rest of the nation—and pressures were mounting for the President to take decisive action to control the runaway situation. Popular opinion polls, in the election year, were overwhelmingly against the admission of any more Cuban refugees.[2]

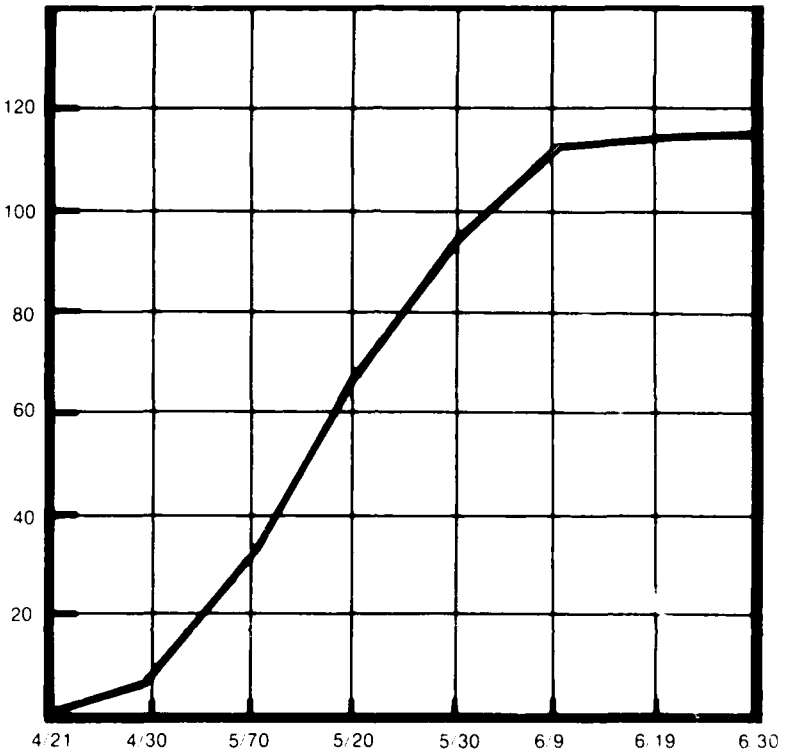

Figure 4. Cuban refugee statistics, arrivals at Key West, April-June 1980 (in thousands)

Source: US Transportation Department, Coast Guard, Flag Plot, Incident Memo 04 91c2, 13 August 1980

In developing the administration's plan of action, Gene Eidenberg had flown to south Florida to evaluate the situation and meet with the heads of the involved south Florida Federal agencies. Options for ending the Boatlift were discussed at a 10 May dinner-meeting in Miami.* When the session ended at almost 11 p.m.,

* Attending the Saturday dinner-meeting at the quarters of Coast Guard Rear Admiral Benedict L. Stabile with Eidenberg were the Coast Guard's Commandant, Admiral John B. Hayes; US Attorney Atlee W. Wampler III; Regional Commissioner of Customs Robert Battard; the District Director for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Ray Morris; and Captain Raymond J. Copin and Commander John E. Shkor of the Coast Guard. Shkor kept a record of the meeting.

Commander Shkor, the US Coast Guard District's Legal Officer, prepared a memorandum, summarizing the discussion and stating the group's recommendations. Early the next morning, Shkor delivered the memorandum to Eidenberg at Homestead (Fla.) Air Force Base, where he was preparing to depart with Admiral Hayes on a Coast Guard plane for Key West. Many of the operational aspects recommended the night before were reflected in the President's plan.[3]

As the Boatlift continued, Florida's Governor, D. Robert Graham spoke out about the concerns of the State, saying non-Hispanics were worried about the impact of the flood of refugees, including "the threat they pose in terms of jobs, pressure on schools, and welfare support. We are in a period where national sympathy for refugees is at a low point."[4]

Before President Carter announced his decision to end the uncontrolled Exodus on 14 May, he sent Eidenberg back to Miami by Air Force jet to be with the Cuban exile leaders when the plans were made public. He also informed members of the Florida congressional delegation during a brief meeting in the Oval Office of his intentions to shut down the Boatlift.[5]

At 4:35 p.m., President Carter told reporters in the Press Briefing Room of the White House that he was stopping the uncontrolled influx of Cuban refugees. He said he was prepared to start an orderly airlift or sea lift to transport Cubans to the United States. He announced a five-point program for regulating the mass migration and identified four categories of Cubans who would be given priority consideration for coming to the United States. These categories included people who sought refuge in the US Interests Section in Havana; political prisoners held by Castro for many years; refugees from the Peruvian Embassy; and close family members of permanent-resident Cuban-Americans living in the United States. The five points of the President's program were:

First, we are ready to start an airlift and a sea lift for these screened and qualified people to come to our

AP Wide World Photos

President Jimmy Carter announces his program for ending the Cuban Boatlift to reporters in the White House briefing room on 14 May 1980.

country and for no other escapees from Cuba. We will provide this airlift and sea lift to our country and to other countries as well, just as soon as the Cubans accept this offer.

Second, tomorrow we will open a family registration center in Miami to begin receiving the names of people who are eligible for immigration to our Nation because they are close members of Cuban-American families.

Third, the Coast Guard is now communicating with all boats enroute to Cuba and those in Mariel Harbor in Cuba to urge them to return to the United States without accepting additional passengers. No new trips to Cuba by these unauthorized boats should be started.... Persons who violate this requirement and who violate US Immigration (and) Customs laws by traveling to Cuba to pick up additional passengers will be subject to civil fines and criminal prosecution.... I have directed

the various law enforcement agencies to take additional steps as necessary to assure that this policy and the laws are obeyed.

Fourth, in an unprecedented and irresponsible act, Castro has taken hardened criminals out of prison and forced some of the boat owners who have gone to Cuba from our country to bring these criminals back to the United States.... I have instructed the Attorney General to commence exclusion proceedings immediately for these criminals and others who represent any danger to our country. We will ask also all appropriate international agencies to negotiate their return to Cuba.

Fifth, these steps are fully consistent with the consensus that was reached by 22 nations and seven international organizations in the San Jose Conference on 8 May this last week.... We will seek the help of the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and other international organizations as well.[6]

The principal points of the President's plan were not new initiatives, Eidenberg said,

> But a clarification and definition of existing policies. It was a statement of what the principles were all along.... It clearly stated the US position and informed the Cuban-Americans of that position.... The 14 May statement was an effort to clarify the continuing position.... The objective was to stop the boatlift and limit the tremendous burden it imposed on the United States.[7]

In retrospect, the President's action was too late to be effective. Once the US boats had arrived in Mariel, they could not realistically be stopped from returning to Florida with loads of refugees. "Further decisions," Jack Watson said, "were rapidly preempted by the volume of boats that quickly proceeded to Cuba and were waiting in Mariel Harbor." Some proposals were made to use force to prevent the return of the boats, but they never were seriously considered. Watson reported,

> There were irresponsible recommedations made to the White House from various sources that the

> boats be sunk or that force be used to prevent them from landing in the United States. This was totally unacceptable—there were women, children, and old people, as well as men, on the boats. Most of these people were helpless victims of Castro's ploy.[8]

Reactions

The success of the President's Five-Point Plan depended to a great extent on Castro's cooperation and, to a lesser extent, on the support of the Cuban exile communities. Based on the administration's optimistic reliance on Cuba's cooperation, the extent of the Cuban dictator's malevolent intent apparently was not fully realized, and Cuba's total disregard for the norms of international conduct regarding emigration was difficult to anticipate.

Responding to the President's proposed plan, degrading cartoons were published in *GRANMA*. A typical cartoon is shown at figure 5, depicting a cowering and sweating President Carter standing in front of an overflowing garbage can on the tip of Florida. The continuing series of political cartoons, drawn by Rene de la Nuez, depicted Castro in charge of the refugee situation, with no intention of doing anything that would diminish his control or ease the US predicament.

A front page editorial in *GRANMA*'s 19 May edition criticized Carter's proposal, castigating the United States for not receiving Cuba's "antisocial elements" and shirking a moral obligation. The editorial said, in part,

> A few days ago President James Carter publicly called on Cuba to establish what he called 'an orderly boat or airlift' to take to the United States those Cubans who want to leave the country. Then, of course, he established a series of limitations saying they would only accept those with relatives in the United States, etc. Nobody knows which country is willing to take the others! In short, the

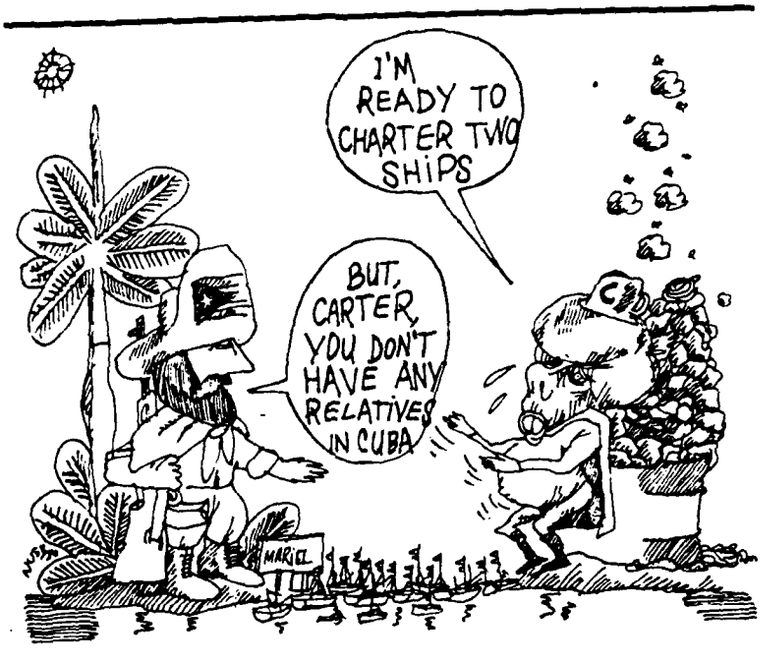

Figure 5. Cartoon from *GRANMA*, 25 May 1980

> United States government wants to pick and choose, take people with certain degrees of skill or training and a clean record—and leave all the other antisocial elements here.[9]

Many members of Miami's "Little Havana" community were willing, at least temporarily, to give President Carter's plan a chance; more than 15,000 Cuban-Americans endured Florida's midday heat and high humidity to sponsor relatives in Cuba for entry into the United States. They waited in long lines at Opa Locka Airport, north of Miami, for a government form the people called a *plantillo* (little plan) for listing names of relatives they hoped to sponsor.[10]

Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY), Chair of the House Committee on the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, had been critical of the administration's lack of a coherent refugee policy. Of the President's proposal, however, she said, "It is exactly what needs to be done to create an orderly outflow from Cuba, in which we can prescreen the refugees and make sure that we receive only political prisoners and family reunification cases."[11]

Other members of Congress, however, were skeptical of the President's plan, charging it was "a public relations effort rather than a real determination to comply with the immigration and refugee laws." They claimed a lack of clear administrative leadership, remarking on the difficulty of telling who was in charge of the latest Cuban Refugee program—the White House's Jack Watson, State Department's Victor Palmieri, or FEMA's John Macy. Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, and an opponent of Carter for the Democratic presidential nomination, criticized the incumbent's handling of the situation. "The chaos and confusion in the Cuban and Haitian refugee crisis is matched only by the chaos and confusion in the administration's policies."[12]

Refugee Status

President Carter first invoked emergency provisions of the Refugee Act of 1980 on 14 April to provide relief for Cubans seeking asylum in the Peruvian Embassy. But then he abandoned the Act when the uncontrolled flood of Cuban refugees began arriving in Florida. On 20 May, the White House announced that Cubans landing in Florida would not be treated as refugees, but rather as applicants for asylum, and therefore would not come under the new 1980 Refugee Act. The administration did not consider the act, which would have required extensive consultations with Congress on the total number of Cubans to be accepted, an analysis of the projected social, economic, and demographic impacts of the arrivals, and estimates of resettlement costs, appropriate to the situation.

Presidential Assistant Jack Watson told reporters the new Refugee Act "contemplates the determination of refugee status in some country other than our own." Since the United States had not been able to carry out orderly processing in Cuba or Costa Rica, the administration had not classified people precipitously arriving in Florida as refugees. Cubans entering the United States through the uncontrolled Boatlift were considered as applicants for asylum. Because of the large number of applicants, Watson indicated that "the White House may have to go to the Congress for special legislation."[13] A May 1980 State Department *Foreign Affairs Memorandum*, prepared for Members of Congress and their staffs, explained the status of the arriving Cubans:

> When Castro started the disorderly and dangerous exodus directly to the United States, there was no way to assure that the arrivals met the refugee standards or other criteria. Arriving without documents or entry permission, these persons are presumed under our immigration laws to be here illegally.... The Cubans ... are being processed under another section of the Refugee Act, which

AP Wide World Photos

Haitians come ashore from a battered wooden sail boat that grounded at Bakers Haulover, just north of Miami Beach, on 14 July 1980.

> deals with asylum. This provision is based on a treaty obligation of the United States assumed in 1968 when the Senate approved ratification of the United Nations Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. The United States thereby agreed not to return persons to any nation where they were likely to face persecution.... Asylum is available to persons, no matter how they entered the country—legally or illegally—even if they do not meet the other criteria of our refugee programs.... All Cuban boat arrivals are being treated as applicants for asylum.[14]

Cuban-Haitian Entrants

While the Nation's attention was focused on the thousands of Cubans arriving daily at Key West docks, crude sailing craft loaded with hundreds of Haitians, fleeing the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, continued to land on various Florida beaches. Several interest groups

raised the issue of equal treatment and status for the Haitian "boat people." Appeals to the administration on behalf of the Haitians were made by the executive council of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations and the United States Conference of Mayors.

The 17 members of the Congressional Black Caucus called for the designation of "refugee" status for the Haitians, charging the administration with racism and "deliberate deceit" in their unequal treatment. Black interest groups and human rights organizations, such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF),* charged that the Carter administration was being unjust—that all Cuban refugees were welcomed without question, while the Haitians were being denied asylum. "We're challenging the double standard," the Rev. Jesse Jackson said at a Miami demonstration. "We want our national leaders to be consistent."[15]

The Conference of Mayors called for the acceptance of Cubans and Haitians as refugees for humanitarian reasons. The nation's mayors contended the refugee designation would enable State and local governments to provide assistance to the Haitians, based on the anticipation of receiving 100 percent reimbursement from the Federal Government.[16]

When the task of coordinating Federal response to the Cuban Boatlift was assigned to Jack Watson, many of his staff members had been responding to fiscal problems associated with the Haitian "boat people" arriving on south Florida's shores. The plight of the Haitians had sensitized the staff to pro-Haitian pressures. While the Haitian and Cuban situations technically were different, the similarities of destitute people arriving by

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* MALDEF leadership also supported equal treatment for the Haitians and their designation as "refugees." Such a designation could have furthered MALDEF's cause for Mexican migrants by establishing a precedent for "refugee" designation for migrants fleeing from economic hardship, as well as political persecution.

boat on the Florida coasts were too great to be ignored. Msgr. Bryan C. Walsh, director of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Miami during the early days of the Cuban Exodus, wrote in an article that

> the differential treatment accordered to one group, largely white and middle class in background* and the other 100 percent black and poor, has the suspicion of institutional racism at work and could lead to increased polarization between Miami's ethnic groups.[17]

Political motivations may have prompted the initial decision not to classify the arriving Cubans as refugees for two reasons:

First, the Carter administration would have been severely criticized for immediately granting "refugee" status to the Cubans—a status previously denied to the Haitians. The administration already was feeling pressures to grant the Haitians "refugee" status.

Second, the significant fiscal consequences associated with the "refugee" designation were a concern to the President. Carter was running for reelection against Ronald Reagan, who had a reputation as a "fiscal conservative" and did not want to incur the major Federal expenses associated with the "refugee" classification. The administration already was under fire for the country's severe economic difficulties.

The administration quickly decided to pursue a policy of equal treatment for both groups. More than a month elapsed, however, before the final determination on the legal status of arriving Cubans and Haitians was issued. In lieu of the refugee status classification, the administration created a new temporary parole status

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* Msgr. Walsh improperly characterized the arriving Cubans. In an interview on 11 December 1985, he reported that a surprising 45 percent of the 1980 Cuban refugees were black. Demographic surveys of the refugee population further showed most of the Cuban arrivals were from "urban working and lower class origins," as opposed to middle class.

called "Cuban-Haitian Entrants (status pending)," which applied to the following:

(1) Undocumented Cubans who arrived in the United States from 19 April to 19 June 1980 and were being processed by the INS.

(2) Undocumented Haitians who arrived in the United States before 19 June 1980 and were being processed by the INS.

Senator Kennedy, who had introduced the Refugee Act legislation in the Senate on 9 March 1979, strongly disagreed with the administration's decision not to classify the Cubans as refugees. He said,

> The Administration abandoned use of the Act (Refugee Act of 1980) in favor of an 'ad hoc,' short-term solution: temporary use of the so-called 'parole authority.' This decision simply delayed a solution to the problem and a resolution of the ultimate immigration status of the Cubans. The resettlement costs involved in dealing with the problem were largely dumped on the states, local communities, and volunteer agencies. All of the undesirable consequences could have been avoided by continuing the use of the 1980 Act.[18]

Kennedy pointed out that emergency procedures were available for dealing with the influx situation, under Section 207(b) of the Act, which provided the following:

> If the President determines after appropriate consultation, that (1) an unforseen emergency refugee situation exists, (2) the admission of certain refugees in response to the emergency refugee situation is justified by grave humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest, and (3) the admission to the United States of these refugees cannot be accomplished under subsection (1), the President may fix a number of refugees to be admitted to the United States during the succeeding period (not to exceed 12 months).

Additional reasons for the Carter administration's decision to create the new parole status and avoid the provisions of the Refugee Act were reported as:

- Use of the Act would set a precedent encouraging millions of Caribbean migrants to come to the United States.
- President Carter did not want to reward those who came to the United States illegally.
- The majority of the 16,000 Haitian arrivals had landed before the effective date of the Refugee Act of 1980 and were not covered by its provisions. The Cuban-Haitian linkage would have made use of the Act difficult.[19]

Enforcing the President's Plan

Attorney General Civiletti took the position that law enforcement actions alone could not effectively deter the flow of boats traveling to Cuba and back. He agreed with the President's proposition that law enforcement steps to control the migration would work only if taken in conjunction with a viable alternative for transporting refugees to the United States. Washington felt that the threat of civil fines or even criminal prosecutions alone would not dissuade the exiles from returning to Cuba for their families; they simply would act first and accept the consequences later.

The Attorney General was afraid stringent law enforcement efforts, without strong programs for family reunification, would be met with resistance, exacerbating the problem of controlling the influx. He reasoned that to avoid the penalties, the Cuban-Americans probably would land refugees at any of the hundreds of islands and inlets along the highly accessible Florida coastline. Such a situation would have been counterproductive, resulting in labor-intensive onshore and offshore law enforcement patrols in remote areas. Persons involved in such clandestine landings could have been arrested, but trials would not have occurred for several months—negating the desired immediate deterrent effect. Furthermore, cases tried before south Florida judges and juries, sympathetic to defendant efforts

to rescue their families from Cuban communism, probably would not have resulted in convictions.

The Justice Department reasoned that once an alternative for transporting the families from Cuba was implemented (for example, ships or aircraft chartered by the US Government), the Cuban-Americans would have had adequate incentive to halt the uncontrolled Boatlift. In a memorandum to Atlee Wampler, US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, dated 14 May, Civiletti identified what he considered the two fundamental parts of the President's five-point program and their anticipated effect as:

(1) Offering the Cuban-American community a viable government-sponsored alternative to bring their relatives and others to this country.

(2) Vigorously enforcing immigration and customs laws to prevent illegal and unsafe boat traffic to Cuba. These two principles combined, said the Attorney General, "will deter persons from making trips to Cuba and will regularize the process of bringing those persons eligible to the United States."[20]

The Justice Department considered, but did not recommend, two additional law enforcement measures to prevent boats from going to Cuba initially.

The *first* involved Coast Guard interdiction of boats leaving the United States enroute to Cuba. This action was not recommended, however, because legal authority was felt to be too narrow, and the intent extremely difficult to prove. Since the appropriate immigration statutes did not have effect beyond US waters (12 nautical miles), the United States would have to prove that "acts rising to the level of an attempt" occurred before the vessel departed US waters. The interdiction option also was rejected because it could have been confrontational.[21]

The *second* measure involved a total ban on all travel to Cuba by implementing the Treasury Department's prohibition against trading with the enemy. Under this law, anyone leaving for Cuba automatically would have been in violation. This preventive measure,

likewise, was rejected as being too difficult to enforce. A reactive posture, involving the seizure of all returning boats and the criminal prosecution of repeat offenders, was felt to be ample deterrence.[22]

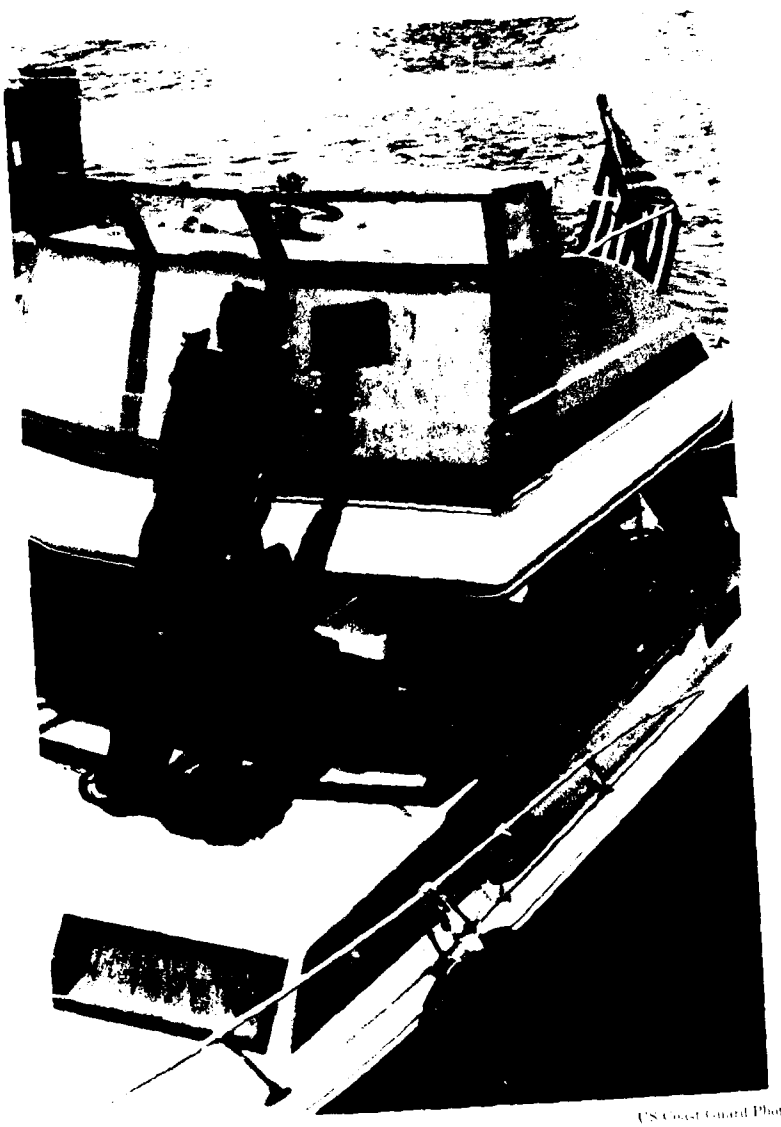
The major difficulty with the Justice Department's reactive enforcement posture—waiting for boats to return with aliens before taking action—was the de facto acceptance of the masses of refugees who would arrive before the deterrence became effective.

To provide a legal foundation for curtailing transportation of Cuban refugees to the United States, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control amended the *Cuban Assets Control Regulation* to prohibit the transportation of certain Cuban nationals to the United States. The amendment, prompted by the Boatlift, became effective on 15 May 1980. It made illegal the transportion to the United States of Cuban nationals who did not hold unexpired immigrant or nonimmigrant visas, or who were not returning residents of the United States. The amended regulation prohibited:

- *Transportation*: To Cuba of a vessel or aircraft to the United States or any vessel or aircraft which has been in Cuba since the effective date of the Regulation, regardless of registry; and of baggage or other property of a Cuban national.
- *Transactions*: Incident to travel to, from, or within Cuba, such as payment of port fees and charges in Cuba and payment for fuel, meals, and lodging, and receipt of any gratuity, grant, or support in connection with travel to, from, or within Cuba.[23]

After the Boatlift ended, the US Customs Service Regional Commissioner complained that the Treasury laws, which had been put into effect at the time of the President's announcement as a specific legal deterrent, were not used. He said in his summary narrative that

> although these ammendments were passed to strengthen our law enforcement efforts, they proved to be ineffectual as the US Attorney's Office



US Coast Guard Photo

US Customs Service officer posts a red notice declaring this boat has been constructively seized.

> in the Southern District of Florida continued to decline prosecution.... By 31 May 1980 the Customs Service had assigned 122 officers to Key West to process the 94,850 refugees who had arrived in 1,725 vessels. Only 6 arrests (for violation of Treasury laws) had been authorized by the Department of Justice Attorneys.[24]

Commander Shkor, Legal Officer for the Coast Guard District, explained that interagency boarding teams of representatives from the Coast Guard, Customs Service, and INS boarded each arriving refugee vessel. These teams, later assisted by Assistant US Attorneys, evaluated each situation and applied the most appropriate law. "While the 'criminal' Treasury statues were not usually enforced," Shkor explained,

> the vessels were routinely seized (constructive siezure*) based on 'non-criminal' violations (boating safety and immigration laws).... In the emotional situation, it was not desirable to put people in jail [for criminal violations], creating martyrs. It would not have served the best interests of the Country. We would have had to deal with the 'speedy trial' provisions. It would have incited passions.... The Coast Guard was concerned with implementing the means [taking the boats out of use] as a deterrent as opposed to the ends [convictions] that were going to take time.[25]

Throughout the Mariel exodus, legal issues probably were the most contentious and difficult to resolve, yet were the most critical in implementing effective efforts to bring the situation under control. Perhaps the

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* Under the constructive seizure process, the vessels were posted with conspicuous red notices, usually on their windshields, and left in the owners' custody. The owners were required to moor the boats in their usual berths, and were prohibited from using the vessels until all legal proceedings were completed. Anyone who removed the seized property would be subject to arrest and separate criminal prosecution.

Table 4
Violations most often cited during Mariel exodus

46 USC 1461 (E)	Carrying passengers for hire without licensed operator.
46 USC 224	Carrying passengers for hire without a licensed Master (over 100 Gross Ton (GRT)).
46 USC 390 (c)	Carrying passengers on uninspected vessel (over 6 and under 15 GRT).
46 USC 390 (b) and 46 CFR 176.35	Carrying more than 12 passengers on an international voyage without "Passenger Ship Safety Certificate" (under 100 GRT).
46 USC 325	Engaging in trade other than that for which the vessel is licensed.
46 USC 278 and 46 CFR 67.41-1	Sailing on a foreign voyage without being registered.

most effective legal deterrence throughout the Boatlift, though indirect, was the Coast Guard's enforcement of maritime safety laws. Approximately 2,000 returning boats were boarded by joint Federal agency teams, with the Coast Guard issuing 1,600 "Reports of Violations" for infractions of maritime safety laws. To handle the flood of violation reports that arrived at the Coast Guard's Seventh District Headquarters in Miami expeditiously, additional Coast Guard Reserve personnel with appropriate legal backgrounds were activated. Violations most commonly cited are listed in table 4.

The Coast Guard Hearing Office deferred virtually all other business to take immediate action on Cuban cases. Coast Guard hearings, much less encumbered than civil or Federal court proceedings, were conducted promptly and civil penalties were quickly imposed. A direct "cause and effect" relationship was realized between violations and penalties for boat operators.[26] The Coast Guard also exercised its unique authority to enforce US laws applicable to US vessels on the high

seas: Coast Guard cutters stopped and boarded southbound vessels to inspect for boating safety violations. Based on the Service's enforcement authority, unsafe voyages were terminated.* In extreme cases, commanding officers made arrests and seized boats.

Once the President decided to bring the Boatlift under control, orders were quickly communicated to the Federal agencies on the scene. Enforcement actions were commenced immediately: at sea, the Coast Guard stopped southbound boats; ashore, Federal agencies began seizing boats returning with refugees.

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* Leon B. Kellner, US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, was in charge of the Federal interagency group that developed mass migration contingency plans after the Boatlift ended. He was concerned about the use of US Coast Guard boating safety laws for purposes other than those intended. Atlee W. Wampler, III, US Attorney for South Florida at the time of the exodus, considered the boating safety laws as applicable, because the boats were not safe for high-seas passages.

16

Barrier at Sea

KEY WEST, Fla., May 17—The Coast Guard today began setting up a 200-mile-long patrol zone from the southern tip of the Florida Keys to Miami to block vessels trying to go to Cuba or trying to elude customs stations as they returned loaded with refugees.... The aim of the blockade is to halt the dangerous and disorganized shipment of refugees across the Florida Straits, an exodus that President Fidel Castro has been manipulating by selecting who can leave.

The New York Times
18 May 1980

COAST GUARD HELICOPTER CG-1456 LIFTED OFF THE DECK of the Cutter *DALLAS* just after 7 a.m. on 16 May 1980. Flight deck crews quickly secured their equipment and headed for breakfast on the mess deck—reveille had come early so the "Old Man" could get to a meeting in Miami. The HH-52A amphibious helicopter banked to port, leveled off, and headed for Key West. After the initial stimulation of the take off, Captain Bill Brogdon settled into his webbed seat for the hour-long flight to Boca Chica. He had no qualms about leaving the ship in the hands of his executive officer, Commander Glenn E. Haines; Haines was more than ready to handle the responsibility of command.[1]

Brogdon, On-Scene Commander for Coast Guard cutters patrolling between Mariel and Key West, had been summoned to a 10 a.m. conference at the Seventh District Headquarters. He expected the meeting was to discuss changes in US policy toward the Cuban Boatlift announced by the President; how the changes would affect cutter operations remained to be seen. Brogdon was sure of one thing, however: His cutters already had all the work they could handle. Lieutenant Thomas A. Rummel, operations officer for *DALLAS*, was belted into the seat next to his captain. Brogdon was glad he had decided to bring Tom along; two sets of ears was a good idea when changes in policy were being discussed.

Rummel balanced a clipboard thick with messages on his knee, as he busily reviewed radio traffic received during the night. Brogdon wondered if Jim Loy on *VALIANT* had found the disabled refugee boat he was searching for, but he knew it was useless to ask—conversing above the helicopter's turbine engine was impossible. When the traffic was sorted, he would get the messages marked for "Commanding Officer's action and info" and then he could review pending missions. Leaning back, Brogdon closed his eyes; during the past three hectic weeks, he had learned to rest whenever he could. The Captain's calm was interrupted when the pilot reported over the headphones the Navy amphibious assault ship *SAIPAN* was sighted ahead, bearing 040° relative at a range of about 20 miles. Leaning forward, Brogdon looked through the helicopter's open side door. He could see the large ship shrouded in morning haze below, slowly heading east. The small white HH-52A helicopter continued on its course toward Key West at a speed of 80 knots.

Brogdon was relieved when the helicopter came to a stop in front of the temporary Coast Guard facility at Naval Air Station Key West. He unbuckled his seat belt, stretched his legs, and, leaning forward into the cockpit, thanked the pilots for the flight. Leaving his survival life vest and earphones on the seat, he climbed down out of the helicopter. A Coast Guard duty officer

escorted him and Lieutenant Rummel to the small administrative office the Navy had provided the Coast Guard aviators for coordinating their air operations. Lieutenant Commander Sam Dennis, Commander of the Coast Guard's Group Key West, his operations officer, and the operations officer from Navy Amphibious Group TWO, embarked in *SAIPAN*, were waiting in the office. They also were enroute to the conference in Miami.

After brief introductions, the duty officer informed Brogdon the HH-3F helicopter was ready to take the group to Miami. While the twin-engine helo was configured for operational rescue work, it was considerably larger, quieter, and much more comfortable than the smaller HH-52A helicopter. Cruising at 140 knots, the helo landed at Watson Island near downtown Miami in ample time for the officers to get to their meeting. As they climbed into the waiting Coast Guard station wagon, they calculated they would even have time for a quick cup of coffee before things got started.

Dual Mission

The meeting was held in a conference room in the John F. Kennedy Federal Building, across the street from the Miami Courthouse. The Coast Guard was the largest Federal agency in the building and occupied several floors. After Rear Admiral Ben Stabile welcomed the participants—a mixture of Coast Guard officers from field units, support facilities, and District staff, and representatives of the Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Services—Captain Ray Copin announced, "The Coast Guard has been tasked with stopping all southbound boats to Cuba."

Deeply concerned by the tasking, Brogdon quickly stated his reservations about taking on new missions without additional resources. He pointed out that his overworked cutters were committed along the north-south trackline from Mariel to Key West, providing

assistance for the overloaded vessels carrying thousands of Cubans to Key West daily. Obviously, such a north-south configuration would be ineffective in stopping southbound boats—an east-west barrier would be required—and cutters would have to be repositioned. Brogdon said,

> I was horrified at the prospect of having to do both. We were fully involved saving people.... The cutters were up to their ears with everything that was going on as it was.... The problem of stretching our resources in two directions at the same time seriously bothered me.

By 15 May, more than 600 refugee boats already had been assisted by the cutters. To his objections, Brogdon was told, "Try it and see how it works."

During the morning session, the conference discussed in detail the new Cuban Sealift Operations Order (OPORD) prepared by the district staff and distributed at the meeting. The revised OPORD contained a new mission statement for the Coast Guard units: They were to be heavily engaged in law enforcement as well as search and rescue. The four elements of the new mission to be accomplished simultaneously were:

- To interdict southbound boats for the purpose of curtailing the sea lift.
- To prevent the loss of life.
- To ensure that all northbound arrivals terminate at Key West for processing.
- To provide all concerned agencies with up-to-date and accurate intelligence on vessel movements.[2]

The "Concept of Operations" in the new OPORD stated the Coast Guard's primary mission was "interdicting southbound traffic." Plans for establishing barriers to intercept boats destined for Cuba were reviewed by the conference participants. New operating areas, designated by the names of colors, were defined. The OPORD also called for greatly increased air surveillance patrols—continuous daylight barrier "bow tie" search patterns were to be flown. Aircraft would cover

hundreds of miles east and west of the transit route to report southbound vessels. Long-range Coast Guard and Navy aircraft would fly the surveillance patrols.

The morning session also heard briefings on the use of high-tech detection equipment, including side-looking airborne radar, "Carolina Moon" (a large-area, high-intensity illumination device mounted on a C-130 aircraft), shore-based radar, and the "Night Sun" helicopter-borne illumination device.

During the break for lunch, Brogdon and some of the other operational commanders ate at Sally Russel's restaurant around the corner on Flagler Street. Sitting at a back table on the second level, they discussed problems they would face with enforcing the President's order while still effectively responding to humanitarian rescue situations. Captain Alan C. Dempsey, a Coast Guard Academy classmate and friend of Brogdon's, was assigned to the Seventh District staff. He was particularly interested in the luncheon discussion, as he recently had been selected to relieve Brogdon as On-Scene Commander in the Florida Straits when *DALLAS* returned to its New York home port.

In a few weeks, the problems would be his.

Back in the conference room, the afternoon session was devoted largely to legal issues of a barrier effort. The district legal officer, Commander John E. Shkor, went over each statute that might apply to stopping the boats from going to Cuba. He also discussed procedures for enforcing the laws, including pre-boarding dialogues, witness interview questions, evidentiary check lists, photographic evidence requirements, and dockside processing procedures. When the meeting was over, Brogdon and the Key West group were driven to Coast Guard Air Station Miami, where a C-131 Convair aircraft was waiting. At Naval Air Station Key West, Brogdon boarded an HH-52 for the flight back to *DALLAS*, which was patrolling just north of Cuba. The helicopter landed briefly on *SAIPAN* to drop off the Navy operations officer and then continued on to the cutter.

First Effort

Lieutenant (junior grade) James W. Decker saluted and said, "I stand relieved." With that simple statement, he turned over command of the 95-foot Coast Guard Cutter *CAPE YORK* on 16 May 1980. The small but formal change-of-command ceremony was just finishing when the public address system at Group Key West sounded along the waterfront: "Now hear this, all WPB commanding officers and officers-in-charge lay to the group operations office." The "skippers" of the in-port patrol boats were ordered to discontinue any maintenance in progress, cancel all liberty, recall their crews, and prepare to get underway. The order to turn back boats heading for Cuba had been received. *CAPE YORK*'s modest change-of-command reception was cut short and preparations were made for getting underway.[3]

Starting on 14 May, Coast Guard Radio Station Miami commenced hourly Urgent Marine Information Broadcasts, advising all vessels not to go to Cuba, and boats in Cuba to leave without refugees. The broadcasts, in English and Spanish, said alternate transportation for refugees would be arranged, and warned of vessel seizures and heavy fines if US immigration laws were violated. President Carter's highly publicized Five-Point Plan, and the threat of law enforcement action against violators, caused the number of southbound boats to drop dramatically from more than 100 per day to less than 10 per day.

Far fewer southbound boats were seen than the On-Scene Coammander had expected. On 17 May, air patrols detected only six southbound boats, while 91 boats were sighted making their way north. All but four of the northbound boats were carrying refugees. With a greatly diminished number of boats arriving from Florida, the Castro government began embarking even more people on the overloaded vessels being sent north, increasing the potential for disaster.[4]

The first blockade action—to discourage boats from leaving south Florida ports to go to Cuba—involved

US Coast Guard Photo

Coast Guard 41-foot UTBs (utility boats) and Navy Minesweepers moored at the Coast Guard Station, Key West, were used to enforce the prohibition against boats going from the United States to Cuba during the 1980 Cuban Exodus.

highly visible coastal and harbor patrols. Dissuading Cuban-Americans from attempting the trip was as important as interdicting southbound boats that actually tried. Smaller 41-foot utility cutters boarded boats leaving Key West Harbor to verify they were not enroute to Mariel. Under Title 14, Section 89 of the United States Code (14 USC 89), the Coast Guard had authority to stop and board US vessels in US and international waters to enforce applicable US laws. Using this authority, the Coast Guard conducted a highly visible and aggressive boarding program to enforce the President's prohibition against boats going to Mariel. The press reported,

> In its blockade, the Coast Guard has also posted two 210-foot cutters in international waters off

> Mariel to catch any Cuba-bound boats that made it past the barrier of a dozen patrol craft and several helicopters and airplanes equipped with radar and searchlights.[5]

Helicopters flew low overhead, supporting the utility boats and patrol cutters as they stopped and boarded vessels. The active interdiction program demonstrated the nation's resolve to end the Boatlift.

Operationally, however, investigating all vessels in the high-density coastal waters was impossible. The sheer number of boats and ships engaged in legitimate activities along the coast greatly exceeded the number the Coast Guard cutters could examine. In the littoral waters, boats destined for Cuba, and not yet committed on a southerly course, were not readily identifiable for boarding, as they merged with other local traffic. After the initial demonstration effect of the coastal blockade, the barrier of larger cutters was shifted further south beyond the coastal traffic, where it was more effective in interdicting southbound vessels. Coast Guard helicopters flew dawn patrols just offshore along the Keys; smaller boats intending to go to Cuba frequently left at first light so they could make the trip across the Florida Straits in daylight. The helicopters relayed their sightings to the nearest cutters to the south, so they could move into position to intercept.

Enforcement Authority

The complicated legal aspects of preventing boats from going to Cuba generally created more concern for lawyers ashore than for cutter crews. They simply carried out the orders of the President—US vessels were not to go to Cuba. After stopping a boat and determining it was enroute to Mariel, boarding parties would inform the people aboard the trip was in violation of a presidential order and they would have to return to the United States. After inspecting the boat for safety violations, checking the

vessel's documentation, and verifying the identity and addresses of the people on board, the boat was ordered back to Florida with instructions to report its return to the local Coast Guard commander. The crew was informed that the local Coast Guard commander would be notified of boat's identity and would be expecting the call. In most cases, the boaters were disappointed, but readily complied with the orders of the Federal officers. The northerly progress of returning boats was monitored on the cutters' radars, to ensure that the boats did not attempt to circle around the cutter and head for Cuba.

The authority to turn back the vessels was spelled out in the Seventh Coast Guard District's Cuban Sealift OPORD. *ANNEX ALPHA*, "Law Enforcement Procedures," contained detailed instructions for conducting interdictions and boardings. For most of the cutter crews, trained in drug interdiction operations, the procedures were familiar, with minor variations. Pre-boarding and boarding checklists and boarding procedures in the OPORD were similar to those already used in drug interdiction. The Treasury Enforcement Computer System, which contained a data base of all boardings, was routinely accessed during the interdiction of southbound boats, to identify prior offenders and determine if the boats had previously been seized. Special instructions for boarding commercial vessels also were provided.[6]

ANNEX BRAVO, "Legal Guidance," listed the following laws and regulations as applicable, and provided basic legal guidance for their enforcement:

- Immigration Laws, 8 USC 1323 and 8 USC 11234.
- Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 31 CFR Part 515.
- Conspiracy, 18 USC 371.
- Seized Property Act, 18 USC 2232 and 18 USC 2233.
- Monetary Law, 31 USC 1101.
- Boating Safety Law, 33 CFR 177.[7]

Aerial Surveillance

The staff of the Seventh Coast Guard District realized that an accurate and timely system for detecting and reporting southbound vessels was critical to the success of the barrier. Coast Guard long-range search aircraft—C-131s from Air Station Miami and C-130s from Air Station Clearwater—flew surveillance flights; Navy long-range P-3 aircraft from Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville, Fla., augmented the Coast Guard flights. An experienced consultant from Washington, DC, helped the staff design crossover barrier patrols and "bow tie" surveillance patterns for various search situations. Initially, two long-range fixed-wing aircraft patrols were flown continuously during daylight. One pattern covered the area east of the Mariel-Key West trackline, and the other the west, generally just north of Latitude 24° North; the eastern flight surveilled the Cay Sal Bank.

While the "bow tie" patterns generally were effective, the frequent need to divert to investigate sightings for law enforcement or search and rescue operations interrupted the continuity of the patterns and diminished their utility. Frequent diversions to avoid squalls, common to the area, also made the surveillance barriers less effective. Search aircraft would have been more effective if they had been able to work with "chase planes," which could have investigated sightings as they were reported.

While the Seventh District's Operations Division coordinated patrols for the fixed-wing aircraft, Group Key West scheduled coastal surveillance patrols for the HH-3F and HH-52A helicopters operating out of NAS Key West. Helicopter patrols were flown along the Keys to the east and north and across to the Dry Tortugas islands to the west. The helicopters were tasked with reporting southbound vessels and refugee boats landing at points other than Key West. Their obvious presence helped deter boats from attempting the trip to Cuba.

US Coast Guard Photo

Navy long-range P-3 aircraft from COMPAT Wing 2, Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Fla., flies a surveillance patrol to detect southbound boats in the Florida Straits during the 1980 Cuban Exodus.

Flight deck-equipped cutters scheduled flights for their own attached HH-52A helicopters—usually to the north of their positions to detect southbound vessels for intercept. The "Carolina Moon," with millions of candle power of illumination, was of limited effectiveness in detecting evading southbound boats at night. It did, however, have a psychological impact: Illumination patrols along the Keys at night were highly visible reminders the Coast Guard was just offshore, waiting for anyone trying to go to Cuba.

On one particular calm day, an airborne helicopter from the Cutter *DALLAS* detected a high-speed boat heading south. Cuba was just over the horizon at a range of about 20 miles. The boat was traveling at about 25 knots and could not have been intercepted before reaching Cuban waters. After reporting the sighting, the helicopter flew across the boat's bow several times in an unsuccessful attempt to stop the boat. The pilot

then gained altitude and had his crewman drop smoke floats ahead of and to either side of the boat's course. As white smoke billowed from the salt water-activated pyrotechnics, the boat came dead in the water. The helicopter went into a low hover next to the boat and ordered it to stand by for boarding by the Coast Guard. *DALLAS* took about 40 minutes to get close enough to board—the boat was expected to bolt away at any moment for Cuban waters only a few miles away.[8]

The flexibility of cutter-helicopter teams was particularly effective during the Cuban operations. However, the full potential of Coast Guard and Navy fixed-wing aircraft, which flew hundreds of surveillance patrols, may not have been realized. "Many hours were flown but the overall effectiveness of the fixed-wing surveillance flights was questionable," Captain Ray Copin, the District Operations Officer, said. "The coordination between the surface and air assets was a weak point in the operation."

Attempts were made to use Navy E-2 aircraft, with enhanced radar capability. The high volume of traffic in the Florida Straits, however, resulted in an inundation of target data, with not enough surface units to prosecute all the contacts. All radar targets, regardless of size, were reported in the same manner; a method of discriminating between targets for prosecution was needed. A Coast Guard C-130 equipped with side-looking airborne radar (SLAR) also was used, with much the same result. It generated a high volume of contacts, but was not equipped to provide tracking data to determine the southbound vessels. SLAR was of questionable value in the barrier effort.[9]

The Coast Guard's new Aerostat system—a ship-tethered balloon with an airborne radar—would provide considerably improved capability, however, for detecting and tracking southbound boats. The system's high resolution radar, with a radius of 60 nautical miles and computerized data link to patrol cutters, could be very effective.

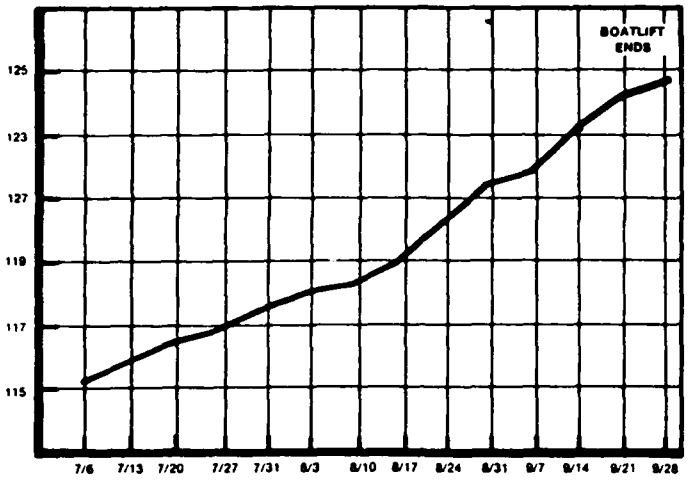


Figure 6. Cuban arrivals at Key West, July-September 1980 (in thousands)

(Source: US State Department, Cuban-Haitian Task Force, *A Report of the Cuban Haitian Task Force*, 1 November 1980, p. 78)

Barrier Effectiveness

As the weeks passed after the Coast Guard barrier was established for preventing boats from going to Cuba, increasing pressure was felt for an accurate assessment of the barrier's effectiveness. While the number of transiting boats was diminished, loads of refugees still arrived in Key West on a daily basis. (See figure 6.) The continued and sizable investment in manpower and resources of several Federal agencies severely detracted from their other missions. The government was anxious to cut back its commitment, but was reluctant to do anything that could trigger another flood of southbound boats.

Copin and his staff wrestled with the problem of measuring effectiveness, but not enough data was available for more than rough estimates. They knew they could calculate effectiveness percentages by dividing the daily southbound intercepts by the total number of

U.S. Navy Photo

High-speed boat returns with refugees from Mariel after successfully penetrating the Coast Guard barrier. Extra gasoline for the long trip was stored in the containers seen here on the dive platform aft.

$$\text{Interdiction Effectiveness (E)} = \frac{S}{S + N + dM} \times 100$$

E = Percent of Effectiveness.
S = Number of Southbound boats interdicted.
N = Number of Northbound arrivals in Florida.
dM = Change in the number of boats in Mariel.

Figure 7. Formula for calculating interdiction effectiveness.

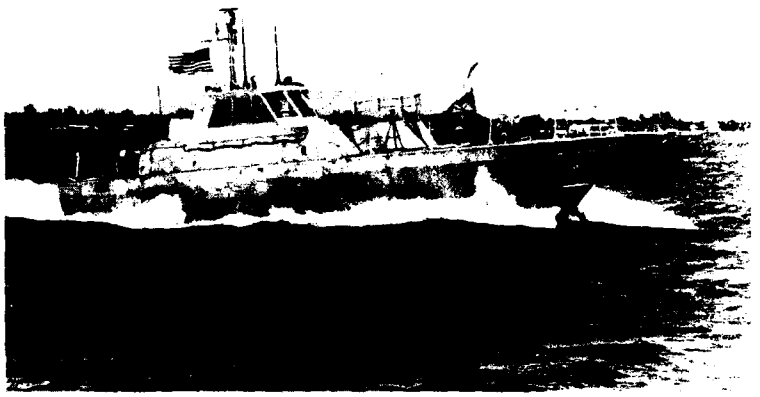
boats heading south each day (those that were intercepted plus those that successfully reached Cuba). The problem was determining how many boats evaded the barriers and arrived in Mariel. Because cutters remained at least 15 nautical miles offshore, accurately monitoring the coastal traffic in and out of Mariel Harbor was impossible. Boats that evaded the cutters and reached Cuban waters easily traveled undetected inshore along the coast to Mariel.

The breakthrough came when the intelligence community provided relatively accurate data on the daily total of US boats in Mariel harbor. With the availability of numerical changes in the US boat population, the effectiveness of the southbound interdiction could be calculated with the formula shown at figure 7.[10]

Considering the large area of ocean to be covered, calculations showed a not surprisingly low daily effectiveness of about 50 percent. According to the Seventh Coast Guard District *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*:

> It was generally recognized that our imperfect screen at night in the Straits of Florida, together with the relative ease of going around the screen even in daytime on one end or the other, but particularly on the Bahamas end, combined to make it impractical to expect much higher effectiveness levels than about 50 percent.

An attempt to increase the effectiveness level was made by adding additional surface-intercept vessels and equipping the units with better nighttime detection devices.



US Navy Photo

Speedy 65-foot aluminum-hulled Navy Mark III patrol boats, like the one shown here, were deployed to the Florida Straits to help interdict boats enroute to Cuba from the United States.

Still, only limited improvements were noted in the effectiveness percentage.[11]

Second Navy Augmentation

August saw a definite increase in the number of boats going to Cuba. The lack of "clear, convincing, and visible" Federal law enforcement policies and the continued manipulation of the situation by the Castro government were felt to be the cause. Castro refused to accept President Carter's alternate transportation proposals; he reportedly enticed the Cuban-Americans to come to Mariel with offers to increase the ratio of family members to be loaded on the boats. As the number of boats slipping through the Coast Guard barrier increased, the Navy once again was called in to assist the hard-pressed Coast Guard cutters.

On 14 September, a force of four 172-foot Navy ocean minesweepers returned to the Florida Straits with

a detachment of five high-speed 65-foot Navy MK III patrol boats. USS *EXULTANT* (MSO-441), USS *LEADER* (MSO-490), and USS *ILLUSIVE* (MSO-448) had taken part in earlier Cuban operations. USS *DASH* (MSO-428) and USS *FEARLESS* (MSO-442) were participating for the first time. Operationally, the vessels were assigned to the tactical control of the Commander of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron; administratively, they were assigned to Commander L. M. Hardt, Commander of Amphibious Squadron Two, located ashore at NAS Key West. The naval units were assigned to extend and tighten the barrier; in addition, Navy P-3 and S-3 aircraft began flying night surveillance flights, using infrared detection equipment and reporting contacts directly to the Coast Guard Squadron Commander.[12]

Until this second augmentation, the use of Navy ships and helicopters in Cuban operations had been limited to humanitarian assistance and aerial surveillance. When surface units began interdicting boats directly, the question of *posse commitatus** limitations arose. The Navy vessels were to carry out the same mission as Coast Guard cutters: stopping, boarding, and possibly seizing southbound vessels. *Posse commitatus* limitations were overcome in two ways: First, the Secretary of the Navy granted a waiver to the *posse commitatus* policy, specifically authorizing Navy units to assist the Coast Guard by actively taking part in enforcing laws related to the Cuban boatlift. Second, a law enforcement-trained Coast Guard boarding officer or petty officer, vested with authority to enforce applicable laws, was assigned to each Navy vessel.

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* The *posse commitatus* law, enacted during the post-Civil War reconstruction era, prohibited the Army from assisting law enforcement officials in enforcing civil or criminal laws. The law originally applied to the Army, but was amended in 1956 (Title 18, US Code, Section 1385) to include the Air Force; it has been extended to the Navy as a matter of policy.

Interdiction

On 2 June, the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (SERON) was established, with Captain Brogdon embarked in *DALLAS* as Commodore (COMSERON). His title until then had changed from the initial "On-Scene Commander" designation to Commander, Coast Guard Forces South of Twenty Four North (COMCGFOSOTF). As the Squadron was repositioned into a barrier mode and the situation was stabilized, Brogdon admitted that the catastrophes he initially had feared had not occurred. "We were barely able to handle the search and rescue," he said. "I was afraid we would lose some people.... After the operation (interdiction) started, the situation resolved itself. We followed priorities, with saving people the first priority."[13]

In July, the southbound 40-foot cabin cruiser *VANGIE* was intercepted by the 210-foot Cutter *VIGOROUS* at night; responding to a radar contact, the cutter set a course to intercept the Cuba-bound vessel. *VANGIE* was illuminated with a carbon-arc searchlight as the cutter attempted to establish communications with the yacht. Voice messages sent from the cutter over various radio frequencies in Spanish and English were not answered; a crewman used a "loudhailer" from the wing of the bridge to attempt to communicate with the people on board. The boat continued to pound her way south through the four- to six-foot seas at 12 knots. *VIGOROUS* called for assistance from the 82-foot Coast Guard patrol boat assigned to her operational control—the cutters had been jointly patrolling the waters of their assigned operating area just north of Cuba. The Operation Order called for using "non-deadly force" to stop southbound boats that refused to heave to, precluding the use of the ship's guns or other firearms.[14]

The cutters, one on either side, slowly closed in, trying to convince the cabin cruiser to stop. People on board the yacht began throwing line and debris over the side, apparently attempting to foul the screws of the cutters. *VANGIE* turned into and rammed *VIGOROUS* twice, doing more damage to herself than the steel-hulled cutter.

Commander Appelbaum, commanding officer of *VIGOROUS*, ordered the crew to blanket the windshield of the cabin cruiser with thick layers of firefighting foam. Losing all visibility, *VANGIE* quickly stopped her engines and came dead in the water. In addition to other charges, the people on board the cabin cruiser were arrested for "assault on a Federal officer in the execution of his duties." The Coast Guard's 180-foot buoy tender *PAPAW*, on patrol nearby, was called in to hoist the cabin cruiser onto her buoy deck, relieving the cutters of the need to tow the boat to port. All three cutters remained on barrier patrol.

"It was the most intense operation I have ever been involved in, in terms of the state of readiness required and the pace of activities," Appelbaum said of the interdiction, adding,

> It was a challenging time. We sustained an extraordinary pace of activity. We didn't have time for regular logistics support—we had to make fuel and supplies go further. In seven-and-a-half weeks of operation, *VIGOROUS* was only in Key West once overnight. We couldn't go into port because the cutters were needed to maintain the barrier—we had to stay on station. In a future operation like that I would recommend using an oiler to refuel and resupply the ships at sea.

Another commanding officer commented that the limited tank capacity of the 210-foot medium endurance cutters for helicopter fuel (JP-5) imposed a serious limitation on the cutters' detection capability on the barrier. "More helicopters were needed," he said. "A helicopter should have been on every flightdeck-cutter at all times."

The inability of many southbound boat operators to complete the voyage to Cuba without assistance also helped the interdiction effort. When boats became disabled, they had to call the Coast Guard for help, ending their attempt to reach Mariel.

The Coast Guard Cutter *CAPE KNOX* was deployed from Charleston, S.C., to Key West to take part in the

interdiction phase of the Cuban operation. The 95-foot *CAPE KNOX*, commanded by Lieutenant (junior grade) Mark J. Sikorski, was notified on Thursday, 17 July, to be in Key West, more than 500 miles away, ready for patrol by Monday, 21 July. The crew, their feet sticking to the deck, took in the mooring lines as the patrol boat backed away from the pier—a fresh coat of "non-skid" paint had not yet fully dried. The cutter left Coast Guard Base Charleston astern as she headed down the Ashley River for Charleston Harbor. Passing between Fort Sumter to starboard and Fort Moultrie to port, *CAPE KNOX* steered down Charleston's long main ship channel to the ocean.

The quick departure had been difficult for many of the 14-man crew, who had been counting on a brief in-port maintenance period to take care of personal business. But once at sea, all thoughts were on preparing for the job ahead—though little guidance had been received on what their mission would be. After a brief stop at Port Canaveral for fuel, the cutter arrived in Key West on schedule. Once in Key West, the cutter worked directly for the Group operations officer, who made all patrol assignments. During the deployment of *CAPE KNOX*, patrol boats (WPBs) generally conducted independent three-day patrols with one-day in-port breaks for rest and provisions. Sikorski felt the three-and-one schedule was adequate for maintenance and crew rest, but would not have recommended any longer patrols. The patrol boats were used for coastal interdiction along the Keys, patrolling the Cay Sal Bank, and relieving the larger cutters of the tows of seized or disabled boats.[15]

CAPE KNOX spent most of her time independently patrolling the Cay Sal Bank looking for southbound vessels. Sikorski recognized the importance of patrolling the Cay Sal Bank, located on the east flank of the barrier: Boats trying to make end runs around the barrier probably would use the Cay Sal Bank. Its uninhabited little islands and difficult-to-navigate coral reefs offered ideal conditions for small boats to avoid detection.

Sikorski reported that while *CAPE KNOX* was deployed to Florida, as many as 10 WPBs were operating

from Station Key West at the same time; the cutters were moored three and four abreast. "Support by the Group was very good," he said. "The Group Engineer coordinated all repairs. The system worked very well. There was no lack of repair personnel or funds. The boats were kept running." Sikorski said he thought that the WPB operations could have been more effective with more coordinated multi-unit operations—WPBs working with 210s. (The use of WPBs for coordinated missions with the cutters of the Squadron increased greatly later in the Cuban operations.) While he knew Coast Guard aircraft were surveilling the Banks area, their operations were seldom coordinated with the WPBs and he had no communications with them. The lack of secure communications was a weakness—covered-voice circuits would have facilitated more coordinated operations.

The commanding officer of *CAPE KNOX* felt the patrol boat missions should have been better defined—more guidance was needed on specifically what was to be done. Coordination of operational activities by a separate division or staff at the Group level was suggested as a more effective means of using resources. Sikorski said the 95-foot patrol boats, with their larger 14-man crews, generally were more effective for round-the-clock patrol duties than the 82-foot WPBs with eight men; crew fatigue was the limiting factor.

The cutter *COURAGEOUS*, a Seventh District medium endurance cutter homeported at Port Canaveral, Fla., along with the Key West-based *DILIGENCE*, frequently operated in the Florida Straits and was familiar with the potentially hazardous Cay Sal Bank area. When deployed on Cuban operations, *COURAGEOUS*, under the command of Commander Alan F. Miller, routinely patrolled the Cay Sal Bank to interdict boats using the Banks to reach Cuba. The Cutter seized 21 vessels, mostly at night while the boats were trying to make end runs around the Coast Guard barrier without lights. The seized boats were transferred to cutters returning to Key West for logistics, or to WPBs dispatched by the Group to bring the seizures to port.[16]

The Seventh District Operation Order directed that "the boarding officer or other person who is intimately familiar with the case shall accompany the vessel to port and remain with the vessel until his services are no longer required." In compliance with the OPORD, key personnel from *COURAGEOUS* were sent ashore with each seizure. On the ship, which had a complement of only eight officers and 55 enlisted personnel, the absence of critical people was quickly felt. At one point, Miller and his executive officer were the only qualified watch officers on board; they had to stand "port and starboard" watches (six hours on watch—six hours off watch) for two-and-a-half days. Some boarding officers were not returned to the ship for as long as a week.

As the number of refugee boats leaving Mariel phased down, a pattern began to develop. The Cubans would put the boats out of Mariel Harbor at about 5 a.m. each day, making the search and rescue aspect of the operation a little easier; the need for rescue resources could be anticipated and more units could be freed for interdiction work. When the boats came out of Mariel, they were escorted or handed off from cutter to cutter on their journey north; the boats were not allowed to become scattered, as had happened earlier, resulting in large-area searches.[17]

Barrier South

The 378-foot cutter *DALLAS* returned to the Florida Straits on 18 July, with the author as the new commanding officer and commodore in charge of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON). While cutters of the squadron patrolled their sectors diligently, southbound boats still managed to penetrate the widely spaced barrier and reach the Cuban coast. In an effort to be more effective, the Squadron Commander moved the cutters south to form a barrier just north of Cuban waters. The

rationale was to have aerial surveillance detect Cuban-bound vessels well north of the coast and report them to the waiting cutters. They then would have time to move into a blocking position ahead of the boats.[18]

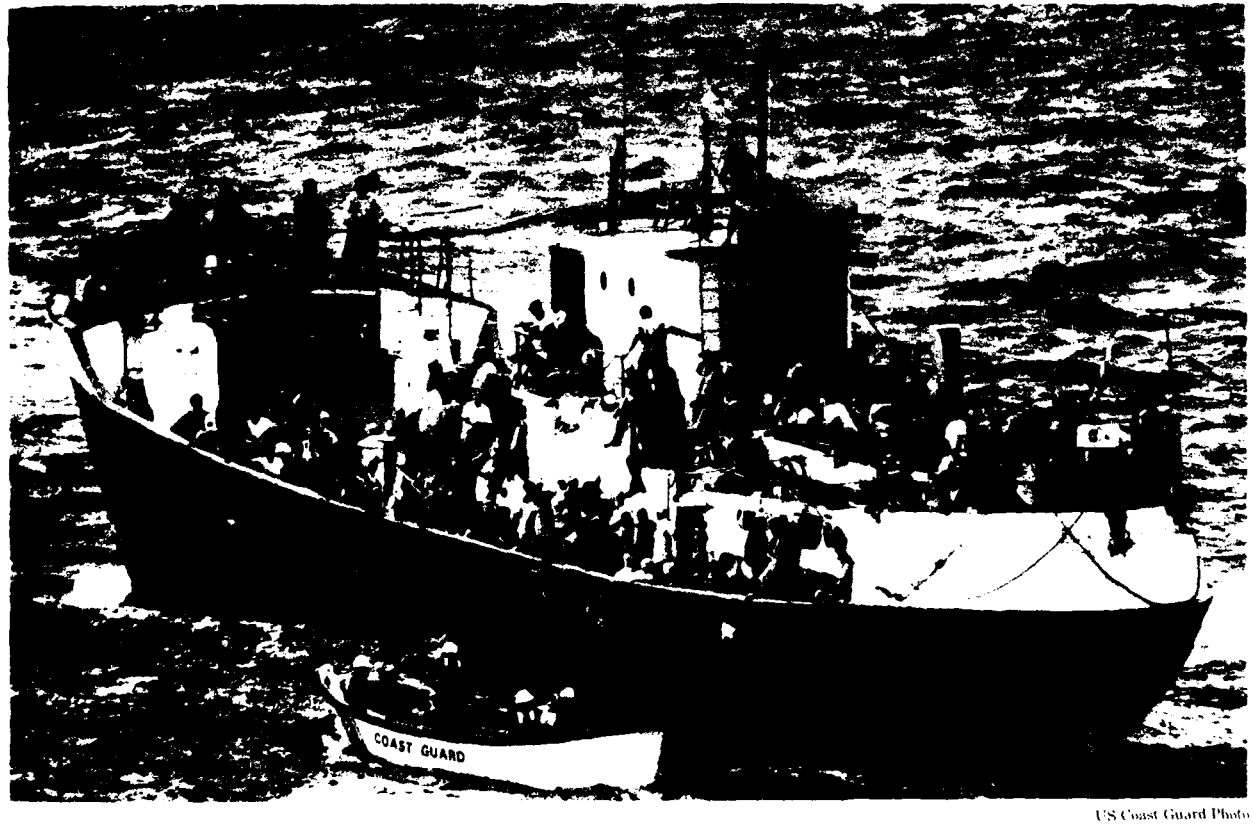
While the probability of confrontations with Cuban ships closer to the Cuban coast increased, the more southerly barrier proved to be more effective for interdiction.

Fortunately, the earlier threatening tactics of the Cuban naval vessels were not experienced on the southern barrier. While Cuban fishing or commercial vessels enroute to Cuban ports occasionally were intercepted at night and illuminated by Coast Guard cutters with high-intensity searchlights, the most that resulted was vehement protests over the radio in Spanish. Because of the probability of a contact being a Cuban vessel, the cutters were careful to make their intercepts from aft, illuminating the vessel's name and home port on the stern.

In an effort to tighten the barrier even further, the Squadron Commander requested operational control of 95- and 82-foot patrol craft to patrol with the larger cutters just north of Cuba. The WPBs were assigned to individual cutters in each area for operational control and support. The WPBs also were used to escort the overloaded boats coming out of Mariel to Key West as the smaller cutters rotated back to port for logistics. The larger cutters refueled the WPBs underway and provided limited logistic support.

Large Ships

On 2 June, the Coast Guard Squadron encountered a new situation—the Panamanian-registered 118-foot M/V *RED DIAMOND* left Mariel with hundreds of persons on board enroute to Key West. *RED DIAMOND*, a coastal freighter, was escorted by the Cuban command ship *LAS MERCEDES* and three Cuban trawlers, F-7674, F-7918, and *CARIBE 16*. The



US Coast Guard Photo

Coast Guard motor surf boat brings emergency medical technicians from the cutter *DALLAS* to assist Cuban refugees on board *RED DIAMOND*.

commander of the Coast Guard cutters was ordered to prevent *RED DIAMOND* from coming to Florida—to "shoulder her out of the way." Captain Peter Winston Phillip of *RED DIAMOND* told the Coast Guard that he was enroute to the Bahamas, the Captain of *LAS MERCEDES*, in command of the freighter's Cuban escorts, said he had been ordered to escort the ship to Key West. The Coast Guard cutters *DALLAS*, *ACUSHNET*, and *CHEROKEE*, maneuvering between the Cuban ships and *RED DIAMOND*, began to force the freighter to the east.[19]

The captain of *LAS MERCEDES* angrily protested the actions of the Coast Guard cutters. He said that he had been told by his Fleet Commander that if the Coast Guard interfered with the *RED DIAMOND*'s course, "there would be a serious international incident." As the situation progressed, Washington changed its position: At 4 p.m. on 2 June, the Coast Guard ships were ordered to allow *RED DIAMOND* to come to Key West.

The Justice Department said the decision to allow the ship to come to Key West had been made "for humanitarian reasons."

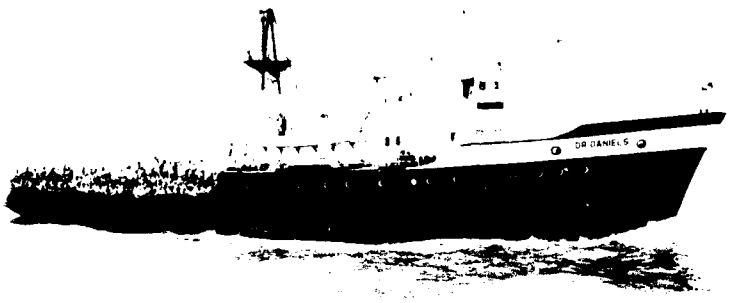
During the transit, the freighter indicated that it had a medical emergency on board and requested Coast Guard assistance. Chief Hospital Corpsman Mael and Petty Officer Duchin, a trained emergency medical technician, were sent by boat to the ship. They treated a number of people on board *RED DIAMOND* as she rolled and pitched in the seaway. The medical people called for the cutter's helicopter to evacuate a mother and her three-day-old infant, in serious condition from dehydration, to Key West. Another pregnant woman went into labor while the Coast Guardsmen were aboard. *DALLAS* escorted *RED DIAMOND* to Key West.[20]

Cuban-born Mariano Faget, a US Immigration Service examiner tasked with processing the arriving Cubans in Key West when the boatlift began, said, "Castro put pregnant women on the larger boats. He knew the Coast Guard would never turn back boats with pregnant women on board."[21]

The rusting red-and-white-hulled *RED DIAMOND* arrived in Key West shortly before 9 a.m. on 3 June. Captain Phillip was charged with transporting illegal aliens and was held on $100,000 bond. The 731 refugees on board, including 35 infants, brought the number of Cubans arriving since the beginning of the Boatlift to more than 100,000. The Panamanian government, in keeping with previously issued warnings, immediately cancelled the registry of *RED DIAMOND*. The new infants, pregnant women, and other medical problems apparently were a test of US Government resolve to prevent the vessel from landing at Key West. The sizable Cuban escort indicated that Castro was aware that an attempt would be made to stop the ship.

A large group of Cubans had chartered the M/V *RIO INDIO*, a 276-foot Panamanian-registered cargo vessel, to bring relatives to the United States. Based on intelligence reports, *COURAGEOUS* was sent to the Yucatan Passage between Cuba and Mexico to intercept the vessel. On the evening of 29 May, *COURAGEOUS* interdicted *RIO INDIO* and "on behalf of Panama" sent a boarding party to check the ship's documentation and compliance with the the Convention of the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) agreement. The eight-man boarding party, under the command of Lieutenant Keith Tony, the cutter's operations officer, encountered a hostile environment: Some 37 of the Cuban exiles who had chartered the vessel were on board, obviously determined to get their families out of Cuba—at any cost. Lieutenant Tony, uncomfortable with the situation, requested a backup, and a second boarding party of 10 armed men was sent to the ship. The boarding parties completed their inspections, noting several safety discrepancies to be reported to the Panamanian government, and left the ship. *RIO INDIO* proceeded to Havana, with *COURAGEOUS* following. The government of Panama promptly canceled the registry of the 276-foot ship and Cuba did not load refugees aboard.[22]

As the interdiction of southbound boats and deterrence of foreign-flag vessels became more successful, a



US Coast Guard Photo

The 150-foot Grand Cayman-registered M/V *DR. DANIELS* enroute to Key West with hundreds of Cuban refugees aboard.

new issue arose. In early June, members of an Episcopal church group in New Orleans purchased a 100-foot former US Navy minesweeper for $120,000 cash in Boston to bring Cuban refugees to the United States. The name of the US-registered vessel was changed to *GOD'S MERCY*. She arrived in Key West from Mariel on 12 June with 422 refugees on board. The crew was arrested for importing illegal aliens into the United States and the vessel was seized; the operators were released immediately on their own recognizance. The venture apparently had been organized for a single trip and the vessel was considered expendable. This new scenerio was difficult to defend against.[23]

The arrival of *GOD'S MERCY* focused immediate attention on the potential one-time use of other large US-flag vessels. Coast Guard marine safety and documentation units on the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts, and Captain of the Port offices were requested to be on the alert for similar situations. They also were asked to be on the lookout for any suspicious activities, such as sudden efforts to reactivate out-of-service vessels of significant size, or vessels bought outright for cash. The Coast

Guard discouraged several transactions involving suspect vessels. The stepped-up attention of the Coast Guard's Commercial Vessel Safety Program also uncovered some questionable activities. An investigation of M/V *INAGUA* in Tampa, Fla., for example, discovered strong ties through charters with Cuban-American interests. The charters were abandoned when the Coast Guard devoted its full attention to the ship.

In another suspicious case, the M/V *GENERAL* sailed from the Great Lakes for Florida with questionable intentions. The Coast Guard located the vessel when it stopped in Jacksonville, Fla. The Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office (MSO) in Jacksonville found so many safety and documentation discrepancies while inspecting the ship that the persons who chartered her abandoned the venture.

Another case involved intelligence reports that indicated that the M/V *MI ESPERANZA* (My Hope) planned to bring in hundreds of Cuban refugees on the 4th of July as a symbol of independence for the escaping Cubans. Coast Guard units up and down the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts were alerted to be on the lookout for the ship. Nothing was heard of the vessel until 24 June, when a small coastal freighter was reported aground off the coast of Florida. The grounded ship, which ironically turned out to be the Coast Guard's old Boston Lightship, was brought to Miami for repairs. Further investigation in Miami revealed that the ship was indeed *MI ESPERANZA*, intended for the 4th of July crossing. The ill-equipped ship had only one large-area navigational chart, showing the Keys, the Florida Straits, and Cuba, and numerous violations of US laws and regulations were found. Five months later, the vessel sailed from Miami—the owner informed the Coast Guard's Miami MSO that the ship was "not likely to return to the United States."[24]

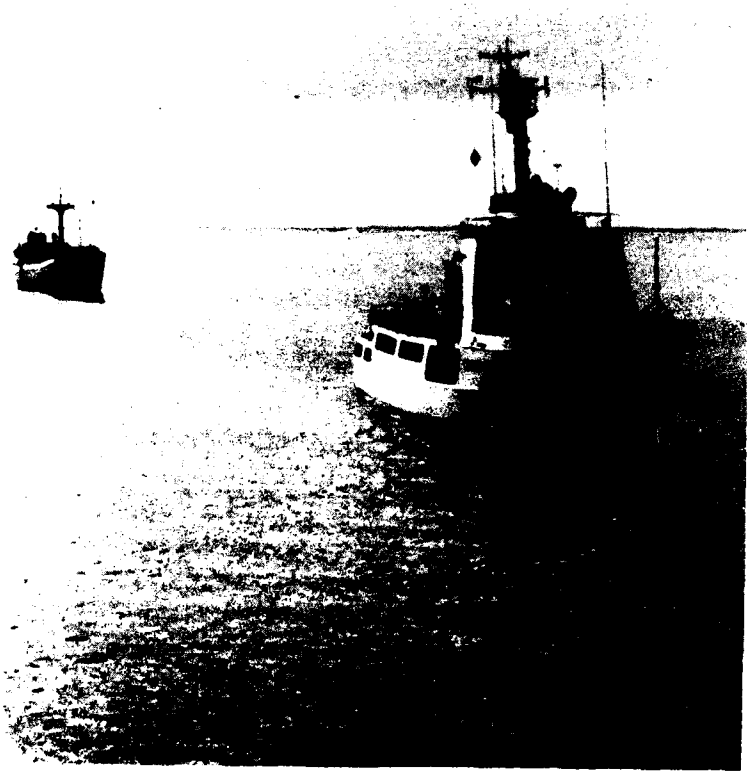
In July, as the Federal Government was phasing back its refugee processing organization, Castro once again appeared to be reviving the dwindling Exodus with plans to load two or three thousand refugees on

another large ship and send it to the United States. Intelligence sources indicated that the 183-foot M/V *KIRKDALE* had been "sold foreign," for $225,000, to "Cuban interests" traced to the United States, for transporting people from Cuba to Florida. The name of the ship, formerly owned by a Cayman Islands shipping firm, and registered in Grand Cayman, was changed to *BLUE FIRE*. When the new owners had made known their intentions to pick up Cuban refugees, the Cayman Islands government would not permit her to sail. The owners then claimed *BLUE FIRE* had been re-registered in the United States, showing a $2 Florida receipt as proof to Customs agents in Georgetown, Grand Cayman. The receipt was accepted as proof of US registry, and the Cayman Islands canceled the Grand Cayman-GC (United Kingdom) registry. The vessel was allowed to sail, purportedly to Tampa, Fla.: Grand Cayman never informed the United States of the situation.[25]

The ship avoided detection during the trip from Grand Cayman and entered Havana Harbor unsighted. Because of the *BLUE FIRE* situation, 500 marines were placed on standby at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Federal officials were alerted to be ready to return to Key West to handle a renewed volume of migrants.[26]

Much diplomatic negotiating concerning *KIRKDALE*, alias *BLUE FIRE*, took place between the United States, Cayman Islands, and Cuba. Four medium endurance Coast Guard cutters, including *DILIGENCE*, established a picket line 12 miles off the Cuban coast to intercept *BLUE FIRE* when it departed Cuba with potentially thousands of refugees on board. The Seventh District Operations Officer, Captain Copin, said he personally flew to the cutters to deliver instructions

> and a list of code words to govern their actions. The code words were to be used over uncovered (unencrypted radio) circuits.... There were some drastic alternatives discussed, such as 'sink the



US Coast Guard Photo

Coast Guard Cutter *DILIGENCE* tows the Motor Vessel *BLUE FIRE* to Key West after seizing it off the western tip of Cuba.

> ship.'.... The use of large ships to transport refugees was a major concern to the United States—severe action would have been taken to stop it.[27]

A vessel fitting the description and profile of *BLUE FIRE* departed Havana and turned west, staying close to the Cuban coast. When the ships of the picket line, staying out of Cuban waters, were not able to make a positive identification, *DILIGENCE* was detached to trail the vessel until she could be identified. Using her helicopter at a point where the freighter had to transit further off shore, the cutter tentatively identified the vessel as *BLUE FIRE*. When the vessel rounded the western end of Cuba, it entered international waters, where it was boarded by a party from the cutter under the command of Lieutenant Eugene K. Gibson, operations officer of *DILIGENCE*. Even though the boarding party found no refugees on board, the vessel was seized and the captain and seven crew members were arrested for conspiring to bring illegal aliens into the United States.[28]

The use of large commercial vessels, capable of transporting thousands of people, represented a considerable threat to the renewal of an uncontrolled migration. The United States recognized the threat and resolved to stop the ships before they reached Cuba; experience had shown that once ships departed Mariel harbor, they delivered their human cargoes to the United States. Fortunately, diplomatic efforts had persuaded Panama, and other flag states, to pressure Cuba into not using their ships for the Boatlift. Another significant deterrent to the use of large ships probably was the fear of losing the revenue of a working merchant vessel through seizure by US authorities. The one-time use of low-value, old, or obsolete ships, such as M/V *GOD'S MERCY*, was a dangerous alternative, presenting unique problems. Obsolete ships, with limited licenses, were economically feasible to purchase for a single trip. The new owners, intent on breaking the law in any event, would not be discouraged by the fact the ship was not licensed for international use. They simply

would operate the vessels beyond the limits of the documentation; for example, document coastal and sail international, or document cargo and carry hundreds of passengers.

The willingness of various groups to break the law, disregarding safety-at-sea requirements, created potential catastrophes. If an emergency had occurred at sea, such as fire or flooding, on an improperly equipped or grossly overloaded vessel, a grave price would have been paid in lost lives.

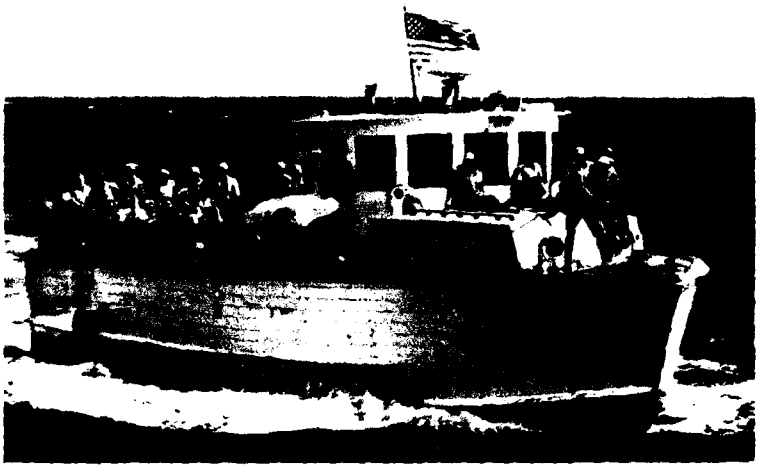
17

Agencies Ashore

Back in Cuba, 'He' (the Cuban Government) told us that blacks were mistreated in the United States. 'He' said the police used dogs on them. When our boat got to Key West, I was worried about what would happen to my family—my wife and my two children. There was a black soldier (US Marine) on the pier when the boat arrived. I was surprised to hear him speaking Spanish. When I asked him if they put dogs onto blacks here, he laughed. The soldier told me not to worry, we would have no problems like that in the United States—everything would be O.K. I was much relieved.

Delfin Hernandez
Miami, Fla., 12 December 1985

HAROLD SHOFFEITT ARRIVED IN KEY WEST IN FEBRUARY 1980 as the new Port Director of Customs. With two part-time employees, he was charged with enforcing customs laws at the Port of Key West and Key West International Airport. The Customs Service also had a small Inspection Control Divison in Key West with five Customs Patrol Officers. Shoffeitt's office was on the first floor of the Federal Building at the corner of Simonton and Caroline Streets in downtown Key West; the building also served as the Customs House and Post Office.



US Coast Guard Photo

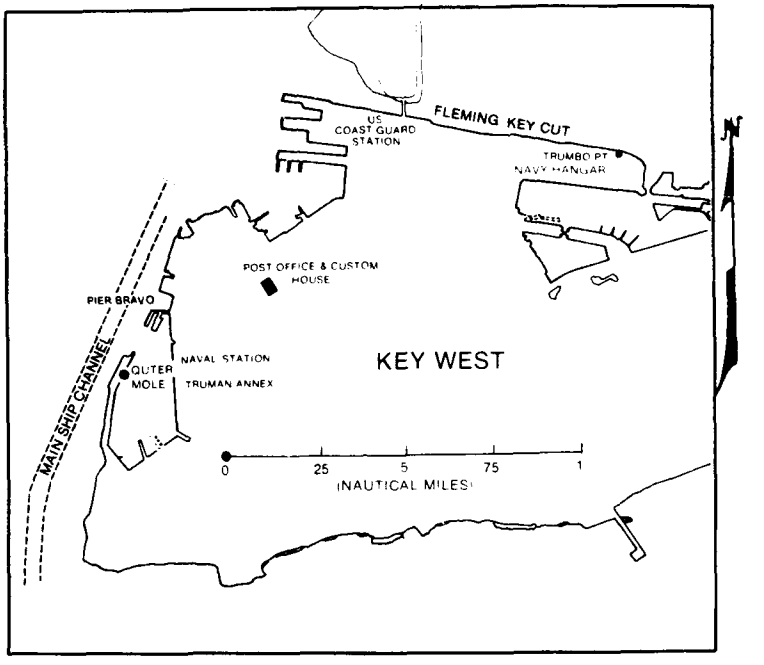
Many of these Cuban refugees have their heads covered for protection against the hot sun during their passage from Mariel to Key West in April 1980 during the Cuban Boatlift.

In performing his duties, Shoffeitt frequently worked with Immigrations Inspector James Carroll, the sole representative of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Florida's most southern city. Carroll also was new to Key West, having arrived the previous month.*[1]

Initial Response

The first two boats with Cuban refugees reached Key West on 21 April 1980. For the Federal agencies in Key West, the arrival was not considered an unusual or significant event: Cubans had been arriving in the Keys by various means ever since Castro took power in 1959. When

* Immigration Inspector James Carroll died of a heart attack in 1980, not long after the Cuban Boatlift ended.



Key West, Florida

Shoffeitt reported the arrivals to his District Office in Miami, he was directed to carry out routine procedures: The Cubans were interviewed by INS and Customs, instructed to report to the INS in Miami the next day, and released to the Key West Chamber of Commerce. Chamber personnel arranged for the Cubans to be fed—many had been seasick during the rough crossing—and housed for the night. The next day, the Cubans made the four-hour bus trip to Miami. Federal officials had no fear the Cubans would fail to report to INS; by reporting, they would be entitled to several benefits. Customs officials in Miami told Shoffeitt they were investigating the boat arrivals and would use intelligence reports to evaluate the situation.

Permanent residents of Key West, a tourist and fishing town with a year-round population of about 32,000, constitute a tightly knit community. Federal officials assigned to Key West knew and trusted each other; they

worked well together on a casual first-name basis. If something unusual developed, each agency representative knew he could count on the others to help handle the surge in workload. They were accustomed to supporting each other. "In the beginning," Shoffeitt said of the influx of Cubans,

> the only agencies involved were the US Customs Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service, US Customs Service Patrol, Agriculture, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Everyone was helping Jim Carroll (INS) cope with the situation. That's the way it's done in a small close-knit community.... We worked independently of Miami and made the decisions on scene that had to be made.

As more boats arrived, Shoffeitt realized something major was beginning—the mood among the Cuban-Americans bringing boats to Key West portended bigger things to come. With growing concern, he reported each of the early arrivals from Cuba to his District Director in Miami and kept the district's Public Affairs Officer, Jim Dingfelder, informed.[2]

Shoffeitt was alarmed by reports from the crews of the arriving boats that 13 more vessels were in Mariel getting ready to leave. He realized the volume of refugees would quickly overwhelm him and his limited staff. As more boats arrived with hundreds of refugees, Customs, INS, and other agencies began working around the clock. On Wednesday, 23 April, two days after the first boats docked, Customs sent two additional people to Key West from District Headquarters in Miami to assist. Two days later, another two Customs officers arrived.

With boats from Cuba arriving at various docks along the Key West waterfront, Shoffeitt and Carroll decided to require the refugee boats to put in first at the Outer Mole* of Key West Naval Station. A shrimp boat that had

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* A concrete breakwater adjacent to Key West's main ship channel at the approach to the harbor. It was constructed to protect the ship moorings and anchorages of the Naval Station.

recently moored at Stock Island was ordered to return to the Mole for processing. Shoffeitt circulated the word through the Key West Cuban-American community that all arriving boats had to stop at the Mole first. He knew the "community" had good communications with the boats in Mariel. Shoffeitt said,

> We got some of our best information about boats arriving from Berena (Carbollo), a Cuban-American woman who owned the Fourth of July Cafe on White Street in Key West. She reportedly had better information on the ETA (Estimated Time of Arrival) of the boats than the Coast Guard.

As refugee boats continued to sail into Key West, the Outer Mole was found to be too remote for speedy processing and transporting of the increasing numbers of refugees. The operation was shifted across the Basin to Pier BRAVO, a concrete pier on the Naval Station's Truman Annex, closer to the center of Key West, with easier access to roads. Pier BRAVO also had a concrete building near its offshore end, in which the Cubans could be processed. On 26 April, Florida Governor D. Robert Graham declared South Florida's Monroe and Dade counties as disaster areas because of the influx of Cuban refugees. He activated the Florida National Guard and committed State resources to assist with the burgeoning refugee situation.[3]

Reinforcement

Supervisory Customs Inspector Vann Capps was called to the Miami Customs Headquarters on Sunday morning, 27 April, to discuss the Key West situation with the Commissioner of the Customs Region, Robert N. Battard. Battard instructed Capps, on orders from Robert E. Chasen, Commissioner of Customs in Washington, to determine what resources the Customs Service would need to cope with the flood of Cuban refugees arriving in Key West. With plans to

stay in Key West up to two weeks, Capps began his evaluation just after the "Sunday Storm" ripped through the port.[4]

When Capps completed his initial inspection the next day, he called Battard and described the escalating situation. He cited the immediate need for more Customs Service officers, based on his personal observations and intelligence reports from Coast Guard surveillance flights; numerous boats were reported transiting the Florida Straits. Battard authorized Capps to arrange for additional resources. On Monday, Capps took charge of the Customs Service operations in Key West. Relieved of the responsibility, Shoffeitt, who had no more than six hours of sleep in the previous six days, was so exhausted he was unable to drive himself home. He called his wife to come to the waterfront and drive him the few blocks back to their house on Flagler Street; he slept round-the-clock for the next 24 hours, before going back to work.[5]

Early on Monday, 28 April, the Miami Customs Headquarters instructed Capps to seize three large shrimp boats involved in transporting refugees for profit. Customs Service officials "constructively seized" the profiteering vessels, moored behind Stock Island north of Key West, for violating immigration statutes. The seizures were intended as warnings to other commercial boats not to hire out to go to Cuba to get refugees. The Federal Government put out a clear signal that it would not tolerate boats going to Cuba. Subsequent actions of the US Government, unfortunately, were inconsistent and confusing, undermining the Federal position in Key West. In the morning, Capps was directed to seize boats, then later the same day, he was told to stop the seizures. He said,

> Two days later, I again received instructions to start seizing. This time we were to seize all boats. If they were profiteers, we were to take physical custody.... We had shrimp boats arriving from all over. There were boats from Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Louisiana. They all wanted to hire out

US Navy Photo

US Customs Service inspector collects information from Cuban refugees aboard a recently arrived fishing boat.

> for profit to carry refugees.... I arrived on Sunday and didn't get to bed until Wednesday night because I was attempting to respond to changing guidance—the directions kept changing.[6]

The Customs Service's small Port Director operation was expanded from one official to eight during the first week of the Cuban Boatlift. By the second week, more than 50 additional personnel had been reassigned to Key West, along with a Customs Service patrol boat. The initial Federal involvement was humanitarian, documenting and helping the arriving refugees, but law enforcement soon became a major role.

In addition to the dozens of Coast Guard cutters and helicopters and hundreds of personnel arriving in Key West to support offshore rescue operations, the Service also was concerned about other mission areas. The use of unlicensed boats to carry passengers from Cuba involved commercial vessel safety law violations; increased vessel operations in the Port of Key West also prompted concern for port safety and security.

The Coast Guard's Miami Marine Safety Office (MSO) responsible for the Key West area sent Lieutenant Kenneth E. Gray to Key West on 23 April to evaluate whether the MSO would become directly involved in the mounting situation. Gray drove a government car south from Miami on Highway US 1, the only road into the Keys. A stream of vehicles towing boats south clogged the Key West highway, only two lanes wide in several places. When Gray crossed the bridge from Stock Island and made his way downtown, he found streets and alleys congested with cars and trailered boats. After observing operations at the waterfront and seeing what was happening in Key West, he returned to Miami to report to his commanding officer.[7]

Two days later, Gray returned to Key West for duty; he was to be a point of contact for Group Key West and other Federal agencies with MSO Miami. For the next two weeks, MSO Miami kept a liaison officer in Key West. While the MSO still had no direct program involvement, the liaison officer monitored the processing of arriving boats and provided guidance on maritime safety laws.

Immigration officer Mariano Faget drove to Key West on 24 April with additional personnel to support Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) activities. He was serving as acting Chief Examiner during the reorganization of the Examiner's Office in Miami when the Boatlift began. When Jim Carroll reported the arrival of the Cubans to Faget the day before, he asked for help—especially for people fluent in Spanish. Carroll had said that many more refugee boats were expected to arrive, according to reports from surveillance aircraft. Faget, bilingual in English and Spanish, arranged to get more examiners to Key West to help with screening. When the additional INS personnel arrived in Key West, they immediately began interviewing refugees. Faget was disturbed by what he learned from his interviews. Along with family members, Castro already had begun sending disreputable characters with the boatlift. "Right from the beginning," Faget said,

> Castro was sending out vagrants and low-class people.... There were homosexuals from Havana who had been told to leave Cuba by the CDR (Committee for the Defense of the Revolution). When they were told to leave, they went and got their friends and they all went to Mariel.... There was a mixture of homosexuals, lesbians, prostitutes, and vagrants. A very disreputable group. The 'low life' of Havana.[8]

Faget spoke to someone from the White House on the phone and tried to describe the types of people who were arriving in Key West. "I told them I am Cuban," he said, "but I never met the kind of people who are arriving on some of these boats when I was in Cuba.... The White House was not happy with what I was telling them about the 'low life' that was arriving. They did not want to believe me."

Waterfront

Initially, procedures at the waterfront were confused—working independently, agency efforts often were duplicated. In the unprecedented situation, frequent delays were experienced as agency representatives sought guidance and approval on various issues from their respective headquarters. The agencies quickly realized, however, that a coordinated effort was the only way they could handle the escalating situation. Working together, boats were brought to the pier one at a time and processed jointly. As newly arrived Federal personnel developed working relationships, interagency cooperation improved and coordinated procedures were implemented. Gradually, the Federal workers brought the situation under control.

By the end of the first week, 15 additional Immigration Service officers were on scene helping process Cuban arrivals. The complement of Immigration Service inspectors and detention officers in South Florida was then quickly increased to 50. An additional 100 Border Patrol officers also were rushed to the Keys for enforcement duties.[9] The US Government feared refugee boats

would attempt to discharge their Cuban passengers, technically illegal aliens, at various points along the Florida coast to avoid detention and entrance processing: Border Patrol officers were deployed to contain the refugees within the Keys, ensuring that they would be processed at designated arrival points. Border Patrol Stations at Tampa, Orlando, and Jacksonville were stripped of personnel, who were hastily reassigned to Key West and Miami. Jim Brown, Border Patrol agent-in-charge of the Orlando Station, was assigned temporary duty as Deputy Chief of the Border Patrol in Miami. He coordinated the temporary assignments of 250 additional Border Patrol agents sent to help with the Cuban influx, and arranged for logistical support for the buildup. Brown said,

> Check points were set up along US 1 to prevent the arriving Cubans from coming north into Florida. It was feared they would land clandestinely and make their way north without going through processing.... Border Patrol Stations were set up at Florida City and Marathon, as well as in Key West.[10]

Some refugee boats did arrive at various points along the Keys, Brown said, "by accident, mistake, bad navigation, or mechanical problems. But I didn't know of anyone who tried to sneak into the coast." Border Patrol agents also provided security on buses that brought the Cuban entrants to Miami from Key West and were detailed to INS to assist with vessel seizures, photographing arrivals and evidence, and identification work. Durwood Powell, Regional Commissioner of the INS Southern Region, was sent to Miami to personally assume direct command of the program in South Florida.

Florida State agencies coordinated their operations from a 24-hour-a-day Command Post in the Monroe County Commissioners' chambers in Key West. Personnel from Florida's Marine Patrol, Highway Patrol, National Guard, and Department of Transportation staffed the Command Post. Some 780 Florida National

US Navy Photo

US Marines from the First Battalion, Eighth Marine Regiment, Second Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C., take over support functions from troops of the Florida National Guard on 13 May 1980. The Marines provided security and assistance for Cuban refugees located at the Naval Air Station, Key West.

Guardsmen provided transportation, security, and logistic support for what they called "Operation Alien Assist"; 75 State highway and 40 State marine patrol officers also provided law-enforcement assistance. A detachment of 434 US Marines, wearing camouflage uniforms, arrived in Key West from Camp Lejeune, N.C., on 7 May, to relieve National Guard troops. After surveying the situation, Lieutenant Colonel James R. McElroy, commanding the Marine detachment, immediately requested an additional 400 Marines.[11]

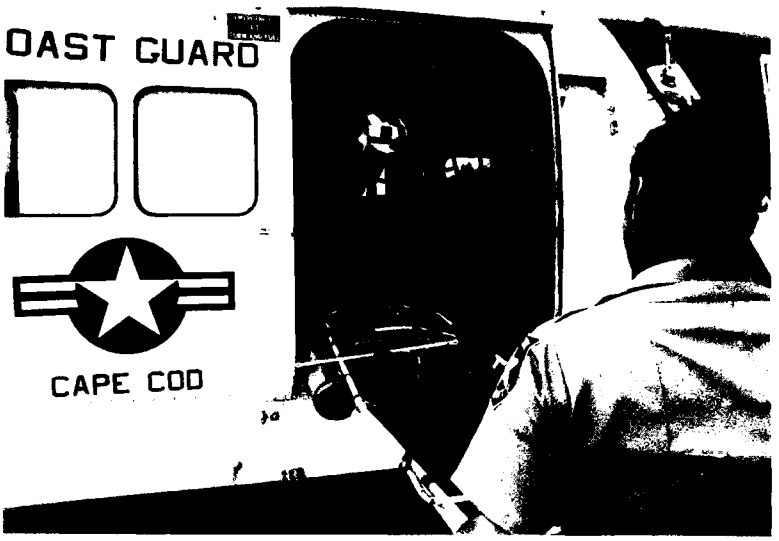
Many arriving refugees accused other passengers of being spies from the Cuban *Direccion General de Inteligencia* (DGI). Initially, only one agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was available to investigate all the accusations. He rapidly was overwhelmed and more agents were assigned to assist in screening suspects.

Lieutenant Commander Sam Dennis, commander of the Coast Guard's Key West Group, said that cooperation among local Federal agencies—Coast Guard, Customs Service, INS, and the US Attorney's Office—was excellent during the first two hectic weeks. They all worked well together, he said, because the situation "was a reinforced extension of normal working relationships."[12]

Bill L. Boggs, an administrator in a US Public Health Service (PHS) clinic in Memphis, Tenn., was reassigned to Miami when the Boatlift began. He administered the medical screening for the Cuban refugees flooding into the United States, setting up examining facilities at the arrival point, to check the physical condition of entrants and provide emergency care. Long-term treatment was not provided in Key West; people with major problems were sent to hospitals in Miami. Working primarily out of Miami, Boggs coordinated PHS medical personnel and supplies, and the flow of entrants from Key West to medical facilities in Miami for treatment.[13]

Initially, the PHS clinic in Miami tried to provide support for the arriving Cubans, but its limited resources were quickly overtaxed. The Service attempted, with little success, to activate PHS Reserve personnel to meet the immediate need for additional doctors and nurses. The PHS Reserve pool was found to be too small to draw on; activating personnel fast enough to meet the emergency demands of the situation was too difficult. As a result, active duty PHS volunteers were brought in for temporary duty from hospitals, clinics, and Indian Reservations all over the country. They did an excellent job while on the scene, but continuity was hindered because they served for only two weeks before returning to their permanent assignments.

When refugees with serious health problems were identified during initial screenings, they were transported to Miami for treatment. In Key West, the limited health care infrastructure was quickly overloaded, while in Miami, a short distance to the north, many



US Coast Guard Photo

A seriously ill Cuban refugee is removed from a Coast Guard helicopter and readied for the trip to a hospital in Key West.

diverse medical facilities were available. Preventing Key West, limited in physical space and facilities, from becoming a bottleneck was important in effectively responding to the influx. Volunteer Cuban-American doctors and nurses from south Florida, primarily Miami, came to Key West to care for the Cuban arrivals. After initial PHS screenings, refugees were seen by Cuban-American physicians. "There was no set procedure for this; it just happened," Boggs said. "The Cuban-American medical personnel were very sympathetic to the plight of the refugees and were very liberal in having them admitted to hospitals in Miami." The hectic pace of the operation allowed little time for coordination between the two medical teams. Boggs said,

> This created serious problems for INS and PHS, who could not track the people. Sometimes the Cuban-American medical personnel would take refugees directly to Miami in their own vehicles and have them admitted to hospitals. The hospitals later came

> to the Public Health Service for payment of the hospital bills. PHS had to settle the claims of the hospitals.... PHS was criticized by members of Congress for paying for unauthorized health care.

Based on the physical screenings, most of the arriving Cubans were found to be in very good physical condition. Many, however, were found to be suffering from psychological problems. Boggs said,

> Many of the people had been in psychiatric facilities immediately before coming to the United States. They had been on medication and received their last dose before getting on the boats. By the time they reached Florida, the medication had worn off resulting in bizarre behavior patterns. At first the problem was not recognized and then the doctors realized what was happening. Once they figured it out, they could treat the people. They found they were dealing with some serious problems.... The long-term patients are still being treated in US facilities.... The largest problems for the PHS were the psychiatric problems.

Federal Coordinating Officer

On Sunday, 27 April, Thomas R. Casey of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)* drove his wife from their Alexandria, Va., home to Washington's Union Station; Mrs. Casey was leaving by train on a business trip. Before he returned home, his electronic "pager" alerted him to contact FEMA. When he called in,

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* FEMA was created on 1 April 1979, when the following Federal disaster relief agencies were combined: Federal Disaster Assistance Administration and Federal Insurance Administration (Department of Housing and Urban Development); US Fire Administration (Department of Commerce); Defense Civil Preparedness Agency (Department of Defense); and Federal Preparedness Agency (General Services Administration). Executive Order 12148 designated the primary responsibility for administering the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-288) to the Director of FEMA.

he learned he was to represent FEMA at a White House meeting being convened to discuss Cuban refugees arriving in Florida. The Agency had been unable to contact the Director, John W. Macy, Jr., and the Associate Director for Disaster Response and Recovery, William H. Wilcox, was in Europe. As acting Associate Director in Wilcox's absence, Casey was to attend for FEMA.[14]

During the meeting, chaired by Presidential Assistant Jack Watson, Casey first learned of the seriousness of the refugee boats landing at Key West. As the session progressed, Casey wondered why FEMA had been called to attend—FEMA's normal role was responding to emergencies caused by natural disasters. Immigration laws were discussed at great length during the meeting, as well as the Government's authority to take enforcement actions. After the meeting, Macy, who arrived while it was in progress, asked Watson about FEMA's role. Watson replied he needed someone to coordinate Federal relief efforts in Florida, relieving State and local governments of the responsibility. Casey said that in his opinion the situation was an immigration problem: If INS people on the scene could not handle the arrivals, they should get more help from INS.

Watson told Macy, "I'll be more comfortable with Tom Casey in Florida." Casey, who had worked closely with the White House during a recent snow storm emergency in Buffalo, N.Y., was a "known quantity" to Watson. Having recently returned to Washington from a field assignment, he was familiar with disaster response. Casey cancelled a fishing trip and left for Florida the next day. He described his assignment as "to straighten out the mess that existed in Key West ... to take over and relieve the State of its responsibilities." Since no declaration of an emergency had been made yet, Casey was told to use whatever authority was available to provide the arriving refugees with housing, food, and medical attention, until the White House could decide what was to be done with them.

Noted for his ability to get things done, Casey, a no-nonsense New Yorker of Irish descent, had been particularly effective working with officials of Buffalo and

New York State. When Casey took charge in the slower-paced environment of south Florida, however, he encountered major cultural differences with the people of Cuban heritage and local Key Westers; his direct approach was less effective.

FEMA In Miami

Local representatives of the State Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service met Casey when he arrived at Miami International Airport on Monday. He was driven to the Dade County Civil Defense Office, where he received a briefing on the current status of the influx; he then flew to Key West for a first-hand look at the refugee situation.

"Chaos" is how he described what he found in Key West.

Returning to Miami, Casey set up his headquarters. The General Services Administration (GSA) arranged for the use of the recently renovated fourth floor of the Customs Building on the Miami River; it was conveniently near the regional offices of the agencies in downtown Miami. Casey was impressed with GSA's responsiveness, especially since an emergency officially had not been declared, and specific funding authority had not yet been established. Casey brought in 12 FEMA personnel from different regions to work in Key West and Miami.

Casey told the regional heads of Federal agencies in Miami, "I'm here on behalf of the White House to take charge," and tasked them with providing representatives to work with FEMA at the headquarters in the Customs Building. "The agencies that had not worked with FEMA before had problems accepting FEMA's authority," Casey said. "While the responsibility was FEMA's, FEMA used the agencies to carry out the responsibility."

Initially, local Federal agency representatives resented Casey's taking over. They did not like his dogmatic manner, but no one denied the need for a single

agency, with appropriate authority, stepping in and taking charge of refugee resettlement. With White House support and essential funding authority, Casey was the one to make things happen. Of the problems he faced, Casey said, one of the most difficult was

> the reticence of some of the Federal agencies to accept the coordinating authority of FEMA—usually local agency people, but in some cases, at the national level.... The people in the agencies should have had a better understanding of and accepted the authority of the people in charge and stopped worrying about protecting 'turf.' I was upset with the attitude of some of the agency representatives. There were new agencies not used to working with FEMA. The representatives wanted to work 9 to 5 and were not used to putting in lots of overtime.

To provide relief for the refugees, FEMA tasked agencies with written "Mission Assignments" signed by Casey. The Defense Department, for example, was given the "Mission Assignment" of housing and feeding the refugees. The Public Health Service was tasked with health care and the General Services Administration with general support. FEMA, with the help of Army contracting, retained responsibility for coordinating refugee transportation. Casey considered transportation critical to the success of the operation, and recommended keeping control of transportation in a similar operation in the future. He said,

> 'Mission Assignments' were signed by the FCO (Federal Coordinating Officer) and given to the regional director of the agency. If more than one region was involved, like GSA, the 'Mission Assignment' was given to the headquarters in Washington.... The 'Mission Assignments' were used as authorization for reimbursement.... FEMA personnel were used to oversee the accomplishment of the 'Mission Assignments.'

The refugee emergency was a new experience for FEMA, because it was a continuing situation and FEMA

US Navy Photo

Cuban refugees wait at dockside in Key West to be processed on 11 May 1980.

personnel were working with many key agencies for the first time. "Most of us are used to moving into an area after a disaster has occurred," Casey said. "In the refugee situation,

> the influx of people into Key West did not stop when we arrived. In fact, it intensified to a maximum of over 6,000 people in a single day.... What's more, we had no way of knowing more than a few hours in advance how many people would be arriving, and we had no way of knowing how long they would continue to arrive.[15]

While the role was unusual for FEMA, Casey thinks the mission was proper. "It was FEMA's duty to try to correct the impact of the influx on the people of the State of Florida and to take care of the needs of the arriving people," he said. "FEMA had the experience and funding authority needed to do the job.... Handling a (natural) disaster was similar to handling the Cuban situation. It was similar to a disaster situation."

Senator Quentin N. Burdick (D-ND), considered the founder of FEMA, and a few other members of Congress did not agree with Casey's assessment: They later introduced legislation to prevent FEMA's future response to other than natural disasters by removing "or other catastrophes" from the "Emergency" definition in the Disaster Relief Act of 1974.[16]

Casey, who had worked with more than 20 disasters during his career, said his philosophy was, "Don't give me a plan; give me an organization. I need people, communications, and information" in handling an emergency. "The 'people' were there. The 'communications' were available," he said of the refugee situation. "The 'information' (intelligence)

> was the biggest problem. I needed to know the number of boats leaving Mariel to be prepared to receive them—to have the appropriate resources available. I sent my own man into the Cuban Community to gather our own intelligence. He would be gone for a while and then return with the information.

Casey was in continuous telephone communication with the White House, and met frequently with Gene Eidenberg, deputy to Presidential Assistant Jack Watson, who flew to Miami two or three times a week. A routine of daily conference calls was established, with Casey conferring with Watson or Eidenberg and representatives of other agencies in Washington; the Departments of Defense and Justice were always included in the calls. FEMA met at 10 a.m. daily with representatives of south Florida's Federal agencies in the conference room of the Customs Building. "FEMA talked to the White House daily," said Captain Alan C. Dempsey, Coast Guard representative at the meetings, "and passed on the instructions to the agencies." At first, only those agencies heavily involved in the Boatlift—INS, Customs, Coast Guard, FBI, and the US Attorney's Office—participated. Later, more Federal and volunteer agencies took part.

In the initial meetings, chaired by FEMA, agency representatives gave status reports on what had developed during the previous 24 hours. As reports were made, the agencies coordinated efforts to resolve problems that surfaced. While no funding for the emergency was available until the President's declaration of an emergency, FEMA had authority to direct the agencies to use their own appropriations to relieve the situation. FEMA took the lead in coordinating funding, transportation, and supply problems. Problems involving operations or communications were referred to the Coast Guard.[17]

As the daily conference calls with the White House continued, Casey became concerned about the heavy involvement of high-level presidential advisers in the detailed oversight of FEMA's relief operations; it restricted his flexibility to act quickly. During a morning conference call, Watson directed the Defense Department representative to set up charter flights for relocating refugees from Key West. "Jack, I'll take care of that," Casey countered, and asked Watson to "stop the conference calls and keep the White House out of it—stop it at me."[18]

Rear Admiral Benedict L. Stabile, in charge of Coast Guard operations in Florida, said the Federal Coordinating Officer had difficulties in the beginning, partially because "he came down with a 'Washington attitude' but with no cards to play with" and partially because of the reluctance of local Federal organizations to accept an outsider coming in to take over. Casey's aggressive take-charge approach tended to antagonize the local people.[19] Captain Dempsey, who attended the daily FEMA meetings, said,

> The initial reaction of the agencies was negative toward FEMA. There was a lot of resentment against FEMA for coming in and taking over after they had already gotten organized.... The agencies quickly realized, however, that FEMA was coordinating closely with the White House and had access to the needed funding. They also realized the problems (refugees) had not been brought under control yet.... FEMA treated the event as an emergency situation like a volcano eruption.... They took the position they were there to resolve the situation.

Agency Responsibilities

FEMA reported that by 4 May, 13 Federal departments and agencies were responding to the influx of Cuban refugees. FEMA listed the agencies and their functions as follows:

- *Immigration and Naturalization Service.* Initial screenings at Key West, separation for further processing and relocation or detention as necessary.
- *Federal Bureau of Investigation* and *Central Intelligence Agency.* Refugee security clearances.
- *Department of Defense.* Military support.
- *State Department.* Liaison with FEMA.
- *Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.* Applications for Social Security and physical examinations.

- *US Customs Service*, Department of the Treasury. Inspection of baggage and vessels and port of entry control of vessels and crews.
- *US Attorney's Office*, Department of Justice. Prosecution of criminal cases.
- *US Coast Guard*, Department of Transportation. Air and vessel surveillance, and search and rescue.
- *Department of Labor*. Employment services at Eglin Air Force Base.
- *General Services Administration*. Contracting agent for support services and supplies.
- *Federal Aviation Administration*, Department of Transportation. Port of entry control of aircraft.
- *FEMA*. Coordinating office for Federal, State, and local agencies.[20]

In caring for refugees, FEMA worked with the State Department's Rehabilitation Services (Cuban Refugee Program) and several relief organizations. The following organizations, along with local volunteer groups, were involved: Church World Service; International Rescue; Catholic Charities; American Red Cross; Salvation Army; and Cuban Medical Association.

FEMA received written guidance and funding authority for its response to the Cuban influx in the President's emergency declaration signed on 6 May.[21]

While FEMA described itself as coordinating all aspects of the Cuban refugee emergency, several departments and agencies actually were conducting separate and distinct functions, as outlined below.

- State Department and National Security Council, negotiating an end to the Cuban Boatlift.
- Coast Guard, involved in the largest peacetime operation in its history, providing search and rescue assistance to refugee boats and preventing more boats from reaching Cuba.
- Justice Department, legal and enforcement aspects of the situation, attempting to bring an end to the Boatlift.
- Immigration and Naturalization Service and Customs, entry processing of arrivals before turning them over to FEMA.

Key West

One of Tom Casey's first actions was to have Bill Traugh set up a FEMA command and control center in Key West for coordinating Federal refugee relief activities in the Keys; State and local representatives were relieved of the responsibility. Casey wanted to phase FEMA into the refugee operation gradually, without disrupting the ongoing process. In Key West, FEMA coordinated the reception of arrivals, their temporary housing and feeding, and transportation out of Key West. "Once I had Key West set up," Casey said, "I left it alone." He went to Key West only when major problems arose, such as when the media "bombarded" him about the arrival of criminals and mental patients. He only went to Key West then to "get a better idea of what was happening," he said.

As refugee boats arrived, they were anchored in the Naval Station basin until they could be brought, one at a time, to Pier BRAVO for round-the-clock processing by teams of INS and Customs personnel working in shifts. Florida National Guard personnel, and then the Marines who replaced them, helped offload passengers. "The National Guard and Marines were excellent," Customs officer Capps said. "They showed a great deal of compassion for the refugees." Many of the Guardsmen and Marines spoke Spanish; they calmed the refugees and explained the procedures to them.

On 15 May, the day after President Carter announced his intention to stop the Mariel Boatlift, a greater law enforcement emphasis was placed on processing arriving boats. The Coast Guard established a Marine Safety Detachment (MSD) in Key West, and additional Boating Safety Detachments (BOSDETs) were assigned to the Keys. After 15 May, a boarding team* met each boat as it

* Boarding teams included four Federal officers: an Immigration and Naturalization Service inspector, a Customs Service officer, and two Coast Guard officers or petty officers, one trained in commercial vessel safety laws and regulations and the other trained in boating safety law enforcement.

U.S. Navy Photo

An elderly Cuban refugee kisses the ground on reaching Key West aboard M/V *DR. DANIELS*.

reached the pier. Fifteen Coast Guard marine inspectors were assigned to the newly established MSD on a rotating basis, while 15 Coast Guardsmen from two BOSDETs remained in Key West for the duration. The teams worked in three eight-hour shifts.[22]

When a boat arrived at Pier BRAVO, the Customs Service agent and a Coast Guard officer identified and removed the master and crew for questioning. The INS officer then removed the refugees, and other Coast Guard members of the team conducted a safety inspection of the vessel. After conferring, the team then would recommend what legal action, if any, should be taken.[23] Commander John E. Shkor, the Coast Guard District's Legal Officer, described the legal processing at the pier in a memo to the District Commander. He wrote,

> The teams work together to ascertain the nature of any violations which might be present. They then present the facts to an Assistant US Attorney working at the processing dock; that Attorney makes the decision to undertake or decline criminal prosecution based on the guidance given by the US Attorney General. When no criminal prosecution is undertaken, INS issues the notice of intent to fine and Customs effects constructive or physical seizure of the vessel. If prosecution were to be authorized, INS would effect the arrest and function as lead agency for the referral; Customs would effect seizure of the vessel. Safety and navigation violations would be processed by the Coast Guard in accordance with its normal civil penalty assessment procedures.[24]

The Coast Guard made operational decisions at the pier, such as whether winds and seas were too severe to bring a loaded boat alongside, or whether a boat shipping water should be brought in ahead of others. Levels of authority delegated by the agencies to different members of the boarding teams varied. Coast Guard and Customs representatives, for example, generally had greater latitude to make decisions than the INS representative, who frequently had to check with higher authority.

In one case, a small pleasure boat arrived with a baby who had been born during the crossing from Cuba. The INS examiner asked the Coast Guard marine inspector what nationality should be listed for the child. The impromptu reply was, "If it was a US boat, it's a US citizen. Put down, nationality—US." Decisions had to be made rapidly.

People coming off the boats received medical screenings, to determine serious health problems; they were given high-protein snacks to eat and liquids to drink. Customs had the boat captains fill out arrival forms and INS interviewed the refugees. The process included the following steps:

1. The captain came off first, after identification.
2. Passengers were carefully counted.
3. The captain filled out arrival forms.
4. Passengers were offloaded.
5. Passengers were given medical checks and first aid as necessary. (Capps said many arrivals had dog bite wounds requiring stitches; people said the guards in Cuba had turned the dogs on them.)
6. Passengers were walked off the pier to an administration building at the Naval Station, where FEMA took over. FEMA was not involved in operations on the pier and took charge of the refugees after initial processing.[25]

"It was a very emotional experience," said Capps, who was in charge of the Customs operation; he was deeply moved by the humanitarian aspects of the whole episode. He was particularly concerned about children forced to separate from their parents and leave Cuba; he also was distressed that a better system was not available for uniting refugees with families and friends. Capps said,

> Thousands of Cuban-Americans were waiting outside the fence for relatives to arrive. There was no mechanism for making notifications. The (Federal) teams on the pier tried to give the Cuban-American volunteers (doctors and nurses) lists (of arrival names) a couple of times a day.... There should

> have been a better way to communicate and publish arrivals.

Well-intentioned volunteer doctors and nurses from the Cuban-American community tended to interfere with the processing. Too many unauthorized people had access to the arrival area on the pier. In some cases, after authorized people gained access, their passes were carried out and used by others to come onto the pier. Possibly, the unauthorized people on the pier were providing information on new arrivals to the waiting crowds.

FEMA quickly recognized that Key West, an island two miles wide and three-and-a-half miles long, could not accommodate the continuing influx of refugees. Expeditiously relocating the refugees off the island was critical. Transportation and the availability of suitable relocation sites were vital factors in the equation. Casey said,

> We developed a system that could transport up to 10,000 people out of Key West a day. The transportation system was the major logistic problem of the whole operation.... Even moving the people from the pier by bus was a problem.... FEMA had to find property in the United States where the people could be relocated to from Key West. The Department of Defense was reluctant at first to cooperate until pressured by the White House.

Refugees with immediate family in South Florida were bussed to Miami for release to their sponsors; those without sponsors were processed in Key West and transported to refugee resettlement camps. Volunteer agencies helped find local sponsors and resettled refugees. In Key West, the Navy provided temporary housing for the Cubans in an old seaplane hangar at Trumbo Point, and helped with feeding the refugees. The first resettlement camp was established at Eglin Air Force Base on the Gulf Coast of Florida. As the camp approached its capacity, additional camps were opened.[26]

US Navy Photo

An unused Navy hangar at Trumbo Point in Key West is used for temporary housing for Cuban refugees.

When the refugees completed processing, they left Pier BRAVO and were loaded on buses. The Cuban-American community gave them inspirational leaflets embellished with Cuban and American flags. In bold letters, the leaflet read in Spanish as follows:

To the Cuban Refugees:

This great nation has given the opportunity of a new life. Total freedom in the broadest sense, guarantees and security of an orderly and peaceful life. Besides offering a new birth and consideration as a person, with all the inalienable human rights before God and man.

> President Jimmy Carter has opened the arms of our nation to you. Respect the law and obey the authorities. Patience, faith, and optimism, with God's help and your personal sacrifice, you will reach in the United States, the freedom and prosperity that you desire. Other Cuban refugees that preceded you have already attained these goals, establishing an indestructible bond of friendship with the United States and their people.

Eugene Eidenberg, who coordinated the Federal response to the influx for the White House, said,

> The management of the arriving people (Cubans) was particularly well done. The agencies did a magnificent job of handling the logistics.... The Coast Guard, DOD, and the domestic agencies did exceptional jobs. The screening was well done and the logistics were done under difficult situations.... Coordination problems (between Washington and the field) were minimal during the period when the Cubans were arriving. They later became acute when the entrants were in the camps.[27]

Enforcement Actions

After the President announced, on 14 May, his intention to halt the Boatlift, Federal agencies in Key West embarked on an aggressive program to stop boats from going to Cuba to bring back refugees. The day after Carter's announcement, the Customs Service seized 75 boats, mostly commercial fishing vessels that had returned from Cuba with 4,000 refugees. Boat operators were charged with bringing in illegal aliens and carrying passengers without proper licenses; they faced fines of up to $1,000 for each alien brought into the United States.[28]

US Coast Guard Photo

Boats seized by Federal agencies during the Cuban Exodus are moored at the Key West Naval Station.

Initially, the widely publicized enforcement program did not have the desired effect.* Assistant US Attorneys were being too selective in accepting cases for prosecution; their decisions were based on whether cases were "sure winners." Selectivity, rather than broad application, undermined the preventive nature of the enforcement program. Commander Shkor, the Coast Guard's District Legal Officer said,

> The definition for taking legal action was too narrow, and the small number of cases (for prosecution) would not be an effective deterrent.... Attorney General Civiletti reserved arrest and criminal prosecution for 'egregious' cases, such as profiteers who had been warned and still went to Cuba to pick up people, and repeat offenders.[29]

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* Atlee W. Wampler, III, US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida during the Exodus, recognized that enforcing the immigration laws was important in deterring the continuing situation, but said that Federal and Circuit judges were not accepting the cases--"while the laws were comprehensive, the cases were not accepted."

When Assistant US Attorneys were sent to the arrival area in Key West, where they could see first hand what was happening, they became more "hard nosed" about accepting cases.

By 15 July, emergency aspects of the Cuban influx had abated: Arrivals were down to only a few hundred a week, and a well-organized processing system was in place. FEMA passed its role as lead agency for refugee resettlement to the State Department. The Cuban-Haitian Task Force was established, under the State Department's Office of Refugee Affairs. The Task Force oversaw camp operations and resettlement efforts with a Washington staff of 84, representing 10 Federal agencies, and a major regional staff of 74 in Miami. Task Force camp commanders and their staffs ran the resettlement camps. Christian R. Holmes, Deputy Secretary of State for Refugee Affairs, was appointed Task Force Director on 1 August 1980. Because of FEMA's broad funding authority, however, it retained funding and coordinating roles.[30]

As the Boatlift slowed, the United States continued to keep a careful eye on Cuba. Coast Guard cutters continued to patrol the Florida Straits, interdicting southbound boats and monitoring the activities of larger suspicious vessels. The Carter administration awaited a sign that the 1980 Cuban Boatlift crisis was over.

18

Boatlift Ends

Good morning. Mariel is closed. You all must go.

Colonel, Cuban Army
Mariel, Cuba, 25 September 1980

ECHOING ACROSS MARIEL HARBOR, THE VOICE from the green Cuban loudspeakers ordered all boat captains to come ashore. On board the anchored boats, the people were excited: They thought their relatives had arrived, and they soon would be able to depart with them for Florida. Their first indication of bad news was the free boat ride ashore—the normal $3 fee was not collected. When the boat skippers had gathered in the warehouse, a uniformed Cuban colonel told them they would have to leave Mariel without their relatives. They were given 34 hours to get their boats out of the harbor.

On Thursday, 25 September 1980, the 82-foot Coast Guard Cutter *POINT THATCHER* was patrolling north of Mariel. Just before midnight, the cutter's radar operator detected a series of blips on the green radar screen, indicating boats were departing the harbor entrance. Master Chief Boatswain's Mate E.P. Owens, the cutter's Officer-in-Charge, reported the activity to the Squadron Commodore. By noon on Friday, the Coast Guard confirmed that none of the 58 boats that left Mariel carried refugees. The disappointed boat crews told Coast Guard crews Cuban authorities had made them leave.

The Boatlift was over.

Unilateral Action

The White House announced, on 26 September, the end of the 159-day Boatlift, which had transported more than 125,000 Cubans to the United States. White House and State Department officials reported the Castro government, in a unilateral action, "had ordered all remaining boats in the port of Mariel, Cuba, to return to the United States without refugees." Speaking for the State Department, Sondra McCarthy said, "We have heard reports from some boat captains that they were told by Cuban authorities the Mariel operation has been suspended."[1]

While no official statements came from the Cuban government indicating the end of the sea lift—both Radio Havana and *GRANMA* were silent on the issue—the Carter administration was optimistic that the crisis finally had been concluded. Some 56 boats arrived in Key West on Friday, 26 September, without refugees. Returning crews said that 20 more US boats were not able to sail from the Cuban harbor because of mechanical problems.[2]

Grateful the Boatlift was over, the President reported the Castro government had assured the United States the remaining refugees stranded in Mariel would be reunited with their families in "a legal way." President Carter reportedly had not been aware of Cuba's unilateral plans to end the exodus until the boats actually departed Mariel. Jack Watson, the President's new chief of staff, said the White House knew the United States and Cuba were discussing some sort of plan and "we had reason to believe there would be such a unilateral action.... We did not know that it would occur until in fact it did occur." He said the United States gave no "quid pro quo" for the Cuban action. When asked why the Cubans had ended the Boatlift, Watson said,

> I can only speculate about that. I suspect the Cuban Government has become aware of the widespread negative effects that the illegal, disorderly and dangerous flood of refugees has had on American attitudes toward Cuba.[3]

Wayne Smith, head of the US Interests Section in Havana, played an important role in talks that led to the Cuban decision to end the Boatlift. During a meeting with Cuban officials the week before, he had been informed that Castro would be closing Mariel Harbor "soon" but was not told when.

On 16 September, after the ninth airliner was hijacked from the United States to Cuba, the Cuban government warned future hijackers that they would face "drastic penal measures" and possible extradition. The next day, two young Cuban men commandeered a Delta Airlines flight as it approached Columbia, S.C. After a brief refueling stop, the pilots were forced to fly the plane to Havana. In response to this 10th hijacking, Cuba took the unprecedented unilateral action of returning the hijackers, who were refugees from the Mariel Boatlift, to the United States for prosecution. *GRANMA* said this "drastic measure" would demonstrate "that no one can play with the word and honor of the Cuban revolution," and that similar strong actions would be taken against future "air pirates."[4]

A further conciliatory action was taken on 24 September: The last 11 demonstrators of the 400 Cubans who sought refuge in the US Interests Section in Havana were allowed to leave their safe haven without incident. Many of the demonstrators already had left for the United States and, as far as Interests Section personnel could determine, no reprisals were taken against anyone who took sanctuary after the 2 May attack. US officials speculated that Castro's conciliatory actions, supportive of administration efforts, may have been aimed at thawing chilly relations between the two

countries and aiding prospects for a Carter reelection in November.*[5]

Presidential Election

Castro began expressing his concern about the US election when Ronald Reagan appeared certain to win the Republican nomination. "Raygan, Rayagan, or Reagan—I don't know how it's pronounced—who is the shoo-in Republican presidential candidate has said that he is in favor of imposing a naval blockade of Cuba," Castro said, in his May Day speech. "It goes without saying, however—I should warn him of this—that it won't be easy."[6] In a front-page editorial in *GRANMA*'s 19 May edition, the Cuban government addressed Carter's demand that the Boatlift be ended. *GRANMA* asked,

> Should we now help Carter solve the problem of Mariel as he sees fit?—a problem created by the previous inept policy of the United States and the residents in that country—and that of the Interests Section—provoked with the help of former counter-revolutionary prisoners—only bearing in mind the internal situation in the United States.
>
> And who can guarantee Carter's victory? Even if he does win, who can guarantee that there will be a change in policy toward Cuba?[7]

Of Reagan's position on the Mariel Boatlift, the *GRANMA* editorial said, "Reagan is one of those who

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* On 13 October, Ramon Sanchez-Parodi, head of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, DC, announced a further unilateral action intended to ease tensions between the United States and Cuba: The Castro government pardoned 33 Americans serving prison sentences in Cuba for various offenses, including illegal entry and drug smuggling. Sanchez-Parodi said the action was taken to express the "traditional attitude of friendship" between the Cuban and American people.

talked about a naval blockade of Cuba, but that wouldn't be our problem. We will withstand any kind of blockade or aggression. If they elect a fascist or a madman, that's their problem. Hitler was also 'crazy' and you know how he ended up."

The Cuban president and senior US diplomatic representatives attended the anniversary ceremonies of the Sandinista Revolution in Managua, Nicaragua in July. During an informal meeting on the evening of 18 July with Donald F. McHenry, US Ambassador to the United Nations, Lawrence A. Pezzullo, US Ambassador to Nicaragua, and William D. Bowdler, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Castro expressed concern about the growing conservative trend in the United States and the possibility of a Reagan victory. Castro said he did not want to damage Carter's reelection chances by precipitating further frictions between Cuba and the United States during the next four months.[8]

The next day, the Cuban leader publicly expressed his concern about a possible Republican victory in the US elections in an address to a crowd of 100,000 Nicaraguans during ceremonies in Managua's "July 19 Plaza." He described the Republican platform as a "threat to peace," and "a terrible platform that threatens to apply once more the big stick to Latin America ... that speaks of reversing as much as possible the Panama Accords." Back in Havana, at ceremonies commemorating the beginning of his own revolution on 26 July, Castro said,

> We must clearly warn the Republican clique, Mr. Reagan and his advisers, that their threats against Cuba will be to no avail.... If the platform is fulfilled there will be war between the United States and the Latin American peoples.[9]

Eugene Eidenberg, who succeeded Jack Watson as Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, coordinated the continuing White House response to the Cuban Boatlift. Recalling a meeting about the Boatlift in late summer 1980, he said, among

the topics discussed were the negative impact of the Cuban influx on the Key West economy in general, and on fishermen whose boats had been seized in particular. Political damage to the Carter campaign caused by the dissatisfaction also was assessed. Participants agreed a continuation of the Boatlift would aid Reagan's chances for election. Eidenberg recalls that at that point, Wayne Smith, Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana, commented that the fact the Cuban Boatlift was helping Reagan politically could be communicated to Castro. Smith said, Castro, apprehensive of Reagan's conservative views, might bring the Boatlift to a halt, rather than help the Republican ticket. Eidenberg said, "I was astounded that such a mechanism for stopping the Boatlift was available and had not been used. I could not believe it. We should have played that card much earlier." Eidenberg added that if persons within the Federal bureaucracy had any reluctance about being involved in partisan politics, the message could have been delivered through other than official channels. "The objective was to stop the Boatlift," he said, "and limit the tremendous burden it imposed on the United States."[10]

Myles Frechette, the State Department's Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, said such a message was sent to Castro, indicating a continuation of the Boatlift might guarantee Ronald Reagan would be elected president in the November election. The note pointed out that Castro's undermining of Carter's election chances by continuing the Boatlift was inconsistent with the Cuban leader's widely publicized condemnation of Reagan. Frechette's opinion was that Castro "indeed decided to stop the boatlift because he did not want to help Reagan's chances for election."[11]

Robert A. Pastor of the National Security Council staff interpreted Castro's intentions differently. "In my opinion," Pastor said, "Castro really preferred to see Reagan elected. It was easier for him to have hardline Reagan for an opponent." Carter, with his more flexible initiatives to improve relations with the Cuban people,

had been difficult for Castro to predict. Castro could more easily mobilize the sentiment of the Cuban people against Reagan, with his rigid conservative positions. Pastor said,

> I passed to Castro through informal channels that praising Carter and criticizing Reagan would help get Reagan elected. With the up-coming election, praise from Castro was a detriment and criticism a benefit because of the views of the American people.

Pastor's view was that Castro expressed his preference when he continued his scathing attacks on Reagan and softened his criticism of Carter. Kenneth N. Skoug, Jr., Director of the State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs, did not agree that Castro would have preferred to see Reagan elected President. He said, "He (Castro) did not want to help the Reagan campaign, but he took action to stop the Boatlift too late to have any impact on the election. It (the presidential election) was not, however, a primary consideration for Castro."[12]

Whatever the motivations, Castro carefully followed the presidential elections in the United States. In September, a Radio Havana broadcast told the Cuban people:

> The US voters are at a crossroads in these elections, requiring them to announce themselves either for the incumbent Democratic party President James Carter or for his Republican opponent, and both present a gloomy panorama of incalculable dangers.
>
> Carter is already known an incompetent man who has not fulfilled his electoral promises, foolish in political matters, and submissive to militaristic and most reactionary circles of the United States. The other option, and even worse and of gloomier proportions, is Ronald Reagan.[13]

Cuban Motivation

While the potential outcome of the US presidential election probably did influence Castro's decision to end the Boatlift, most likely it was only one of several factors considered. The length of the delay, two months from the time the election issue was raised to the Cuban government and the actual cessation of the Exodus, indicated the low degree of importance Castro placed on the election issue. More pragmatic factors probably were of greater significance in Castro's decision to terminate the sea lift.

Frechette believed Castro ended the Boatlift when he realized how seriously his image was being damaged internationally—world opinion was overwhelmingly against him. Third World sentiments were seen in the actions of developing countries in volunteering to help the refugees. Castro also realized he was undercutting his liberal support in the US Congress. Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), usually supportive of efforts to normalize relations with Cuba, had turned against Castro. Skoug said Castro recognized the extent of the anger in the United States toward Cuba, and admitted he had ended the Boatlift to win back some of the good will he had lost.[14]

Frechette said that when Castro finally realized the extent of the anti-Cuban sentiment the situation was causing in the United States, he "became concerned that he was shocking the United States too much ... that he may be pushing the United States too far and that we might take rash actions." The turmoil caused by the Exodus also seriously disrupted social and economic structures within the country. "It caused considerable uproar in Cuba," Frechette said, "and had a negative impact on the Cuban population.... Castro sensed that what was happening was impacting on the entire population."[15]

Internally, the propaganda value in ridiculing those who were leaving was nearly exhausted, and most of the undesirables already had left the country. Continuing the Exodus, even on a greatly diminished scale,

only served as a lingering disruption to the Cuban society and a pervasive reminder people were still willing to flee the country, leaving everything behind.

In Havana and Mariel, a costly infrastructure was being maintained to process the few refugees being shipped out. As long as even a few US boats were in Mariel Harbor, security forces were needed. While the weekly numbers of departing Cubans had dwindled from tens of thousands to hundreds, the costs of the operation still remained about the same. The southbound boats that trickled through the Coast Guard barrier into Mariel were smaller and faster, with less capacity to carry refugees, making the efficacy of prolonging the Boatlift questionable.

Internationally, Castro was aware he was paying a high price for the ongoing Exodus. The well-publicized flight of people from Communist Cuba tarnished the Cuban president's reputation as a Third World leader and discredited his claim that Cuba was a societal model for developing nations. People leaving Mariel also reminded Latin American countries, particularly members of the Andean Pact (Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia) of the hostility caused by the incident at the Peruvian Embassy and its aftermath. The Boatlift had reached the point where costs far outweighed benefits.

Last Refugees

When Castro ended the Boatlift, approximately 600 people had been processed and were ready to leave the country. Having left their jobs and homes, they became stateless people in their own country—a problem group for Castro. In response to a Cuban request, made shortly after the Boatlift ended, the United States agreed to accept the would-be refugees, once they were properly screened and documented.

The first of the stranded Cubans were flown into Miami International Airport on 19 November 1980 in a

chartered jet. Most of these late arrivals were family reunification cases and, unlike the Boatlift refugees, had received US visas in Havana before departing. People without families in the United States were admitted on the basis of "a well-founded fear of persecution in Cuba." Wayne Smith said the 600 people were "sort of left on the beach when the Boatlift ended.... All of them were interviewed by the consular office and immigration officers. They needed the normal criteria to qualify for entry."

Myles Frechette said, "We did this for humanitarian reasons."

Costs of the flights bringing the refugees to the United States were borne by the Cuban-American community and not the US Government. Church World Service arranged for the airlift, which was paid for by the Coordinating Committee of the Cuban Community.[16]

During the Boatlift, the Cuban government did not allow personnel from the US Interests Section to travel to Mariel Harbor. After the Boatlift was over, Smith finally received permission to make the trip to the port. On approaching Mariel, the car from the Interests Section stopped at a point overlooking the harbor. As Smith scanned the harbor through a pair of binoculars, the old Cuban who operated a small beer stand at the overlook came over and anxiously asked if the boats would be returning.[17]

As the Boatlift crisis subsided, the United States and Cuba began to assess the impacts and implications of the previous five months.

19

National Interests

The mass exodus was a major loss of face for Fidel Castro. After 20 years, the tens of thousands of people fleeing the country were a major embarrassment for the Cuban president.... The numbers and the way the people left indicated that there may have been more people who wanted to leave.... It demonstrated a failure of the Castro regime.

Kenneth N. Skoug, Jr., Director, Office of Cuban Affairs, Department of State
Washington, DC, 12 January 1987

AT 4:32 P.M. ON 19 MARCH 1985, A CHARTERED AMERICAN BOEING 727 JET landed at Havana's Jose Marti Airport. The jet rolled to a halt at the end of the runway, made a 180-degree turn, and taxied back down the length of the strip. From the plane, the 28 Cuban prisoners, each with a Bureau of Prisons (BOP) guard sitting next to him, could see the passenger terminal pass on the left, and new airport construction on the right. The prisoners, shackled hand and foot, were returning to Cuba for the first time since leaving from Mariel in 1980. The 90-minute flight from Atlanta had been uneventful. The Cuban prisoners, noted for their unruliness, sat quietly—they were resigned to returning to Cuba, and prison.[1]

At the end of the runway, the aircraft turned sharply to the right and stopped on an apron built specifically for the *Marielitos*. Their return had been negotiated in the 1984 "Mariel Agreement." Craig O. Raynsford, the Immigration and Naturalization Service representative in charge of delivering the prisoners, could see rows of soldiers from the Cuban Interior Ministry, facing the apron. At a command from their officers, the soldiers broke ranks and formed three concentric circles around the plane. In an impressive show of force, the soldiers, in khaki uniforms with AK-47 automatic rifles at the ready, waited for the Mariel prisoners to leave the plane.

Raynsford left the plane by the rear ramp to speak with the Cuban General, Justo Fernandez de Medina Hurtado, *General de Brigada*, who was in charge of the operation. Raynsford noted the military decorations festooning the general's tunic. Through an interpreter, Raynsford confirmed arrangements for transferring the Cuban prisoners. On Raynsford's signal, the unarmed BOP guards began escorting the prisoners down the plane's rear ramp. The prisoners stepped onto a foam rubber mat designed to clean the soles of their shoes as a protection against agricultural infection. The procedure probably was more symbolic than necessary. The US guards turned over their Cuban charges to the soldiers, who loaded them into waiting buses. The *Marielitos* quietly shuffled off with their Cuban guards. Once relieved of their prisoners, the BOP guards reboarded the plane. The whole procedure had taken less than an hour. As the jet's turbine engines whirred to life, Raynsford turned to say farewell to the Cuban General before reboarding the plane. General de Medina told Raynsford he had a personal request to make: The next time Raynsford returned with prisoners, would he please bring with him a bag of jelly beans? The general had a fondness for the candy, which was very difficult to obtain in Cuba.

Cuban Objectives

Kenneth N. Skoug, Jr., Director of the State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs in 1987, noted the difficulty of determining true motives from Cuban statements. He speculated that the Boatlift was a "response to the Peruvian Embassy incident" and a "reflection of Cuban attitudes over the years." Skoug said the Cuban Exodus

> was an instantaneous reaction of Fidel Castro to turn adversity to his advantage. It was a typical anti-American response to redirect the problem against the United States.... It was not a planned action. Castro was looking to recover from a loss of face. The reaction did not come out of nowhere, however, the idea was there. Castro was always thinking and had his contingency plans.[2]

Castro's near-term goal was to recover from the embarrassment of the refugee situation. He orchestrated a mass rally to demonstrate popular support for his regime—"The March of the Fighting People"—to counteract the negative international press accounts of dissent within Cuba. The embarrassing flights to Costa Rica had been halted while Castro assessed alternatives for resolving the crisis. The potential for another boatlift certainly was one of the options he considered. Juan Clark, Jose Lasaga, and Rose Reque wrote in a report for the Council for Inter-American Security,

> He (Castro) apparently sought to escape international embarrassment, caused by Cuban working-class refugees arriving in Latin America, the very people who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of the revolution. In shifting world attention to the United States, the impact of departing refugees was substantially diminished.[3]

As the Boatlift increased in momentum, the Cuban president received reports from the United States describing the anguish caused by the uncontrolled waves of refugees arriving in Key West. As Castro had

US Coast Guard Photo

A Cuban-American couple waits at the pier in Key West for their relatives coming from Cuba.

planned, the Boatlift had shifted the attention of the international media to the United States and taken Havana out of the spotlight of unfavorable attention.

Castro's diversionary efforts in creating the Boatlift apparently evolved over time. Early successes of shipping undesirables to the United States emboldened the Cuban leader to expand his objectives. Noting the dilemma the refugees created in the United States, and not fearing reprisals, Castro progressed to the next reprehensible stage of the Exodus: He used the Boatlift to rid the country of significant numbers of criminals, dissidents, non-producers—the burdens on the Cuban society. Castro reveled in the inability of the United States to control its border. He publicly mocked President Carter, boldly demonstrating his coercive influence over activities within the American population. US boats came to Mariel Harbor and meekly waited at

Castro's pleasure, then did the bidding of the Cuban government by transporting refugees of Castro's selection to the United States.

Riots at hastily constructed and overcrowded US refugee camps, widely publicized in Cuba and overseas, were evidence of the success of Castro's harassment of the Carter administration. The Boatlift was successful beyond Castro's expectations. The confused response of the White House served to enhance the Cuban leader's ability to use the situation to his advantage. Throughout the episode, the Cuban president enjoyed the apparent dual benefits of tormenting the United States while purging the Cuban population of *lumpen*.

Castro and the Cuban government, however, were unprepared for the success of the ploy: They underestimated the response of the Cuban-American community, and were not prepared to process the huge number of persons leaving the island. A lack of personnel, vehicles, and facilities to support the processing procedures caused serious bottlenecks. Cuban officials at Mariel were ill-prepared and overburdened; they had not anticipated the arrival of hundreds and then thousands of boats. The long delays encountered—some boats waited more than a month—were indicative of how unprepared Cuba was. During the early stages of the Exodus, facilities at Mariel were so overloaded that Cuban gunboats permitted US vessels and their frustrated crews, out of food and money, to leave without refugees.

As the Carter administration struggled to control the runaway situation, Castro increased the pace of the Exodus. He rejected all efforts to negotiate a halt to the Boatlift. Harvard University's Jorge I. Dominguez, a noted authority on Cuban affairs, said,

> Although the massive outflow reflects poorly on the regime's abilities to maintain the allegiance of a substantial portion of the citizenry, the government will probably benefit politically from it. Once again, the revolutionary government has exported its political opposition. Indeed, this time it even exported some of those it considered socially unacceptable.[4]

As the Exodus progressed, and in its aftermath, Castro benefited from the expulsion of people who failed to "integrate with the revolution" and who were nonproducing burdens on the economy. An upsurge of revolutionary spirit was a further political advantage for the Castro regime. The mood of those loyal to the regime was described in a report to Congress as

> a revolutionary fervor not seen in many years. Reaction of pro-government Cubans to the exodus of those they deem as disloyal, and to the perceived threat from the United States, has whipped [up] zealous support of the Castro government.[5]

Costs and Benefits

When the Boatlift ended and the rhetoric had subsided, the fact that a massive number of working-class people had fled from Fidel Castro's communist regime was undeniable. Developing countries of the Third World, for which Cuba had been a model of revolutionary development, paused to consider the situation: Why would so many Cubans, many born and reared in the communist society, decide to give up everything and flee their homeland?

Cuban efforts to discredit the character and motives of the refugees were of limited success; the number of people involved in the mass exodus was simply too great to be discounted. The outpouring symbolized a moral failure for the Cuban revolutionary government and raised serious doubts about the validity of Castro's claim that Cuba was a socialist society to be emulated. Barry Sklar wrote, in a report prepared for the US Congress,

> Cuba's image in the Third World has been damaged to a certain extent, as other nations see Cuba with an international refugee problem not usually associated with progressive, developing states. This

> issue compounds Cuba's image problem, which has been seriously affected by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, because of Cuba's close association with the USSR. Cuba's loss of a long-sought Security Council seat in the United Nations was a setback to its prestige in the Third World.[6]

The refugee situation seriously tarnished Cuba's relations with neighboring Latin American countries, particularly Peru, Venezuela, and Costa Rica. Castro's motives in precipitating the crisis for the Peruvian government were puzzling. Peru historically had maintained good relations with Cuba and had initiated actions within the Organization of American States (OAS) that essentially ended the OAS embargo against Cuba. Venezuela and Costa Rica, also traditionally had enjoyed warm relations with the Castro government.

Opinions concerning the costs and benefits of the Boatlift for Cuba were mixed.

- Dr. Robert A. Pastor, a Latin American specialist with the National Security Council, felt while Castro did ease some of his population problems with the Boatlift, the Exodus was a net loss overall for the Cuban president, internationally and domestically. "Once it started, it was a real dilemma for Castro," said Pastor. He considered the internal disruption to have had a significant impact on Cuba, while internationally, Cuba's image was severely damaged. Castro "completely underestimated the situation right from the very beginning at the Peruvian Embassy," he said. "Nothing was planned. He never would have done it if he had known what would happen."[7]
- Skoug agreed that Castro lost credibility because of the large-scale demonstration of discontent. The Exodus showed the flaws in the "Cuban Model," he said, and demonstrated a stagnant economy and repressive political system. Working class people were fleeing the society, not the wealthy.[8]
- Ambassador Myles R. R. Frechette, Coordinator for Cuban Affairs with the US State Department during the migration, contends the Boatlift had a detrimental

internal effect on the Cuban population, which was a significant factor in the Cuban president's decision to end the Exodus.

- Dr. Wayne S. Smith, Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana at the time, felt that the international and internal damage to Cuba made chances for another Boatlift unlikely. The major dislocation problems within Cuban society, Smith said, and the loss in production resulting from the disruptions, "had severe economic repercussions for the country. Overall, it was a net loss (for Cuba) and a severe blow to Castro's ego."[9]

While foreign affairs specialists—citing diminished international prestige and internal disruption—considered the Boatlift an overall loss for Castro, the negative consequences apparently were only temporary. Internationally, Cuba reconciled its differences with its neighbors and Castro regained the personal prestige he had lost; he continued to be an important force in Third World politics. Indeed, the developing countries seemed to admire the way the Cuban leader stood up to one of the "superpowers" and came away an apparent winner.

Castro's stature in the Third World may well have increased.

Domestic Impact

The most immediate impact of the uncontrolled Cuban Exodus for the US Government was the need to assist the refugee-ladened vessels in their open-seas transit from Cuba, and provide care for the refugees when they arrived in Key West; the expense to US taxpayers was considerable. An extensive Federal organization of ships, planes, and facilities, and thousands of personnel, responded to the five-month emergency. The fact that no more than 27 fatalities occured among the 125,000 refugees who sailed the 100 miles of open ocean from Mariel to Key West attests to the effectiveness of the rapid and humanitarian US response.

U.S Navy Photo

After processing in Key West, Cuban refugees are flown to resettlement camps on chartered airline flights.

President Carter quickly authorized $10 million to house, feed, and care for the flood of refugees. A relocation camp was established at Eglin Air Force Base on the northern Gulf Coast of Florida to process the overflow of refugees from Key West. Tents and facilities were hastily erected for the refugees without sponsors. The influx was so rapid that the Eglin processing center and resettlement camp, opened on 3 May, was filled to its capacity of 9,700 in only six days.

A second camp, with a capacity of 19,000, was opened at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, on 8 May. As Fort Chaffee reached its capacity in a little more than a

AP Wide World Photos

Cuban refugees at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, talk through the fence of the fort's stockade, where they were confined after rioting. The Army brought in additional troops and civilian police also were assigned to the refugee center to help maintain order.

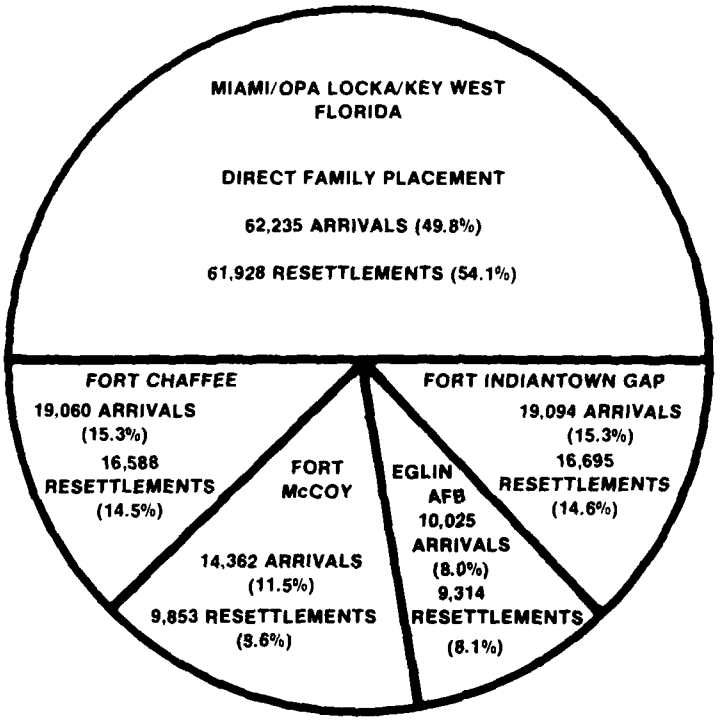

Figure 8. Cuban processing and resettlement by facility
(By percent of total arrivals and percent of total resettlement)

(Source: US Department of State, Cuban-Haitian Task Force, A Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, 1 December 1980, p. 75.)

week, a third reception center was opened at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. A fourth and final refugee camp was opened at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, when the Pennsylvania camp reached its peak capacity of 18,311 on 29 May. Fort McCoy was filled 18 days later (16 June) with 13,258 refugees. The mass of arriving Cuban refugees declined sharply after the first week of June and no additional camps were required. (See figure 8.) On 15 July, the Cuban-Haitian Task Force was formed to coordinate refugee camps and resettlement efforts under the auspices of the US State Department.

Table 5
Distribution of Cuban-Haitian Task Force funding
(in millions of dollars)

FEMA (Includes "Mission Assignments" to other agencies.)	**$245.0**
EDUCATION:	
Adult Immigrants	**17.6**
School improvement/special initiatives	**7.7**
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES:	
Public Health Service	**36.0**
JUSTICE	**20.8**
TRANSPORTATION:	
US Coast Guard	**18.0**
TREASURY:	
US Customs Service	**0.6**
TOTAL	**$345.7**

On 23 October 1980, Arthur Brill, Director of Public Affairs for the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, announced that the Federal Government had spent $400 million in resettling Cuban refugees—the expense continued to mount.[10]

In a statement before the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas O. Enders said less than a year later, on 31 July 1981, "By the end of this fiscal year, it is estimated that the Mariel boatlift will have cost the United States over $700 million."[11]

In Fiscal Year 1980 (FY 80 ended 30 September 1980), congressional legislation appropriated $345.7 million for the 124,776 Cubans who had arrived during the Boatlift and for 8,215 Haitian entrants who also had reached the United States. The Cuban-Haitian Task Force (CHTF) assisted both groups; funds were distributed as shown in table 5.

President Carter spent another $20.9 million on the crisis, through various presidential determinations. The State Department expended money from its Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund, for various

services provided to the Cuban and Haitian refugees. The Cuban-Haitian Task Force also spent $10.75 million for operational costs, grants to the Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration for refugee transportation, and for Department of Health and Human Services salaries at various settlement camps.

In addition to direct costs of refugee assistance (processing and resettlement covered in the 1980 legislation), follow-on funding for continuing social services was expended. The Cuban-Haitian Task Force Report listed the following budgetary actions for 1 October 1980:

> Fascell-Stone amendment treats Cuban-Haitian Entrants as refugees for the purposes of providing them domestic assistance under the terms of the Refugee Act of 1980 and reimbursing states and localities at 100 percent. Also triggers the $100 million appropriation in the FY '80 Supplemental (budget) to reimburse state and local governments for the cost of cash and medical assistance and social services. Permits President to direct executive agencies to provide processing and resettlement assistance for Cuban-Haitian Entrants. Provides authorizing language for the $65 million 'budget amendment' appropriation.
>
> Resolution making continuing appropriations for FY'81 passes Congress. Contains $65 million "budget amendment" providing $35 million for resettlement and processing and $30 million for camp operations.[12]

Public Law 96-422 (Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980, which contained the Fascell-Stone Amendment) provided refugee domestic assistance funding for Fiscal Year 1981. The amended Act enabled a full range of social services for the refugees in a manner similar to that provided under the 1980 Refugee Act. The Fascell-Stone Amendment authorized the reimbursement to States for costs of social services for the refugees. Long

US Coast Guard Photo

Sign behind this wheel chair-bound woman reads, in Spanish, "The last one to leave Cuba, please turn out the lights."

after the end of the Boatlift, funding for the following social services for the refugees continued:

- Aid to Families with Dependent Children.
- Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.
- Supplemental Security Income.
- MEDICAID, the Federal medical aid program that provides financial assistance for medical expenses of individual needy citizens.
- Food Stamps.
- Financial assistance to school districts that serve entrant children.

With the passage of the amended Act, specialized programs for cash, medical assistance, and additional services and training also were made available to the refugees.[13]

Atlee W. Wampler, III, US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida during the Boatlift, and later a prominent Miami lawyer, said that in spite of the infusion of Federal funds, the influx caused significant fiscal impacts on the local communities in terms of "schools, housing, and social services. It (the Boatlift) has created a crisis with the Miami hospitals taking care of nonpaying indigents. They (the hospitals) are on the brink of disaster.... It is a crisis situation ruining the infrastructure of City (Miami) and County (Dade) social services."[14]

Cuban criminals arriving with the Boatlift were responsible for further direct and indirect costs to the United States. The expense of detaining some 1,769 suspected felons in Federal correctional facilities pending deportation to Cuba was initially borne by the US Government. When Castro refused to repatriate the detainees, the suspected criminals were released because of a lack of sufficient evidence of their criminality.

Unfortunately, the people of the United States had to pay a heavy price for the release of the Cuban criminals; society had to suffer the consequences of the crimes of the *Marielitos* before they could be arrested and reincarcerated. Since the Boatlift, thousands of

Marielitos have been confined, primarily in Federal prisons.[15]

Years after the Boatlift ended, consequences of Cuba's reprehensible action in sending criminals to the United States were still being felt. Andrew J. Carmichael, Special Assistant to the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), said, "For the INS detention people, the Cuban Boatlift has never ended. For them, it has been a seven-year nightmare."[16] When asked what impressed him most about the Exodus from Mariel, Jim Brown, the Border Patrol's Assistant Chief Patrol Agent in Miami, said,

> The great expense to the United States Government caused by the undesirables that arrived on the Boatlift. The *Marielitos* are still creating serious problems for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. There are 98 being held in an INS detention facility in Dade County (Florida). These are *Marielitos* received from the Florida state (law enforcement) system.... The Florida system and the Federal system are inundated with *Marielito* problems. Most of the INS funds for this area go to dealing with their problems. The other people who need INS attention are not getting it.... The *Marielitos* destroyed the entire (Dade County INS) containment facility. As the cost for housing (them) goes up there are less funds for other programs.[17]

"The Mariel criminals are the worst prisoners in the world," Raynsford said of the "excludables" who arrived with the 1980 Boatlift. "When they hear that negotiations are being conducted for their return to Cuba, they burn down their cellblocks." Jack Watson, President Carter's Chief of Staff, considered the Boatlift a net gain for Castro because it "caused so much trouble for the United States. He (Castro) got rid of the dissidents and got rid of his institutionalized."

Msgr. Bryan O. Walsh, director of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Miami and an authority

on refugee affairs, also believed the Exodus was an overall benefit for Castro, as it

> served as a safety valve to release internal pressures; dissatisfied people left the island. The Boatlift was a violation of human rights.... People were forced to leave their country against their will.... The situation with unaccompanied minors was particularly serious. Minors were forced to leave Cuba without parents or guardians.... Castro's actions did not receive the exposure internationally they should have. The US failed to take advantage of the (negative publicity about the) situation.[18]

Guillermo Martinez of the editorial board of *The Miami Herald* and a leader in the Cuban-American community recognized the benefits of the Exodus for the Cuban leader, but discounted the importance of removing dissidents. "It was a plus for Castro," he said,

> in that the United States failed to exploit the situation by broadly publicizing the dissatisfaction of the (Cuban) people.... It (the exodus) eased his housing situation.... The fact that it brought dissidents forward to identify themselves was not that important. Castro has no reason to fear internal unrest. The degree of control over the population is unbelievable—worse than Russia.[19]

Dr. Juan M. Clark, who conducted extensive research into Cuban internal affairs, considers the Boatlift situation to represent both gains and losses for Castro. He listed the gains as exporting social undesirables and political dissenters, making available scarce housing, and improving the employment situation. Cuba's losses, Clark said, were bad publicity, damaging internationally and internally, and internal disruption.[20]

Legal Immigration

The only strained international relations of consequence for Cuba that remained as a result of the uncontrolled Exodus were with the United States. Even in America, the outrage waned with the passage of time. US and Cuban Interests Sections, established in Havana and Washington when limited diplomatic relations were restored in 1977, functioned without interruption. To a large extent, normal diplomatic business between the countries continued. The only major issue that remained to be resolved from the 1980 Boatlift was the return of Cuban "excludables" sent by Castro to Key West from Mariel.

In December 1984, after many unsuccessful negotiating efforts,* Castro agreed to accept the return of 2,746 Cuban "excludables," criminals and mentally ill,** sent to the United States during the Boatlift. In exchange for their repatriation, the United States agreed to accept former long-term Cuban political prisoners (imprisoned for what the Cuban Penal Code described as "crimes against the security of the state") and their families, and resume the normal processing of visa applications from Cubans seeking to emigrate to

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* Ambassador Myles R. R. Frechette, the State Department's Coordinator for Cuban Affairs in 1980, took part in secret negotiations with the Cubans for the return of Mariel "detainees" shortly after the Boatlift ended, while the Carter administration was still in office. Arrangements were worked out for repatriation of Cuban criminals and mentally ill, in exchange for the emigration of released Cuban political prisoners to the United States. At the last minute, the Cubans would not finalize the agreement. Ambassador Frechette felt the Cubans thought they could get more by negotiating with the new Reagan administration and possibly force the consideration of broader issues.

** The Federal Government institutionalized 142 mentally ill Cuban men in two buildings at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC, pending deportation. The Justice Department funded these Cuban "detainees" at an estimated annual cost of $10.2 million. The INS describes the group as "aliens without status," since immigration laws excluded mentally retarded or mentally defective individuals.

the United States. Under the "Mariel Agreement," up to 20,000 visas per year would be issued to the following categories of emigres:

- Sons and daughters (over age 21) of US citizens, regardless of marital status.
- Brothers and sisters of US citizens.
- Spouses and unmarried sons and daughters of legal permanent residents of the United States.
- Highly skilled professionals, including those in the arts and sciences, with prearranged employment in the United States.
- Certain skilled and unskilled workers with prearranged employment in the United States, with labor certificates from the US Department of Labor.[21]

Castro suspended the Mariel Agreement, however, during an emotional move in May 1985, when *Radio Marti*, directed by the Voice of America, began broadcasting to Cuba from the United States. Skoug said,

> The agreement had a lot that was in Cuba's favor. Castro praised the agreement.... The suspension hurt the United States, the Cubans who would have left, and Cuba, which would have gotten rid of dissidents and non-producers and have earned income.... The United States stands ready to restore the immigration agreement.... Once he suspended the agreement, he felt he could not reinstate it without receiving something in return from the US.... He has taken a position and now it is a matter of pride.[22]

"Emotions remain a powerful factor in Castro decisionmaking," Tad Szulc said in a book based on personal conversations with Castro and his closest associates. "Castro told friends that he had resented the use of the hallowed *Marti* name against the Cuban revolution; he did not care about the broadcasts themselves."[23] Cuba retaliated with broadcasts in Spanish to the United States on what it called "Radio Lincoln." The signal was intermittently received along the east coast and caused limited interference with commercial radio broadcasts.

Daytime transmissions of "Radio Lincoln" were received on one day only.[24]

Under the 1984 "Mariel Agreement," 201 excludables actually were returned to Havana before Castro suspended it. The United States insisted that repatriation be restored before resuming normal immigration procedures. As a result, until repatriation provisions were reinstated or a new agreement was adopted, normal "Preference Immigrant Visas" for Cubans were not processed. Without the agreement, the only Cubans allowed to enter the United States legally were:

- Immediate relatives of US citizens (that is, wife, husband, parents, or unmarried minor children).
- Long-term and former long-term political prisoners (in prison for more than 10 years).
- Cubans traveling on nonimmigrant visas.[25]

Raynsford said that in 1986, the Cubans indicated that they might negotiate the resumption of the "Mariel Agreement" for the return of Cuban criminals. Based on a clause in the agreement that called for the parties to meet in six months to reassess the agreed-upon terms, the United States asked for another meeting. The three-member US negotiating team—Raynsford from INS and Skoug and another official from the State Department—discussed the resumption of normal immigration with Cuban officials in Mexico. "The Cubans wanted to discuss a broader agenda which was not acceptable to the United States," Skoug said. "The issue of Radio Marti was discussed and proposals were made to allow Cuban broadcasts into the United States. The Cubans would not accept the proposals.... The Cubans were not ready to negotiate in good faith. They had unreasonable expectations."[26]

Of continuing US efforts to reinstate the agreement, Raynsford said,

> The Cubans have been told the United States is willing to meet at any time to discuss the agreement.... The United States is pursuing all available alternatives. Pressures are being

> applied in different areas.... We have tried several avenues. All we can do now is make sure Cuba, and the world, know that the United States stands ready to negotiate the resumption of the agreement.[27]

Cubans wishing to emigrate to the United States suffered most from the suspension of the 1984 Agreement. They were caught up in the international maneuvering of two governments. The abeyance of the agreement, containing benefits for both Cuba and the United States, was not in the interest of either country.

Consequences For America

The most obvious benefit of the Exodus was the reunification of thousands of Cuban families, long separated by the vagaries of the Cuban government. The Exodus was a time of great joy in US Cuban-American communities. Desires to be reunited with loved ones, after years of separation, were driving forces behind the Boatlift. Unfortunately, the Castro government skillfully manipulated these desires.

Since 1985, most Mariel refugees have become eligible for US citizenship. Once citizens, they then can sponsor their immediate relatives in Cuba for US visas to come to the United States. The demographic impact of the Boatlift will continue as Mariel refugees, particularly the 50,000 unaccompanied men who arrived in 1980, sponsor the legal immigration of their families.

A painful cost of the Boatlift for the United States was the need to deal with undesirables Castro included in the Exodus. Exporting thousands of hardened criminals was a heinous act unprecedented for a civilized nation, especially a supposedly responsible member of the Third World community. An expulsion of undesirables on the scale of the Mariel Boatlift was unheard of in modern history. In addition, the inclusion of mentally ill persons among the refugees sent to the United States

was a gross act of inhumanity and a commentary on the social consciousness of Castro and other Cuban leaders.

Even more damaging than the problems actually created by the Cuban felons and undesirables was the degree to which the publicity about their arrival tainted the reputation of all Cuban-Americans in the eyes of other US citizens. Considering the uncontrollable nature of the mass migration and its significant impact on the United States, questions must be raised for the future:

Will the United States be required to endure another Cuban-contrived refugee situation—a situation in which Castro dictates when it will begin, who and how many refugees and "undesirables" will come, and when it will end?

20

Pressure for Migration

Mariel has not been resolved; it has simply been suspended.

Fidel Castro, Havana, Cuba
December 1980

THE CUBAN ECONOMY, FOUNDERING UNDER CASTRO'S RIGID CENTRALIZED CONTROL, shows little prospect for future improvement. As internal pressures, fueled by economic hardship, continue to build within Cuba, Castro, if given the opportunity, will precipitate another exodus of disruptive elements of the Cuban population. In considering this possibility, the United States must remember the innovative nature of the Cuban leader and his ability to improvise. While the 1980 Mariel Boatlift obviously favored Castro's objectives, to assume he would exploit a future situation in just the same manner would be unwise.

In reviewing the 1980 Mariel Exodus, Castro's threats of a Camarioca-style boatlift take on great significance. In hindsight, the United States obviously should have heeded the warnings and acted to prevent, or prepare for, the Boatlift. In defense of officials charged with that responsibility, however, one must note that accurate assessments of Cuba's intentions, based on Castro's prolific pronouncements, were at best very difficult to make. Even the Historical Department of the Cuban Council of State does not know the precise

number of Castro's public speeches. His official presentations since 1 January 1959 probably exceed 2,500, with some of the orations running more than five hours; the longest on record was nine hours. Castro's speeches have been so numerous and so long that the Cuban government has not been able to transcribe all of them; his private speeches and impromptu discourses are inestimable.[1]

Castro's rambling and conversational speaking style, in addition to the number and length of his speeches, makes assessment and analysis difficult. In the course of his lengthy speeches, during which he encourages response from his audiences, Castro may touch on a wide variety of issues, threatening internal and external enemies of the revolution. In 1980, the Cuban president apparently felt certain the United States was aware of his threat to open another port to US boats. He was confident the situation that eventually involved Mariel would not come as a complete shock to the Carter administration—he did not want to provoke a drastic US response. In the future, Castro's rhetorical threats alone may not be sufficient indicators of probable actions. But, when considered in combination with internal and international developments, they may have important meaning. Evolving incidents, preparatory activities within Cuba, and attempts by the Cuban government to communicate directly with the Cuban-American community could signal another exodus attempt.

While Castro's mercurial personality often leads to rash actions—an image he does not dispel—he is a world leader of exceptional longevity. Building on his reputation as an impulsive *guerrillero* leader, the charismatic Cuban *Commandate-en-Jefe* (Commander in Chief) is both shrewd and calculating. He is not likely to gamble when the odds are not in his favor and the stakes are high. Even during the time of the Mariel Exodus, an underlying caution was seen in his escalation of the tumultuous events of the spring and summer of 1980. While the flight of thousands of Cubans to the

Peruvian Embassy became an embarrassing situation for Castro, the Cuban government quickly recovered from the initial shock, and never lost control of the situation or the means of resolving it.

The Peruvian Embassy incident actually was an auspicious opportunity for Castro, which he quickly exploited by putting into effect a preconsidered migration.* Even as the Cuban government was making arrangements for the exodus, Castro warned the United States in *GRANMA* on 14 April that another Camarioca would happen "if the Yankees insist on provoking it." Receiving only mild responses from the Carter administration, Castro determined that US retaliation would be slight. The Cuban leader orchestrated the 1980 Mariel Boatlift in progressive phases, keeping wary eyes and ears open to US reactions.

Future Migrations

Pressures within the Castro regime indicate continued emigration from Cuba to the United States is inevitable. Only the form, timing, and magnitude of such migrations remain to be determined. Successful health care programs initiated by the Cuban government ironically have brought on demographic trends that contribute to the country's economic problems. With a marked decline in infant mortality in the 1960s, Cuba experienced a "baby boom" until 1970, when the number of births began to decline.

Children born in the peak years of the 1960s will increase demands for employment and housing in the

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* In a 1986 book, based on research in Cuba, Tad Szulc describes the initiation of the Boatlift as an emotional response by Castro: "There is little doubt that Castro ordered the exodus from Mariel ... as a gesture of supreme personal rage against President Jimmy Carter for the encouraging attitude he had taken toward the asylum-seekers in the foreign embassies in Havana."

1980s and 1990s. The Cuban Ministry of Public Health indicates the number of Cubans in the 15-19 age group was more than 50 percent greater in 1980 than five years earlier. Children in this bulge already have entered the Cuban workforce, contributing to a stressed economy, plagued with chronic unemployment and underemployment. On the other end of the equation, because of improved medical services, Cuba claims one of the highest life expectancies in the world, 72 years. As the number of less productive older Cubans increases, more social services will be required, further burdening the Cuban economy.[2]

In addition to the demographic benefits of a migratory safety valve, emigration offers other specific advantages for the Castro government. The periodic outflow of dissidents and "ideological diversionists" selected by the Cuban government, as they were in 1980, removes the potential for organized resistance to the repressive government, eases the burdens on a troubled economy, and rejuvenates revolutionary zeal among the Castro faithful.

Pressures for migration also are felt from within the Cuban population, as many Cubans clearly see leaving the island to be in their best interests. The "push-pull" theory of migration helps explain the motivations for their departure: A stagnating Cuban economy and the repression of the regime "push" the migrants, and the large Cuban-American community in southern Florida, only 100 miles away, with a common language and culture "pulls" them. Prospects for a better life—political freedom, economic opportunities, and improved living conditions—are strong "pull" attractions.

The politically astute and influential Cuban-American community in the United States, particularly in south Florida, represents a formidable force for sponsoring legal or illegal Cuban emigres. The close cultural and family ties of Cuban-Americans with relatives and friends still in Cuba facilitates unofficial dialogues with individual Cuban citizens and their government. Such lines of communication can be used to exploit future opportunities for reunification.

Considering a possible future migration, Dr. Jorge I. Dominguez, Chairman of the Committee on Latin American and Iberian Studies at Harvard University, cautions that about "one fifth of the Cubans are entirely on the margins of political life" and do not take part in officially sponsored mass organizations. "They and their offspring constitute the available pool for future emigration," he says,

> should the gates reopen. That means the pool may amount to up to two million people. Although not all of these individuals may wish to leave the country of their birth, it is also true that many who have already left did belong to some of the mass organizations. Consequently, the available pool for future emigration probably is of such an order of magnitude.[3]

"If no changes are made in Cuba or US policies," Dominguez recently wrote in *The Miami Herald*,

> South Florida should expect the sudden arrival of another large number of Cubans. The choice is not whether to have Cuban migrants, but whether they will arrive prescreened and in an orderly fashion, or whether the Cuban government will set all the conditions unilaterally.[4]

Myles R. R. Frechette, the US State Department's Coordinator for Cuban Affairs at the time of the Mariel Boatlift, has said, "Population pressures alone would not cause Castro to initiate another exodus. Such an emigration probably would result from a combination of reasons—domestic and international." In considering the possibility of a future exodus and the important role the Cuban-American community would play, Frechette said, "The unhappiness (in the Cuban-American communities) with the undesirables that came over from Mariel is wearing off, and they will be thinking about reunification again.... The United States has learned a lesson (from the Mariel Boatlift). The Cuban-Americans will go to get their families and will break the law to do

it." Another boatlift probably would not occur, Frechette points out, if Castro perceives a strong US resolve to stop it. "The last thing Fidel Castro wants is a false start on a migration," he said. "It would create real (internal) problems for him."[5]

The current Director of the State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs, Kenneth N. Skoug, Jr., also thinks the possibility of a future Cuban migration largely depends on US attitudes toward accepting it. He points out that, for the foreseeable future, conditions in Cuba would be conducive to large-scale emigration and that

> large segments of the (Cuban) population are discontent with the regime. There is no outlet for their feelings, and there is no way to make economic gains. It does not look like there will be any changes for the foreseeable future.... There will not be any political freedoms.... Conditions of oppression and economic stagnation will continue or regress. Internal conditions could lead to attempts to leave.... There will be the temptation for Castro to export dissidents, the old, and non-producers. It might take a spark to get it started. But it takes two to play. The United States has to let it happen. The attitude of the United States is an important factor and will govern whether it happens. With the attitude of the present (Reagan) administration, it would not be accepted.... The situation can change, however, and sometime in the distant future it can happen again.[6]

"It (an uncontrolled migration) will not happen under a strong US administration," says Guillermo Martinez, a prominent member of the Cuban-American community in Miami, "because he (Castro) does not want a direct confrontation with the United States." Martinez, a member of the editorial board of *The Miami Herald*, agreed that the will of the United States is critical in preventing a future exodus, but, he warns, "under a weak administration 'look out!'.... Right now there are internal and external demands for emigration

and no way to satisfy them." Martinez said that even before Mariel, some 20,000 Cuban-American families had relatives in Cuba—parents, children, brothers, sisters—with whom they wanted to reunite. The situation has become that much worse with the new arrivals from Mariel. "We need to do something to relieve the pressure," he said. "We are giving Fidel Castro the (emotional) tools to use (for another boatlift)."[7]

Based on his experience as coordinator for Latin American and Caribbean Affairs for the National Security Council during the Cuban Exodus and his continued observations as director of the Latin American and Caribbean Program at Emory University in Atlanta, Dr. Robert Pastor said,

> Another exodus can and will occur as long as Castro is in power, but I can't tell what incident will precipitate it. The potential is always there. It may be five or 10 years.... It will happen in response to unforeseen pressures—there are new and changing pressures.... The only way the boats can be stopped from going south (in the future) is through public recognition of the costs (of uncontrolled migration) involved. This deterrent will only be good as long as the memory of Mariel lasts.... While the collective memory is there, the people will not let it happen. If people forget, it will happen again.[8]

Thomas O. Enders, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, said in a statement before the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy on 31 July 1981 that an estimated one to two million Cubans would like to leave the island. He reported that approximately 200,000 Cubans already had been processed and approved by the Cuban government for emigration.[9]

An estimated 10 percent of the Cuban population (some one million people) would have left Cuba during the Boatlift if given the opportunity, Wayne S. Smith, a Cuban specialist at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, said. Smith,

formerly with the State Department, had mixed feelings about the potential for another Mariel-type exodus, however. While the pressures were there, he doubted that the Cuban government would permit another boatlift to happen because of the severe internal disruptions the 1980 Exodus caused to the Cuban society and economy. Smith reflected, however, that the longer legal immigration into the United States from Cuba is not available, "the greater the pressures will become for illegal migration." "The best way to prevent it," he said,

> is to have a working immigration agreement with Cuba. This should be done to permit the normal and orderly flow of immigration.... The US can control events by establishing immigration procedures—we need a normal flow of people.[10]

Improvements In Cuba

The dissatisfaction demonstrated by a significant segment of the Cuban population during the Mariel experience caused Castro to consider ways of relieving the austere living conditions of the Cuban people. The Cuban government established "parallel markets," in an effort to increase the availability of consumer goods; Cubans were able to buy food and materials not normally available through ration plans or government-sponsored purchasing programs. While prices at the "parallel markets" were several times higher than rationed prices, a much better selection was available. The government also initiated a modest bonus system to reward Cuban workers for above-average production. For example, a street vendor with a sales quota of 500 "sno-cones" a day received a bonus for sales above that number.[11]

For the first time since 1959, Cubans were permitted to open interest-earning bank accounts; 2 percent interest was paid on savings from $200 to $2,000. No interest was paid on accounts greater than $2,000

AP Wide World Photos

Cuban farmers sell bananas and garlic at a small "peasant market" in Havana on 19 January 1984. Fidel Castro's communist government is putting a gentle squeeze on Cuba's remaining private farmers, a hardy breed that has produced a crop of Cuban-style "millionaires."

because, as Oscar Alcade, president of the Popular Savings Bank, said, "We don't want to create people who can live on their bank interest."

Cuban officials denied, however, they were moving toward capitalism with the new policies. The "parallel

markets" provided Cubans with an alternative to buying on the black market, they said, and the savings program was justified because it reduced the supply of money in circulation—too much ready cash caused low productivity and apathy toward work. Raul Leon Torras, president of Cuba's National Bank, said, "The experience of the 60s taught us a lesson we won't forget. The worker with a lot of money but nothing to buy—what incentive does he have to work?"[12]

Dr. Juan M. Clark, a professor at Miami-Dade Community College, conducted extensive research into social conditions and repression in Cuba. In 1980, he said, Castro was shocked by the large number of people—particularly young people—who wanted to leave Cuba during the Boatlift: The Exodus made Castro realize that new programs had to be initiated to stimulate motivations and improve living conditions in the country. In addition to parallel markets, farmers were permitted to sell what they raised on private plots in "peasant markets" to increase the available supplies of fresh produce and meat.

Even the style of music for young people was liberalized to relieve some of the austerity in Cuba.[13]

Liberalization Condemned

In 1986, prior to the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, the country's economic planners hoped the economy would be even more liberalized, with perhaps a move toward decentralization. Plans for allowing privately owned taxicabs to operate through cooperatives were discussed. Rumors of ending the state monopoly on the manufacture and sale of clothing and shoes also were heard, along with a greater consideration of costs versus benefits in government projects.

Castro, however, dashed any such hopes in 1986, as he dispelled all thoughts of future economic liberalization. An announcement in Havana on 20 May, said that,

"After a six-year experiment with free enterprise, Cuban President Fidel Castro has outlawed the free farmers markets, condemning them as corrupt and neo-capitalist." The markets represented the capitalist ideology, Castro said, that was anathema to the revolution.[14]

At the close of the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in December 1986, Castro condemned Cubans who would succumb to the lures of profit motivation. He steadfastly endorsed Marxist-Leninist principles and the merits of a highly centralized economy. Castro said,

> We must demonstrate to the capitalists that we socialists, we communists, are capable of doing with pride, honor, principles, and consciousness, that we are more capable than they of solving the problems posed by a developing country ... that a communist spirit, a revolutionary will and vocation....will always be a thousand times more powerful than money!

Castro disregarded examples set by other communist countries of the world, as they moved toward more decentralized economies. The Soviet Union had begun engaging in joint ventures financed with western capital, while Communist China expanded its market economy policies begun in 1979. Denouncing such initiatives, Castro returned to hard-line communist economic theory. "Politically," Skoug said, "Castro is not influenced by the impacts of economic matters."[15]

Absolute control over all aspects of Cuban life "for the good of the country" was Castro's primary reason for preventing the liberalization of the economy. Secondly, the demonstrated success of experiments with profit and loss, and possible wider applications, would contradict communist theory—a theory to which he demanded unquestioning loyalty. Castro also saw the enticements of consumerism, and the motivations generated by the challenges of a profit-and-loss economy, as threats to his communist regime. The overwhelming presence of the

thriving capitalistic system just to the north represented a constant ideological danger to Cuba.

Castro feared any relaxation in militant communist ideology and totalitarian control could present a weakness to be exploited by the United States.

Failed Economy

In the years after the 1980 Mariel Boatlift, Cuba's economic problems steadily worsened. By 1986, the Soviet Union had increased its annual Cuban economic assistance by 50 percent. The Soviets also suspended repayment requirements on Cuba's estimated $9 billion debt to keep the Cuban economy afloat. A hurricane severely damaged Cuba's sugar crop in 1985. The resulting harvest, which was to be sold to the Soviet Union at inflated prices, was so small that it had to be supplemented with sugar purchased from the Dominican Republic to meet the USSR's export requirements. Cuba, in the past, had purchased Soviet oil at artifically deflated prices and resold unconsumed excesses internationally on the world market for hard currency. This source of revenue was lost in the 1980s because of low market prices for petroleum.[16]

Castro publicly admitted in the summer of 1986 that Cuba was experiencing its worst crisis since the beginning of the revolutionary government in 1959. He described the situation as "anarchy and chaos" and complained that the revolutionary spirit was disappearing from the Cuban population. At the end of 1986, Castro warned members of the Cuban Communist Party that the country's foreign currency earnings were expected to drop by 50 percent, from $1.2 billion to $600 million. "We never had it so bad," he said at the 2 December session. "We are going to have to be prepared for difficulties."[17]

If Cuba resolved its severe economic difficulties through decentralization and progressive social and

economic policies, or more massive foreign aid, pressures for uncontrolled migration would be lessened. But an economically viable communist Cuba would pose yet another difficult problem: A prospering communist Cuba would represent a valid totalitarian model for developing nations to emulate. Even with its dire economic conditions, Castro still proudly proclaims Cuba's achievements and actively encourages Third World countries to follow his example.

Furthermore, if Cuba were economically self-sufficient, the annual $4 billion burden the country represents for the Soviet Union could be diverted to other Soviet international endeavors; the USSR would still benefit from an ally only 90 miles from the United States. Considering the alternatives, the United States is unlikely to take actions to strengthen the Castro economy. Without the prospect of additional economic support, and considering Castro's fierce resistance to decentralization and modernization of the Cuban economy, conditions likely to precipitate migrations will continue in Cuba for the foreseeable future. Accepting this prospect, the following three options are available for the United States to control the threat of a Cuban migration:

- Be sure Castro understands the United States will protect its interests if faced with an uncontrolled mass migration supported by the Cuban government.
- Relieve migratory "push" pressures within Cuba, and "pull" pressures within the United States, through the controlled use of legal immigration. Publicize in the Cuban-American community procedures for legal immigration, and stress that illegal immigration will not be tolerated.
- Maintain a state of readiness to prevent or manage an attempted uncontrolled migration.

As with most complex problems, the application of a proper mix and balance of available options will provide the best solution.

Immigration Policy

Differing theories about policy options for Cuban immigration have been expressed. "The Department of Justice holds the theory," says Paul W. Schmidt, Acting General Counsel for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington, DC, "that the approach to Cuban immigration has to be considered in the context of the overall (US-Cuban) relationship. The possibility of normalized immigration provides Cuba with an incentive for the future.... The current restrictions on immigration can be used as bargaining chips with Castro to prevent a future exodus. We do not want any more Mariels." Schmidt does not think the United States should unilaterally reinstate normal immigration with Cuba without receiving a concession on important outstanding immigration issues, such as the repatriation of the Mariel "excludables," criminals and mental patients ineligible for immigration, who arrived with the Boatlift. The 1984 "Mariel Agreement" for the return of the excludables was suspended on 20 May 1985 over the issue of *Radio Marti*.[18]

To exert further pressure on Cuba to reinstate the 1984 "Mariel Agreement," President Reagan, on 22 August 1986, barred the admission of Cubans applying for entry visas through third countries, such as Panama, Spain, or Mexico. Diplomatic posts were not to issue immigration visas to Cubans who arrived in "third countries" after 22 August 1986. This action, based on a National Security Decision Directive approved by the President, removed the only remaining avenue for Cubans without immediate family in the United States to enter the country legally. The presidential action was intended to deny Castro the benefits of emigration to the United States, as long as he ignored Cuba's responsibilities under terms of the "Mariel Agreement."[19]

Other observers, such as Wayne Smith, feel the best way to prevent another mass migration is to provide more means for legal immigration.

Jack Watson, President Carter's Chief of Staff, said, "We need to regularize immigration from Cuba. Pressures (for illegal migration) will continue to grow in Cuba without some form of emigration."

Despite differing views on the matter of illegal migration, no one disagrees that the United States needs a plan for an organized, consistent, and decisive response to a threatened mass Cuban migration. Readiness to control another Mariel situation may be the most significant deterrent to such a boatlift. Such a plan could cause Castro to reconsider initiating an exodus that would be frustrated by, or possibly provoke a retaliation from, the United States.

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Future Strategy

Any person who ... brings to or attempts to bring to the United States in any manner whatsoever, such alien ... shall, for each transaction ...—(A) be fined ... or imprisoned not more than one year or both; or (B) in the case of—(i) a second or subsequent offense (ii) an offense done for the purpose of commercial advantage or private financial gain, or (iii) an offense in which the alien is not upon arrival immediately brought to an appropriate immigration officer at a designated port of entry—be fined ... or imprisoned not more than five years or both.

Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
Public Law 99-603, 5 November 1986

PASSAGE OF THE IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986 demonstrated the Nation's commitment to gain control over its borders. After Congress failed to approve immigration reform legislation in 1982, 1983, and 1985, the 1986 bill easily passed both Houses. While the new law was devoted primarily to illegal entry across land borders, it also dealt with the threat of uncontrolled migrations by sea.

The section entitled *Unlawful Transportation of Aliens to the United States* established criminal penalties for bringing undocumented aliens into the country, regardless of circumstances. Passage of the law was

clear indication of the nation's resolve not to tolerate vessels leaving the United States to go to Cuba and return with undocumented aliens. No doubt or confusion should exist about the legal authority of the US Government to stop a boatlift in the future.

Early Threat

Less than a month after the last boat sailed from Mariel Harbor on 26 September 1980, rumors began circulating in Miami that the Cuban Boatlift would be resumed. Alerted to the possibility by various Government sources and reports from individuals with contacts in Cuba, the south Florida Federal infrastructure immediately began reviewing events of the previous five months, and assessing its readiness to deal with another boatlift. The Justice Department's Office of the US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida had emerged from the past crisis as local coordinator for the Federal Government's response to an immigration emergency. The US Attorney, Atlee W. Wampler, III, quickly established the Cuban-Haitian Boat Flotilla Task Force Executive Committee, and called a series of meetings to address the possible emergency. Wampler, who had gained valuable experience during the previous crisis, recognized the importance of a rapid reaction to control the situation. The first meeting of the Task Force Executive Committee,* held on 24 October 1980 in the US Attorney's office, addressed "contingency planning regarding a possible resumption of the Cuban Boat Flotilla." During the first meeting, also attended

* Agency heads who served as the Task Force Executive Committee included Robert N. Battard, Regional Commissioner of the Customs Service; Donald B. Forsht, US Marshal; Raymond A. Morris, District Director of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service; Rear Admiral Benedict L. Stabile, Commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District; Robert C. Daniels, Bureau of Disaster Preparedness, State of Florida; and Wampler.

by representatives from the State of Florida, members of the committee agreed to review preparations for another boatlift; reports indicated another exodus could occur as early as 5 November 1980.

The chaotic experience of the previous five months had made the agencies particularly wary of such a possibility. In subsequent meetings, responsibilities for a coordinated response to a future boatlift were outlined. The resulting 1980 Contingency Plan was based largely on lessons learned during the previous crisis.

To control boats being trailered south to Key West, the Border Patrol was ready to establish a checkpoint at Florida City, where Highway US 1 leads into the Keys. Personnel from Florida's State Highway Patrol and Department of Criminal Law Enforcement, and Florida National Guard troops, would assist the Border Patrol by checking for proper Florida documentation of boats and vehicles, and ensuring that taxes and license fees had been paid. State officials would impound improperly documented vehicles at the checkpoint.

Federal agents assigned to the checkpoint were to advise persons traveling into the Keys on US 1 with boats of the penalties for bringing undocumented aliens into the United States. They also would record the names of vehicle operators and the identifications of boats being trailered; warnings against violating criminal statutes would be documented.

The Customs Service was to provide a mobile terminal for the Treasury Enforcement Computer System and personnel for 24-hour, round-the-clock operations at the checkpoint. Individuals and boats would be checked against the computer system's data bank to detect violations of the President's order during the previous Boatlift. Coast Guard and Customs Service officials were to prepare questions to be asked at the checkpoint for determining the intentions of people trailering boats into the Keys; the US Attorney's office was to review legal implications of the questions.

The Coast Guard would deploy cutters to the Florida Straits, establishing a barrier to intercept southbound boats enroute to Cuba. Small patrol cutters also

would be positioned at harbor entrances to check vessels leaving Key West, Miami, and other south Florida ports. Coast Guard radio stations were ready to transmit Urgent Marine Information Broadcasts, warning boats not to go to Cuba to pick up undocumented aliens.

Teams of Immigration, Customs, and Coast Guard personnel, who would process arriving Cuban refugees in Key West, were placed on standby. The US Attorney was ready to assign an Assistant US Attorney in charge of Federal teams preparing for 24-hour, round-the-clock operations at the arrival site. The US Attorney's office also made ready to issue press releases explaining the intent of the Federal Government to halt any future boatlift, and describing the preparations being made.

The State of Florida was ready to assign National Guard troops to marinas from Fort Lauderdale on the east coast south through the Keys and up the west coast to Tampa. Guard personnel were to check for violations of Florida laws, such as improperly documented boats, out-of-date certificates, improperly licensed boats, trailers, and vehicles, and improper storage of gasoline. The State also was prepared to suspend the licenses of marina operators who dispensed gasoline into unauthorized containers.

In providing leadership for the Federal organization, Wampler served as the local point of contact with the White House, the US Attorney General, and the Governor of Florida. Wampler was prepared to ask for a presidential declaration of a state of emergency, in the event the threatened boatlift materialized. The agencies were ready to act when confirmed reports were received that vessels or aircraft were attempting to depart the United States with intentions of returning with illegal aliens. Difficult lessons had been learned during the previous chaotic months.[1]

Everyone recognized the essential need to react quickly to a developing situation; adequate resources had to be committed right away. In addition to getting personnel and equipment into operation, the agencies recognized the importance of the public's appreciation of

the determination of Federal organizations to enforce the law. Clear and consistent statements concerning the coordinated activities of Federal and Florida agencies were to be issued expeditiously.

As rumors subsided—and the pending threat failed to materialize—the agencies cautiously returned to their normal functions. The reaction, however, had been beneficial. Attention was focused on the possible resumption of the Boatlift; agency plans were reviewed and refined and organizational relationships were reconfirmed.

Immigration Emergency Plan

In 1982, faced with the continuing potential for an uncontrolled migration from Cuba, President Ronald Reagan directed the Attorney General to coordinate plans for a Federal response to future mass migrations. The Justice Department in Washington drafted a basic immigration emergency plan, and sent it on to the US Attorney in Miami. The US Attorney was to coordinate with other Federal agencies, the State of Florida, and local law enforcement agencies to prepare specific provisions for implementing the plan.

MIAMI Leon B. Kellner, then Chief of the Civil Division of the US Attorney's Office in Miami, was assigned to prepared a detailed plan for a "prompt response to a massive, sudden, and illegal migration." While the plan was designed primarily to respond to another Cuban Mariel-type boatlift—involving large numbers of aliens arriving by sea in the Florida area—the plan also was to be comprehensive enough to deal with illegal migrations from other areas of the Caribbean.[2]

The US Border Patrol's Chief Patrol Agent in Miami in 1982 was Robert A. Adams, Jr. He had the responsibility for preparing the major portion of the plan—the

Law Enforcement segment. He chaired the committee that addressed the operational aspects of controlling an illegal migration. The Justice Department defined the threat that the overall plan was to counter. Adams said the US Attorney's organization in Miami used the given "threat" and built on the framework of the master plan provided by Washington. Adams considered the Justice Department's lead role for producing the plan as appropriate, saying, "The Immigration and Naturalization Service had the lead, because it was primarily an INS problem.... There was no problem with one agency being in charge. Everyone accepted the Border Patrol managing the (law enforcement) situation."[3]

In addition to effective law enforcement, the US Attorney's Office also recognized the importance of public relations in controlling a boatlift situation. Kellner said the essential need for convincing the Cuban-Americans not to take their boats to Cuba was obvious—the government had to vigorously publicize the prohibition against an uncontrolled boatlift. "The Cuban-Americans in Miami are law abiding and solicitous of Government edict," he said. "The message has to be sent to the Cuban-American community

> clearly indicating that the United States would not permit people to go to get their relatives. A consistent message had to come from the authorities of Federal, State (Florida), and local governments.... If the boats leave from Florida, we are lost![4]

In preparing the 1982 Plan, Kellner assessed the causes of the 1980 influx. Based on his research, he concluded, "The key reason Mariel was successful for Cuba was the Carter administration—through word and deed—permitted it to happen.... The message put out to the Cuban-Americans was that it was all right to go to Cuba to get your relatives. Mixed signals were sent.... Affirmative signals were sent to the Cuban-American community."

Rear Admiral John W. Kime, as a captain, was the Coast Guard's liaison with the US Attorney's Office

during preparation of the Mass Migration Plan. He agreed with Kellner on the importance of communicating with the Cuban-American community. "Not enough was done to involve the Hispanic community in the planning process," Kime said. "In a future situation

> we need to talk to the Spanish language radio stations and newspapers and solicit their cooperation. The momentum of a boatlift can be fueled or dampened by what the Spanish language media says. Appeals for more reason could lessen the emotional response.[5]

WASHINGTON During the 1980 Cuban Boatlift, the White House was directly involved in coordinating the Federal response. Unfortunately, the exercise of control at such a high level limited flexibility and constructive oversight in both Washington and south Florida. Since the reaction to a mass illegal migration basically involves law enforcement, in future situations the Attorney General and the Justice Department logically should be designed to coordinate the Federal response. Based on their mission responsibilities, the various agencies of the Department would have major roles in a future immigration emergency. Specific Justice Department field components and headquarters staffs in Washington that would be involved directly are: the US Attorneys, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Border Patrol, US Marshal Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Bureau of Prisons.

FLORIDA The State of Florida revealed considerable ambivalence toward the Justice Department's Mass Migration Plan. In private, Florida officials acknowledged the serious impacts another uncontrolled migration could have on the State, and assured their willingness to help prevent one from happening again. Publicly, however, they recognized the political difficulty of endorsing a plan that was potentially

discriminatory and against the interests of the influential Cuban-American communities in the State. Florida officials also felt strongly that the Federal Government had not adequately reimbursed the State for the considerable expenses incurrred during the 1980 refugee influx.

While, unofficially, Florida expressed its willingness to cooperate with the plan; officially, the State never approved it. Florida officials disagreed with some of the preventive measures proposed, Adams said, for economic reasons. "Florida objected strenuously to the Coast Guard's plan, for example, for restricting marina operations," he said, "because of the impact on tourism and private enterprise."[6]

"Florida was not as actively involved (in preparing the Plan) as the Coast Guard hoped," said Admiral Kime, who attended the coordinating meetings during preparation of the plan. He said,

> The State was preoccupied with reimbursement of all costs. Florida had some honest complaints about the costs the State had been subjected to (in 1980) but not to cooperate fully in the preparation of the Plan to prevent another boatlift could have caused even greater consequences.[7]

Kime said that Florida representatives were extremely sensitive to the politics of the situation, recognizing a future boatlift could seriously hurt the State, but felt that another influx was not absolutely certain. They felt participating publicly in a plan that could be perceived as prejudicial against the Cuban-American community, and disruptive to economic activities of the State, would be bad politics. "The State preferred to take the shorter-range view," Kime said. "They preferred to risk

> the possibility of having less than adequate preparation.... The Coast Guard felt that the Governor's office overestimated the negative impact of participating in the preparation of the Plan with the Cuban-Americans. Actually, the Cuban-Americans were very much against letting it happen again.[8]

When preparing for the future, the difficult issues encountered in the 1980 situation have to be addressed.

Enforcement Concepts

The adequacy of the Government's legal authority to prevent or control a boatlift is a continuing concern. Even when laws are adequate, the question still remains, "Can or will appropriate *preventive* actions be initiated?" A strong predilection for reactive law enforcement was demonstrated in 1980. Enforcing emphasis was placed on penalizing boat operators after they returned to the United States with refugees on board, rather than preventing the boats from departing for Cuba. While reactive enforcement avoids difficult legal issues, it does little to stem the emotional flow of illegal aliens.

A strong position for such a reactive posture can be expected in a future illegal migration situation. Despite recognition that stopping boats from going south is the only effective way to prevent an illegal influx from Cuba, legal authorities probably would recommend against enforcing such a prohibition: Departure controls can be viewed as an infringement on individual rights. During the development of Federal plans for responding to a future boatlift, Kime said the Coast Guard quickly perceived the reactive emphasis and expressed concerns for the issue of interdiction. "To the Justice Department and the Border Patrol, interdiction meant intercepting the vessels returning with refugees," he said. "The Coast Guard raised the issue

> of interdicting the southbound boats right away.... The Plan was heavily weighted toward waiting for the return of the people and handling the enforcement after the fact.... The Federal agencies need to make a massive effort to restrict the boats from going south.... We need to stress prevention. We need to attack the problem before the boats get into the water.... Interdiction on the water by itself won't do it with the resources we have available. We have to keep the boats out of the Keys.... Once they (the boats) get on the water, they are more difficult to stop.

The Coast Guard stressed the failure of the Plan to address actions to prevent the boats from leaving for Cuba. While the Border Patrol was supportive of expanding the scope of the plan, Kime said, "They did not go far enough.... It (the Plan) is better than what we had in 1980, but it still does not address the real issue of the southbound boats."[9]

Andrew J. Carmichael, acting Associate Commissioner for Examinations for the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the time of the Boatlift, did not agree with a reactive posture. "We should be in a position to take preventative action," he said, basing his remarks on his experience gained in operational and legal positions with the Service. Carmichael also felt strongly about not relying solely on reactive deterrence in the future. "We have to 'nip it quickly,'" he said. "While we have to do both—take reactive action as well as preventive—the focus however should be on the preventive."[10]

"Responding rapidly is the only effective way (to control a boatlift)," Wampler said, adding that

> hesitating causes the system to go out of control.... I would recommend a 'state of emergency' be instituted at the earliest possible time in a developing situation.... I would recommend to the Attorney General that the rules of arrest and indictment be relaxed to take action in the National interest to let the public know that adverse actions will not be tolerated.[11]

Reflecting on the ambivalence caused by the conflict between national interests and individual rights, Wampler added, "I know that sounds awful from a human rights viewpoint."

Prompt, forceful, and consistent actions generally were recognized as crucial for controlling a refugee situation before it developed emotional momentum. The legality of such actions, however, was not clear.

Legislation

In the author's opinion, divergent views still exist about legal sanctions available to prevent a future boatlift. Views also differ on the effectiveness of specific legislation to control migration. Schmidt said provisions of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act were reactive and only "increased our ability to take action after the fact." He felt "the key to controlling such a situation is public opinion. We have to convince the people not to do it."[12]

Kellner said, "If Castro says to the Cuban-Americans, 'Come and get your relatives,' the only way to stop the migration is to prevent the boats from going to Cuba." He agreed with Schmidt, however, and added that he did not think existing laws gave the Federal agencies authority to take preemptive actions.

Wampler said that the boatlift could have been stopped by aggressive legal action "even if there was not adequate proof to support the cases." Considering his experience with the Mariel Boatlift, Wampler advocated a broad application of existing laws. "The use of laws against trading with the enemy was difficult to support," he said, "but we should have been ready to do what ever was necessary."[13]

Unfortunately, even if specific laws designed to frustrate a boatlift were available, the question remains, would they be vigorously enforced by a potentially sympathetic judicial system? In 1980, "there was a serious lack of cooperation from the judicial system in the enforcement of the immigration laws," Wampler said. "The judges looked for loopholes to let the people step through. They were politically motivated acts.... It was hard to believe that they (the judges) would fail to support the intent of the Congress through their actions."[14]

"The laws are not adequate," Commander John E. Shkor, Legal Officer for the Seventh Coast Guard District in Miami during the Boatlift, said of the legal authority for stopping a boatlift,

> and I doubt that they can ever be made adequate.... It was a foreign relations matter involving the northward migration of populations. The situation is not susceptible to unilateral resolution by the application of domestic US laws.... Domestic laws can reduce the flow but not stop it.[15]

With regard to the specific issue of US laws to deter boats from going to Cuba to bring back foreign nationals, Shkor said, "Losses in the courts and the lenient penalties demonstrated an inadequacy of US law for that narrow purpose." He commented, however, that if the enforcement agencies had been able to respond immediately with enough resources, the situation with the southbound boats could have been controlled even with marginally effective laws. "It was the availability and application of resources that was critical," he said, "and not the appropriateness of the laws."[16]

The momentum of a boatlift can be frustrated through vigorous enforcement actions, even if sympathetic courts later dismiss the charges. A comprehensive and enthusiastic effort to stop all boats intent on going to Cuba through the use of physical seizures, even if based on questionable legal authority, could discourage and frustrate a boatlift attempt. But to consciously embark on such a course of action, knowing that the laws probably were insufficient to support the measures, would be an abuse of power. The question then is ends versus means.

The dichotomy of the views of legal specialists was apparent. Each clearly identified stringent actions needed to control the difficult illegal migration situation and protect national interests. But, on reflection, they also addressed the unacceptability of abuse of individual rights. "The United States ... still believes in 'due process' and 'constitutional rights,'" Shkor reflects. "The United States will not take measures that could control future migrations if they were inconsistent with our broader ideals."[17]

The desire to protect individual rights through due process, however, may result in an exploitable situation

for Castro. Appropriate authorities must examine, debate, and resolve these difficult issues well before the crisis occurs. When boats begin to sail to Cuba, firm enforcement actions, which everyone identifies as being so crucial to effectively controlling a migration attempt, must be implemented immediately. Waiting until the boats begin returning to Florida will be too late.

"The INS laws are adequate," said Carmichael. In his opinion, the problem was not the sufficiency of legislation. "We have the law and resources," he said. "It is the will to enforce that is required."[18]

"Legislation is not the answer," said Craig O. Raynsford, Associate Counsel General for the INS. "It will take an executive order." A future situation has to be treated as a military operation, Raynsford said about the appropriateness of existing laws for controlling a mass migration. "Close the ports and don't let the boats go south.... Legislation is adequate but not the answer."[19]

Executive Orders

Executive Orders, based in law, are emergency instruments used in extraordinary circumstances to authorize rapid law enforcement measures for protecting national interests, while providing appropriate considerations for individual rights. Faced with a verifiable threat of an illegal migration by sea, the President can declare such an "emergency." And under a presidentially declared "state of emergency," the trailering of boats into the Florida Keys could be controlled, as well as the egress of boats destined for Cuba from south Florida ports.* Perhaps of even greater importance than the effectiveness of the

* Cuba does not have enough boats to sustain a boatlift of the magnitude of the Mariel experience. If boats were used for another exodus, in all probability, they would have to come from the United States.

actual measures authorized is the demonstrated determination of the US Government not to permit another situation to develop.

During the 1980 Boatlift, the first wave of boats to go to Cuba were smaller, private craft easily trailered south through the Florida Keys. Most of the boats in the first wave, which actually triggered the overall rush to Mariel, were not capable of making the voyage from a greater distance than Key West. Even with the boats departing from Key West, the closest point to Cuba (only 100 miles), the Coast Guard was almost overwhelmed by responding to boats that got lost, ran out of fuel, or became disabled with mechanical problems: the Coast Guard assisted approximately 1,400 vessels during the Exodus. Rescue assistance was provided to 190 boats on a single day in April, when the rush of smaller boats south was beginning.

Based on the 1980 experience, preventing these smaller vessels from reaching Key West would blunt the initial thrust toward Cuba. Once they were controlled, the fear of seizures and penalties through enforcement actions by Federal agencies, and warning statements, would discourage profit-motivated larger commercial vessels from hiring out to transport large numbers of refugees from Cuba.

The White House can draft Presidential proclamations and Executive Orders for use in future mass migration emergencies. The presidential "Declaration of a National Emergency," which authorizes extraordinary law enforcement powers, however, would be an exceptional act on the part of the President. It would invoke unusual powers of the Chief Executive generally reserved for extreme situations. Such an action, impacting on constitutional rights of individual citizens, would have its attendant political impacts. Had President Carter foreseen the magnitude of the Mariel Boatlift, he probably would have invoked his extraordinary powers to diminish the Exodus and its consequences. With a presidential election pending, the President took a more cautious, measured approach to the situation. In the

future, events probably would escalate in the same incremental fashion.

The author believes an emergency declaration is not an action an administration would take lightly; undoubtedly, it would be given thorough deliberation. In the early stages of a threatened migration, information needed to make such a difficult decision probably would be speculative—hard evidence to support an emergency declaration would be lacking. Yet, in the critical initial stages of an immigration emergency, when decisive action must be taken quickly, little time would be available to wait for confirming data.

If a state of emergency were declared early enough to have the desired effect—to discourage Cuban-Americans from making further efforts to take boats to Cuba—another boatlift could be averted, and the apparent need for the declaration never would materialize. At that point, success could become a political liability: Critics could claim that the White House had overreacted with enforcement measures when no real danger of another influx existed.

Success actually could become a political liability.

SECURITY ZONES From the very beginning of the 1980 Mariel Boatlift, the importance of keeping boats from being trailered into the southern Keys for launching toward Cuba was recognized. To accomplish this restriction, an extension of the Coast Guard's authority to create security zones in an emergency, under Title 50, United States Code, Section 191 (50 USC 191), was considered. The statute provides that the Coast Guard could exclude persons and vessels from an area

> whenever the President finds that the security of the United States is endangered by reason of actual or threatened war, or subversive activity, *or of disturbances or threatened disturbances of the international relations of the United States*, the President is authorized to institute such measures and issue such rules and regulations—(emphasis added).

The Justice Department addressed the implementation of such a "Security Zone" in July 1980, while the Cuban Boatlift was in progress. Based on an inquiry from the White House, Associate Deputy Attorney General Paul R. Michael requested the Office of Legal Counsel to investigate the feasibility of the Federal Government preventing boats from being towed over the Route 1 causeways into the Florida Keys. The reply indicated that a move by the Coast Guard to establish a security zone on causeways south from the Florida mainland to Key West was "arguable," under 50 USC 191, but that no precedent existed for the use of the statute in that fashion. "We cannot conclude, on the basis of our research thus far, that the Government could not establish a security zone which would encompass the denial of access by boats to the Keys areas at a point on Route 1. After considerable discussion," the reply from the Office of Legal Counsel said. It concluded,

> Given the constitutional and statutory questions raised, however, we believe a good deal more analysis of the legal issues would have to be accomplished before we could conclude with any confidence that there is authority to prevent boats from proceeding beyond a certain point along Route 1 absent probable cause to believe that a specific boat will be used to violate federal law.[20]

Responding again to the White House on 3 September 1980 after further analysis of the constitutionality, feasibility, and utility of checkpoints on Route US 1, the Legal Counsel said that a checkpoint would be constitutionally permissible, if the questions asked would be sufficient to establish a planned attempt to land illegally undocumented aliens.

The Coast Guard already was conducting such questioning on the water. The Attorney General said the checkpoint should be operated by INS, with assistance of other agencies. The memo concluded that since the number of boats attempting to reach Cuba from Key West had decreased drastically,

> the utility or benefits of the checkpoint appears to be highly limited. However, if the Cuban-American Community in Florida were to begin a new flotilla of small boats, departing from the Keys, the checkpoint would be very helpful. Therefore, we recommend that further planning proceed but that this option be held in reserve for this contingency.[21]

TRANSIT ZONES Captain Richard A. Applebaum, who served as a commanding officer afloat during the Exodus, and later as the Seventh Coast Guard District's Legal Officer, suggested the establishment of "Maritime Immigration Enforcement Zones," in connection with a presidentially declared emergency. These zones would be specifically defined areas of the sea, in which emergency enforcement actions would be authorized for appropriate Federal agencies. US authorities would enforce US laws on US vessels. Signing of an appropriate document to address a specific situation could trigger the implementation of these "enforcement zones." This approach, Appelbaum felt, could reduce the impact on Florida's legitimate marine activities, while controlling southbound bo[illegible]. "A number of 11th Circuit Court of Appeals decisions," he said,

> have been highly supportive of the Coast Guard's broad 'highseas jurisdiction' under 14 USC 89 (Title 14, United States Code, Section 89), the Coast Guard's basic law enforcement authority. The decisions connote nothing but support.[22]

Recent changes have been made in interpretations of the Magnuson Act, Appelbaum pointed out, indicating that a "state of emergency" may not be required to invoke the act. In a situation in which the Magnuson Act, or a similar statute, was invoked for a specific port, he said, egress from the port could be controlled through a "clearance process" enforced by US Federal agencies.

Official instructions for clearing the port could be issued in the Federal Register and republished by local

media. Departing boats would be required to obtain clearance certificates from the Coast Guard Captain of the Port or the Port Director of Customs, specifying the purpose and duration of the voyage. Boats departing the Florida Keys would be checked for proper clearance. This system would allow legitimate maritime activities to continue, while discouraging boat operators intent on breaking the law.

The requirement to obtain a clearance certificate alone would discourage many people from going to Cuba—they would be reluctant to engage in the outright deception required to obtain the clearance. The need for such a clearance requirement, a visible demonstration of the readiness of the Federal Government to take action, would proclaim US determination not to accept another boatlift.

Shkor also recommended a similar approach for controlling southbound boats, through the establishment of "transit zones," through which voyages would be illegal for US vessels or citizens without proper authorization. Advantages of a maritime enforcement zone approach to the problem include the following:

- Limiting interference with normal boating activities and individual rights, a specific action that can be implemented quickly for a specific reason.
- Removing provocative enforcement actions from the busy inshore waters.
- Using existing Coast Guard authority to enforce Federal laws at sea.

Kellner said that "the creation of transit zones which would require boats in the zone to have a certificate of authorization could be effective."[23]

CARGO SHIPS The use of larger ships of varying nationalities still represents a considerable threat, to which the United States is vulnerable. To imagine the United States using force to prevent shiploads of refugees—men, women, and children of all ages and physical conditions—from landing in the United States would

be difficult. Leaving them adrift indefinitely in a vessel of questionable safety, regardless of whether food, water, and medical supplies were available, also is very doubtful. Castro, on the other hand, may have fewer qualms about using force to prevent such ships from returning to Cuba. Diverting vessels to another country, such as the Bahamas, with the cooperation of its government,* would only be a temporary solution, as the refugees ultimately would arrive in the United States. Contingency plans that simply say that such vessels will not be allowed to land, or that they will be sent back to Cuba, are unrealistic.

Strengthened sanctions against vessels and owners engaging in such activities, enacted since 1980, has lessened, to some extent, the threatened use of larger ships. The potential loss of a major capital investment, such as a merchant ship, would discourage most owners from engaging in such activities. The one-time, expendable use of low-cost ships to carry refugees, experienced in the 1980 Boatlift, still represents a difficult threat to defend against.

Crucial Decision

After the national dilemma of the 1980 Cuban Boatlift, one could reasonably assume that US Federal agencies have emergency plans ready for implementation. Additional legislation has strengthened the ability of the United States to protect its borders against illegal immigration. While some questions remain about the effectiveness of specific legislative provisions, the political act of passing the law affirmed the resolve of the United States to gain

* The possibility of arranging such cooperation is very unlikely. During the past several years, the Bahamian government has been making concerted efforts to expel illegal aliens, primarily Haitians, from its islands. Work permits previously issued to the Haitians have been revoked.

control over its borders. Existing US laws generally provide adequate legal authority for the agencies to stop uncontrolled migration. Federal resources and personnel, in place in Florida and supplemented by Florida State and local resources, can put emergency plans into operation on short notice.

The final, and most important, link in the chain of preparations to defend against a future boatlift is executive decisionmaking. To be effective, decisions must be made and actions initiated without delay. While advanced preparations have improved the mechanisms for facilitating a quick response to an influx, the difficult decision to act must still be made by appropriate authority. Indecisive actions, compromises, or minor incremental escalations in response to a developing boatlift actually could encourage people to break the law in desperate, emotional bids to reunite with family members. As happened in 1980, Cuban-Americans will interpret Government actions to coincide with their own interest; tentative enforcement efforts could be misconstrued as acquiescence.

Castro, who exercises absolute control over the Cuban population, undoubtedly will time a future exodus attempt to come when the attention of US leadership is diverted by domestic or international crises. Or he may choose a time when executive confidence or commitment is in doubt, such as during a presidential election, a change in administrations, or a debilitating period of competition between the President and the Congress—a time of hesitancy and reluctance to take firm and decisive action.

Castro must be made to understand and appreciate the unequivocal position of the United States not to accept a future uncontrolled migration from Cuba ... and this position should be reaffirmed periodically so there is no misunderstanding. Members of Cuban-American communities also must understand that the United States will not tolerate individuals going by boat to Cuba to retrieve relatives.

In presenting such positions, the US Government must make clear its continuing efforts to restore normal immigration from Cuba, with due regard for national interests.

Epilogue

Something surprises me as a Cuban: to think that a person would rather live in a prison in another country than to return to his country of birth.

Augustine A. Roman, Auxiliary
Bishop of Miami, 29 November 1987

As dawn broke on Sunday, 22 November 1987, traces of black smoke still smudged the blue sky above the Federal Detention Center near Oakdale, Louisiana. During the night, the 7,000 residents of the town of Oakdale watched the orange glow over the pinewood forest as rampaging Cuban detainees set the Detention Center ablaze. Inmates armed with makeshift weapons searched out guards and employees who had been trapped within the prison compound's 12-foot perimeter fence when the rioting began.

Before the night was over, 28 hostages had been seized.

Cuban and US representatives meeting in Mexico City concluded their negotiations on the 1984 Mariel Agreement shortly before midnight on Thursday, 19 November 1987. They had agreed to reinstate the 1984 agreement and resume the repatriation of more than 2,500 Cuban criminals and mental patients, *Marielitos* from the 1980 Cuban Boatlift. In return for Cuba's acceptance of these "excludables," the United States agreed to admit 3,000 former Cuban political prisoners and

reestablish normal immigration from the island, admitting up to 20,000 Cuban immigrants per year. The negotiated agreement was announced jointly in Washington and Havana on Friday, 20 November 1987.[1]

When news of the agreement spread through Federal facilities holding Cuban detainees, fear of being forced to return to Cuba caused mounting tensions among the inmates. At the newly constructed Oakdale Federal Detention Center, 85 miles northwest of Baton Rouge, many Cuban inmates were angered by the news; they had believed they soon would be released to "halfway houses" or to relatives in the United States, when their cases were reviewed. With the announcement of the new Mariel Agreement, they feared the hearings would be suspended and they would be forced to return to Cuba.

A minor disturbance in the cafeteria at the Oakdale Detention Center on Friday was quickly brought under control—the incident was not considered to be significant. On Saturday morning, however, tensions continued to mount and Warden J. R. Johnson doubled the number of guards on duty. Walking through the Center, Johnson reassured the inmates, telling them not to overreact to rumors of the new agreement. The situation at the facility remained relatively calm throughout the day. The $17.5 million Oakdale Center had been opened in April 1986 as a processing point for people seeking political asylum and as an expulsion point for illegal aliens. Later that year, the Center became a primary facility for processing and rehabilitating Cubans from the Federal prison in Atlanta.[2]

Rioting erupted at Oakdale late Saturday afternoon as guards were escorting prisoners from housing units to the dining facility for the evening meal. Without warning, hundreds of Cuban inmates broke ranks and charged the perimeter fence. The unarmed escorting guards chased after the Cubans but could not regain control of them. Unable to scale the barbwire fence, the Cuban detainees rushed the main gate, but were turned back by Warden Johnson and seven guards armed with 12-gauge shotguns—the mob retreated without a shot being fired. Once

the prisoners realized they could not get past the fence, they stormed the prison buildings, seizing as many hostages as they could find.[3]

Leon Smith, a guard at the Detention Center for the past 11 months, was taken hostage during the uprising. When the riot first began, he said, most of the inmates were not participating but were trying to get back to their dormitories away from the turmoil. The prison guards, however, following emergency procedures for a disturbance, had locked the inmates out of the barracks. Unable to find refuge, the prisoners joined in the rioting.[4]

Throughout the night, the 1,000 Cuban detainees rampaged through the 38-acre Detention Center, ferreting out hostages and setting buildings on fire. By morning, the Chapel, Law Office, and Deportation Building were burned to the ground. The Main Administration Building had been gutted and flames had damaged the Barracks and Cafeteria.

News of the reinstated Mariel Agreement also caused anxiety among the Mariel Boatlift detainees at other Federal detention facilities. Officials at the Detention Center in Laredo, Texas, which held 77 Cuban detainees, told the Cubans they probably would not be affected by the negotiated agreement. Seventeen of the inmates were not reassured, however, and escaped through a hole in the roof of the minimum security containment building. In a matter of hours, 14 escapees were recaptured in a brushy area near the Center; the search continued for the remaining three.[5]

By Sunday morning, 22 November, the situation at Oakdale was at a standoff; Cuban detainees controlling the Detention Center threatened to kill the hostages if any attempt were made to retake the prison by force. An additional 300 Federal, State, and local law enforcement agents were rushed to the scene during the night and joined 350 Detention Center staff members in patrolling the perimeter of the complex to prevent inmates from escaping. As Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) officials began negotiating with the inmates through the facility's gates, the central demand was only too clear:

Cuban detainees desperately did not want to return to Cuba.

Joseph S. Petrovsky, warden of the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, reported that the situation there was normal on Saturday, in spite of the uprising in Louisiana. No unusual security steps had been taken at the Atlanta Penitentiary, which housed 1,392 Cubans—the largest concentration in the United States—including the most hardened of the Mariel criminals. On Sunday morning, 22 November, J. Michael Quinlan, Director of the Federal BOP, and Warden Petrovsky decided against a "lock-down" (confining prisoners to their cells). Since the prisoners had shown no indications of unrest, they felt such an action might heighten tensions.[6]

After the original Mariel Agreement for the return of "excludables" to Cuba was signed in 1984, mounting unrest had caused a "lock-down" at the Atlanta Penitentiary. The prisoners confined to their cells had rioted, breaking windows, destroying their furnishings, and burning their mattresses. No hostages were taken, however.

Cuban detainees have demonstrated a propensity for reacting violently to deportation threats. Some of them destroyed a newly constructed multimillion-dollar Immigration and Naturalization Service detention center in Dade County, Florida, when the first Mariel Agreement was announced in 1984. As early as 1980, frustrated Cuban arrivals burned barracks at Army camps where they were detained.

On Monday morning, 23 November 1986, two days after the Oakdale riot, 300 Cuban prisoners in the Industries Building at the Atlanta Penitentiary went on strike and refused to work. The situation escalated when electronic "body alarms" were triggered from the Broom Factory. As inmates closed in, guards hit buttons on their personal alarms, sending signals requesting help. Twelve guards were quickly seized as hostages, and the building was set on fire. The violence rapidly spread throughout the prison, with more Cuban inmates joining the rioting. Detainee Jose Penz Perz was shot and killed by a tower

guard when he attacked a correctional officer with a knife; four other detainees were wounded by gunfire.[7]

The fire spread to two more buildings of the Atlanta Penitentiary, called the "Big A" by the prison's 1,900 Cuban and American inmates.* As the prisoners took over the 23-acre Penitentiary, National Guard troops, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Atlanta city police, and Georgia State troopers cordoned off the prison. Officials watched from beyond the 37-foot-high limestone walls as fires burned out of control; Atlanta city firefighters were unable to reach the burning buildings. National Guard helicopters dropped 250-gallon loads of water from the air in attempts to keep the flames from spreading. Some 400 additional FBI agents were dispatched to the Atlanta Penitentiary to assist prison officials, and another 400 FBI agents were sent to Oakdale.[8]

The Atlanta prisoners organized themselves into three groups—"Cuba," "Atlanta One," and "Atlanta Two"—one in each of three separate cell blocks; they used captured portable transceivers to communicate with one another. Systematically searching the prison, the inmates took 75 guards and Federal employees as hostages and burned the prison's Broom Factory, Warehouse, and Recreation Center. Prisoners who did not take part in the rioting surrendered themselves to authorities when given the opportunity. By Thursday, 26 November, 415 inmates—241 Cubans and 174 Americans—had been voluntarily transferred to other Federal prisons. BOP officials in Washington reported that precautions had been taken at 24 other Federal facilities holding Mariel detainees after the takeover at the Atlanta Penitentiary. Cuban prisoners at Federal

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* Based on a US Justice Department decision to continue operating the 85-year-old Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta, a five-year renovation program was begun in 1984. The Federal BOP was allocated $63 million to modernize the ancient facility, the oldest Federal prison in the United States, once a "home" for noted gangster Al Capone.

Table 6
Status of Mariel arrivals in the United States

Detained	Released
125,000 arrivals	
	103,000 released immediately
22,000 detained by Federal Government	
	20,200 political prisoners or minor offenses
1,800	
1,200 suspected criminals	
600 serious mental cases	
	1,590 released
210 never released	

(Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, for a chart, "What Happened to the *Marielitos*?" in *The New York Times*, 25 November 1987, p. B6.)

Detention Centers were "locked down" in their cells or secure areas.[9]

Since the 1980 Mariel Boatlift, about 10,500 *Marielitos* had been convicted of crimes committed in the United States. Of them, 3,830 were still serving sentences in Federal, State, and local prisons—130 for homicide. Another 3,806 *Marielitos* had completed sentences for crimes committed after arriving in the United States, but were excluded from eligibility for immigration under US law because of their convictions. These "excludables," including 661 drug felons, 445 burglars, dozens of rapists and weapons offenders, and 14 kidnappers, were detained in Federal facilities until repatriation to Cuba could be negotiated. Many Mariel Cubans with serious mental problems also were confined as "excludables" awaiting return to Cuba. The majority of Cuban detainees held for crimes were confined at Atlanta and Oakdale—1,392 at Atlanta and 998

Table 7
Mariel Cubans convicted of crimes in the United States

Serving sentences in Federal State, and local prisons for crimes committed in the United States.	3,830
Detained as "excludables" pending return to Cuba. Completed sentences for crimes committed in the United States. Ineligible for immigration into the United States.	3,806
Released on parole or in halfway houses. Completed sentences for crimes committed in the United States but not considered a threat to society.	3,000 (approx)
Total	10,500 (approx)

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service for a chart "What Happened to the *Marielitos*?" in *The New York Times*, 25 November 1987, p. B6

at Oakdale. Mental patients were confined at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC. An estimated 3,000 *Marielitos* who had completed sentences for crimes committed in the United States had been released. They were judged not be threats to society and were in halfway houses, or on parole.[10] (Table 6 shows the status of Mariel arrivals in the United States; table 7 indicates the numbers of Mariel Cubans convicted of crimes in the United States.)

Addressing the violent reaction of the Cuban detainees to the prospect of being returned to Cuba, Ramon Sanchez Parodi, Chief of Cuba's Interests Section in Washington, said his country welcomed the return of the prisoners. He gave his assurance that no reprisals would be made against the returnees: "They will be exonerated from illegal activities they might have committed before their departure from Cuba." Sanchez said detainees who do not have records of mental health problems could return to Cuba and resume their lives, pointing out that the 201 Mariel "excludables" returned in 1985 were well treated. "If

you want to go there (to Cuba) and talk to them," he told reporters, "you are welcome." He indicated that Cuban medical authorities would rely on US medical records for determining who should be committed for treatment of mental problems.[11]

At both Oakdale and Atlanta, Federal officials negotiating the release of hostages found leadership among the prisoners to be fragmented and shifting. Multiple demands were presented and were continually changed. On several occasions, negotiators thought agreements had been reached, only to receive additional demands. Warden Petrovsky at Atlanta said that in two days "12 sets of leaders" were negotiating on behalf of the prisoners. Every time new prisoner spokesmen appeared, negotiated terms would change. Warden Johnson at Oakdale and other negotiators were constantly made aware of the dangerous situation for the hostages. "They always remind us," Johnson said of the inmates, "that any time we attempt to rush into this facility in any manner, armed or unarmed, they are going to kill the hostages."[12]

After 24 hours of no discussions, negotiations were resumed at Oakdale on Wednesday evening, 25 November. During the lull, Cuban prisoners became better organized, electing four negotiators to speak for them. In Atlanta, where no progress in negotiations was indicated, 100 members of the US Army's Special Operations Forces arrived from Fort Bragg, N.C. The Pentagon reported that the soldiers were sent to Atlanta to provide technical advice and equipment to civilian authorities, in response to a Justice Department request. Despite the size of the Army forces, Defense Department representatives said the soldiers were not there to assault the prison, citing the 1878 *Posse Comitatus* Law, which prohibits the Army from civil law enforcement. Pentagon officials did say, however, that the law did not impose an absolute restriction in all cases.[13]

In Atlanta, inmates released 5 of the 75 hostages late Tuesday night, 24 November, in a move interpreted

as a sign of good will. But less than an hour later, Cuban inmates broke into the prison hospital where 24 prison employees had barricaded themselves since the riots began; they were all taken hostage. To discourage any rescue attempt, hostages were dispersed within the prison.

At Oakdale, one of the 28 hostages, William Hoffpauir, was released by inmates just before 9 p.m. Thursday, 26 November, in another move seen by authorities as a positive step. The next day, a mentally unstable Cuban detainee stabbed Manuel Cedillos, Jr., a 40-year-old counselor at Oakdale, in the neck. Cedillos and his assailant, who was subdued by other inmates, were turned over to prison authorities; the injured prison employee was taken to a local hospital, where his condition was reported as stable. Prison officials learned from the released Oakdale hostages that the remaining 26 captives were dispersed in three groups within the facility.[14]

The Oakdale hostage situation was almost resolved on Friday, 27 November, but negotiations collapsed when inmates made additional unacceptable demands. On Saturday, 28 November, Oakdale detainees said they would not return to the negotiations unless they could consult with Cuban-born Augustine A. Roman, Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Miami. In response to the request, Oakdale inmates were shown a videotaped message from Bishop Roman on Sunday.[15]

At 2:20 p.m. Sunday, Cuban inmates at Oakdale threw down their homemade weapons and began releasing their 26 hostages, ending the eight-day seige. The Cuban detainees had signed an agreement, typed on the stationery of Attorney General Edwin Meese, containing the following provisions:

1. Cuban detainees with families or sponsors, who already have been approved for parole, will not have an arbitrary change made in their decision.

2. The release of Cuban detainees with no families or sponsors, who already have been approved for parole,

will be reviewed and a decision made in a reasonable time. This time will permit a full, fair, and equitable review within the laws of the United States of each individual's status with respect to eligibility to remain in the United States. All Cuban detainees at the Federal Detention Center (FDC), Oakdale, who have not been reviewed will receive an expeditious review of their status, and those eligible for release will be given the same consideration as detainees who fall under the provisions of No. 1 and No. 2 above.

3. All Cuban detainees at the Oakdale FDC with special problems will be sent immediately to medical facilities for evaluation and treatment. They will be given the same considerations as those covered by provisions No. 1 and No. 2 above.

4. Cuban detainees at FDC Oakdale will be given I-94 and other pertinent documents, including work permits, when they are released. No detainee will be held by the INS without an appropriate charge.

5. No Cuban detainee will be held liable for any damage, to this date, sustained by the institution during the hostage situation at this facility.

6. It is understood that the American cadre (non-Cuban prisoners) at FDC Oakdale did not have any part in this situation, and can be removed immediately.

7. Those Cuban detainees who have been accepted for entrance to another country will be expeditiously reviewed.[16]

Steven Donzinger, a spokesman for the nonprofit Coalition to Support Cuban Detainees based in Atlanta, criticized the agreement. "The Cubans (at Oakdale FDC) got very little, except some good publicity," he said. "It's possible the Cubans think they are getting more than they are going to get under this agreement." Carla M. Dudeck, coordinator for the Coalition for two years, also was critical of the agreement. "The success of this agreement," she said, "will depend upon a generous interpretation of the terms by the Government."[17]

Hostages from Oakdale reported they were treated well and that inmate leaders went to great lengths to

ensure their safety. But they were certain they would have been killed if the Government had attempted to retake the prison by force. Every time a helicopter flew over the compound, the Cubans handcuffed the hostages and held knives and machetes to their throats. "They emphasized they were willing to die for their cause," Leon Smith, a Detention Center guard, said. "They said 'if someone comes in we're all going to die.'"[18]

Thirty-year-old Gregory Calvert was on his first assignment as a correctional officer when the rioting erupted in Atlanta on 23 November. A guard at the Federal Penitentiary for just over three months, he and a dozen other officers responded to "body alarms" at the Broom Factory, where hundreds of rioting inmates confronted the unarmed guards. After locking themselves in the Chapel, Calvert and the other guards were taken hostage. He said he was treated well by the Cuban detainees. "But," he added, "I still think they would have slit my throat in a heartbeat. They had control of us and we didn't have any control over ourselves." Calvert said that when the inmates heard a report over the telelvision that a special weapons and tactics team was preparing for an assault on the prison, a guard force of several hooded Cubans, armed with crude knives and machetes manufactured in the prison shop, replaced the detainee "keepers" assigned to the hostages. Calvert thought the new inmate guards would be "executioners" if the assault on the prison looked successful.[19]

Cuban inmates at Atlanta released four more hostages early Sunday morning, 29 November, in what officials believed to be another good faith gesture. Two days later, authorities were surprised when inmates announced from the roof of the Penitentiary that another hostage, senior corrections officer Abdul-Saboor Rushdan, was being released, in honor of the 29th birthday of Cuban detainee advocate Carla Dudeck. In return, Justice Department officials announced that Gary Leshaw, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney who had defended Cuban detainees in the past, would be accepted as a legal adviser to the negotiators.[20]

Efforts to negotiate the release of the remaining 89 Atlanta hostages continued with little progress; the Oakdale settlement apparently had little impact on the Atlanta situation. Federal officials believed that a small group of radical hardcore criminals was blocking efforts of other inmates to negotiate a settlement. On 1 December, the situation brightened as progress was reported in talks between negotiators and Cuban inmate representatives. On Wednesday, 2 December, the transcript of a tape-recorded message from Bishop Roman, encouraging Cuban inmates to end the hostage situation, was read in Spanish over the prison's public address system. In his message, the Bishop urged Cuban detainees to "be very charitable with all the hostages" and not to "ask more than the law permits."

On Thursday, compromises were worked out during talks that continued nonstop from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Cuban inmate demands for a one-year moratorium on deportations, an apparent sticking point during the last two days of negotiations, were resolved. At 5:40 p.m. Thursday, the Government announced that the inmate population, after a two-hour meeting, had accepted the agreement and released the hostages. At the request of the inmates, Bishop Roman was flown to Atlanta to witness the signing. Justice Department officials quickly assembled a news media pool to cover the concluding meeting between Federal and inmate negotiators.[21]

The longest prison siege in American history—11 days—ended at 1:20 a.m. Friday, 4 December 1987, with the release of 89 hostages. Seated at a large formica-covered table in a room just off the prison dining area, following the signing of the agreement, Gary Leshaw read the two-page agreement, which began, "Upon the release of all remaining officers being held in the compound at the USP Atlanta, the ... agreement will be enforced."

Seven of the documents' eight points were similar to the Oakdale agreement. The eighth point, applicable to all *Marielitos* in detention facilities, called for an indefinite moratorium on the return of any Cuban who

arrived via the port of Mariel. The Atlanta agreement, as approved, contained the following provisions:

1. Cuban detainees with families or sponsors who already have been approved for parole will not have an arbitrary change made in their decision.

2. The release of the Cuban detainees with no families or sponsors, who already have been approved for parole, will be reviewed and a decision made in a reasonable time, the process to be completed by 30 June 1988. All Cuban detainees at USP Atlanta who have not been reviewed yet will receive an expeditious review of their status and those eligible for release will be given the same consideration as those covered by points No. 1 and No. 2 above.

3. All Cuban detainees at USP Atlanta with medical problems will be sent immediately to medical facilities for evaluation and treatment. Once these detainees are cleared medically, they will be given the same consideration as those covered by points No. 1 and No. 2 above.

4. Cuban detainees at USP Atlanta who are approved for parole will be given I-94 and other INS documents including work permits when they are released. No Cuban detainee will be held by the INS without an appropriate charge.

5. No Cuban detainee will be held liable for any damage, to this date, sustained by the institution during the hostage situation at this facility. No physical reprisals will be made against the detainees. No prosecutions will be made except for specific acts of actual assault or violence against persons or major misconduct. This exception does not include the mere act of participation in the disturbance or failure to depart Atlanta Penitentiary during the disturbance or acts causing property damage.

6. It is understood that the American cadre (non-Cuban prisoners) at USP Atlanta did not have any part in this situation and can be removed immediately.

7. Cuban detainees who desire to go to a third country and who are accepted by a third country will be

reviewed very quickly and will be permitted to depart with proper documentation and, barring criminal action pending, any detainee has the option to apply for acceptance to a third country and any detainee will be given the opportunity to make such an application. Such an application should be made quickly after the disturbance is resolved if the detainee does not have such acceptance already.

8. As previously stated by the US Attorney General, a moratorium has been declared on the return of Cuban nationals to Cuba with reference to those Cubans who came to the United States in 1980 via the port of Mariel. This moratorium includes all Cubans detained in the United States, and will ensure a fair review of each Cuban's status with respect to his eligibility to remain in the United States.[22]

* * * * * * * * *

The Oakdale and Atlanta riots were painful reminders that lingering consequences of the 1980 Cuban Boatlift continue to plague the United States. Fidel Castro's unconscionable act of exporting criminals to this country continued to impose severe social and fiscal burdens on the United States. Once again, when the issue of returning Cuban "excludables" neared resolution, events occurred to frustrate US Government plans.

Unfortunately, as with all complex problems, no simple solutions were available for the multiple issues involving the Cuban "excludables." Advocates for the detainees pointed out that the Cuban refugees were forced to board boats at Mariel and sail to the United States as pawns in a disagreement between nations. Then, after living in the United States for several years, the detainees—many with wives and children in America—were faced with deportation. Because of their "excludable" status, however, they were ineligible for protection under the US Constitution and had little

recourse to appeal. Almost 4,000 Cuban detainees had completed sentences for crimes committed in the United States, in effect paying their debt to society. While many *Marielitos* were guilty of the most heinous crimes, others were convicted of far less offenses.

What justice is served if all Cuban detainees—guilty of a spectrum of crimes—face deportation? Should the lesser offenders pay the same penalty as those guilty of the most egregious criminal acts?

The situation, however, also could be addressed from a conservative point of view—the nation's immigration laws must be applied equitably and consistently. Under the law, aliens guilty of crimes in the United States are not eligible to apply for citizenship—they are returned to their country of origin. While no agreement with Cuba existed for the return of the Boatlift "excludables," detaining *Marielitos* who had completed their sentences was unreasonable. Some type of accommodation obviously had to be made. But when an agreement with Cuba was arranged for the return of the Cuban detainees, should not the immigration laws of the United States have been consistently applied?

Yet another troublesome aspect of the problem remained to be addressed: The United States has taken a strong position against terrorism and the taking of hostages. Should the Cuban detainees be given special consideration for *citizenship*, based on an agreement extorted through violence and hostage taking?

No easy answers are available to the many difficult issues involving the Mariel "excludables." Still, the problems must be resolved. Appropriate solutions most likely lie in the application of the operable words of the agreements: "fair and equitable consideration." Assuredly, this approach calls for subjective judgments, but, in a democratic society, is not implementing the law, fairly and equitably, a basic tenet?

The costly burden of the Mariel Boatlift has plagued the United States far too long. The time has come to make the difficult decisions to finally resolve the problems of Mariel. Once the painful issues of the

1980 Cuban Boatlift are put to rest, however, we should take diligent care to ***never forget*** what happened in the Straits of Florida during the Spring and Summer of 1980!

Appendix

Participating Vessels and Aviation Units

US Coast Guard Cutters

High Endurance Cutters (WHEC)

USCGC *DALLAS* (WHEC 716)	
CAPT W.J. Brogdon, Jr.	27 Apr-6 Jun 1980
CAPT A.R. Larzelere	18 Jul-29 Aug 1980
USCGC *CHASE* (WHEC 718)	
CAPT R.J. Ketchel	29 Aug-10 Sept 1980
USCGC *INGHAM* (WHEC 35)	27 Apr-6 May 1980
CDR M.J. Moynihan	6 Jun-21 Jul 1980
USCGC *TANEY* (WHEC 37)	
CDR J.W. Lockwood	29 Aug-2 Oct 1980
USCGC *DUANE* (WHEC 33)	
CDR C.S. Mincks	7 Sept-26 Sept 1980

Medium Endurance Cutters (WMEC)

USCGC *DAUNTLESS* (WHEC 624)	
CDR C.H. Smoke, Jr.	23 Apr-13 May 1980
CDR M.O. Murtagh	21 Jun-12 Jul 1980
	7 Aug-27 Aug 1980
	24 Sept-26 Sept 1980

USCGC *DEPENDABLE* (WHEC 626)

CDR R.E. Fenton	23 Apr-6 May 1980
	26 May-25 Jun 1980
	18 Aug-17 Sept 1980

USCGC *DILIGENCE* (WMEC 616)

CDR H.A. Purdy	26 Apr-14 May 1980
	1 Jun-22 Jun 1980
	2 Jul-10 Jul 1980
	15 Jul-29 Jul 1980
	7 Sept-24 Sept 1980

USCGC *VIGOROUS* (WMEC 627)

CDR S.F. Powers	29 Apr-22 May 1980
CDR R.A. Appelbaum	10 Jul-13 Aug 1980

USCGC *VALIANT* (WMEC 621)

CDR J.M. Loy	1 May-29 May 1980
	18 Sept-29 Sept 1980
	10 Sept-29 Sept 1980

USCGC *VIGILANT* (WMEC 617)

CDR R.E. Ettle	3 May-30 May 1980
CDR E.M. Cummings	2 Aug-27 Aug 1980

USCGC *COURAGEOUS* (WMEC 622)

CDR A.F. Miller	15 May-1 Jun 1980
	17 Jun-29 Jun 1980
	12 Aug-30 Aug 1980

USCGC *ACUSHNET* (WMEC 167)

CDR G.C. Nelson	17 May-8 Jun 1980
	29 Jun-14 Aug 1980

USCGC *CHILULA* (WMEC 153)

CDR J.F. Overath	18 May-12 Jun 1980
	30 Aug-5 Oct 1980

USCGC *CHEROKEE* (WMEC 165)

CDR R.J. Heid	27 May-26 Jun 1980
	21 Jul-4 Aug 1980
	26 Aug-26 Sept 1980

USCGC *ACTIVE* (WMEC 618)
CDR K.A. Luck — 12 Jun-3 Jul 1980

USCGC *ALERT* (WMEC 630)
CDR A.L. Chapeau — 15 Jun-12 Jul 1980
6 Aug-6 Sept 1980

USCGC *TAMAROA* (WMEC 166)
CDR A.J. Petit — 6 Jul-7 Aug 1980

USCGC *DURABLE* (WMEC 628)
CDR K.H. Williams — 11 Jul-3 Aug 1980
24 Sept-26 Sept 1980

USCGC *DECISIVE* (WMEC 629)
CDR W.R. Wilkins — 22 Sept-30 Sept 1980

Buoy Tender, Seagoing (WLB)

USCGC *PAPAW* (WLB 308)
LCDR T.T. Musselman — 28 Jul-12 Aug 1980
27 Aug-1 Sept 1980

Buoy Tender, Coastal (WLM)

USCGC *HOLLYHOCK* (WLM 220)
LT R.W. Batson — 16 May-24 Jun 1980

Patrol Craft, Large-95' (WPB)

USCGC *CAPE SHOALWATER* (WPB 95324)
LTJG W.E. Justice — 22 Apr-2 May 1980
10 May-22 May 1980
1 Jun-6 Jun 1980
19 Jun-24 Jun 1980
3 Aug-15 Aug 1980
11 Sept-22 Sept 1980

USCGC *CAPE YORK* (WPB 95332)
LTJG J.W. Decker — 23 Apr-16 May 1980

USCGC *CAPE YORK* (WPB 95332)/*CAPE FOX* (WPB 95312)

LTJG J.G. Pickard	16 May-25 May 1980
	5 Jun-7 Aug 1980
	18 Sept-26 Sept 1980

USCGC *CAPE GULL* (WPB 95304)

LTJG K.R. Wellington	1 May-11 May 1980
	20 May-31 May 1980
	31 Aug-4 Sept 1980

USCGC *CAPE STARR* (WPB 95320)

LTJG E.A. Blackadar, Jr.	16 May-1 Jun 1980

USCGC *CAPE STRAIT* (WPB 95308)

LTJG M.J. Kerski	16 May-4 Jul 1980

USCGC *CAPE CURRENT* (WPB 95307)

LT S.G. Moritz	25 May-4 Jun 1980
	26 Jun 14 Jul 1980
	17 Sept-22 Sept 1980

USCGC *CAPE UPRIGHT* (WPB 95303)

LTJG P.F. Zukunft	2 Jun-19 Jun 1980
	16 Aug-3 Sept 1980

USCGC *CAPE MORGAN* (WPB 95313)

LTJG H.R. Brock	4 Jul-17 Oct 1980

USCGC *CAPE KNOX* (WPB 95312)

LTJG M.J. Sikorski	21 Jul-2 Aug 1980

USCGC *CAPE CROSS* (WPB 95321)

LTJG R.W. Cusson, Jr.	12 Aug-19 Oct 1980

Patrol Craft, Large-82' (WPB)

USCGC *POINT ESTERO* (WPB 82344)

LTJG J.L. Nimmich	28 Apr-30 May 1980
	11 Aug-5 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT SPENCER* (WPB 82349)

LTJG G.H. Teuton, III	13 May-15 Jun 1980
	18 Jul-16 Aug 1980
	20 Sept-2 Oct 1980

USCGC *POINT JACKSON* (WPB 82378)
LTJG B.D. Horrocks 18 May-23 Aug 1980

USCGC *POINT MARTIN* (WPB 82379)
LTJG B.W. Black 23 May-19 Jun 1980

USCGC *POINT LOBOS* (WPB 82366)
LTJG R.L. Kohlhoff 25 May-8 Jun 1980
6 Jul-30 Jul 1980

USCGC *POINT VERDE* (WPB 82311)
LTJG L.T.P. Romasco 5 Jun-12 Jul 1980

USCGC *POINT HOPE* (WPB 82302)
LTJG S.H. Ratti 9 Jun-8 Jul 1980

USCGC *POINT BROWN* (82362)
LTJG R.D. Gibson 13 Jun-13 Jul 1980

USCGC *POINT ROBERTS* (WPB 82332)
LTJG P.L. Seidler, II 24 Jun-2 Jul 1980
1 Sept-8 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT ARENA* (WPB 82346)
LTJG G.T. Elliot 3 Aug-10 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT KNOLL* (WPB 82367)
LTJG J.E. Harrington 17 Aug-14 Oct 1980

USCGC *POINT FRANKLIN* (WPB 82350)
LTJG J.W. Yost 20 Aug-28 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT MONROE* (WPB 82353)
LTJG M.J. Wixom 30 Aug-26 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT LOOKOUT* (WPB 82341)
BMCM J.A. Henry, Jr. 26 Apr-23 May 1980
1 Jul-26 Jul 1980

USCGC *POINT THATCHER* (WPB 82314)
BMCM E.P. Owens 26 Apr-2 May 1980
24 Aug-1 Sept 1980
21 Sept-28 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT HURON* (WPB 82357)

BMCM J. Walker	1 May-25 May 1980
	5 Sept-26 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT SWIFT* (WPB 82312)

BMCM E.W. Gray	1 May-4 May 1980
	7 Jun-10 Jun 1980
	18 Aug-25 Aug 1980

USCGC *POINT HANNON* (WPB 82355)

BMCM L.C. Parritt	15 May-15 Jul 1980

USCGC *POINT CHARLES* (WPB 82361)

BMCM R.C. Ward	17 May-2 Jun 1980
	3 Aug-20 Aug 1980

USCGC *POINT BARNES* (WPB 82371)

BMCM R.E. Hill	15 Jun-26 Jun 1980
	30 Jun-2 Jul 1980
	5 Jul-11 Jul 1980
	31 Jul- 5 Aug 1980
	17 Aug-25 Aug 1980
	2 Sept-14 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT WELLS* (WPB 82343)

BMCM G.E. Samuelson	28 Jun-21 Aug 1980

USCGC *POINT BATAN* (WPB 82340)

BMCM I. Nachon	27 Jun-20 Aug 1980

USCGC *POINT HIGHLAND* (WPB 82333)

BMCM E. Sigmund	4 Jul-10 Aug 1980

USCGC *POINT BAKER* (WPB 82342)

BMCM K.E. Bird	23 Jul-14 Aug 1980

USCGC *POINT SAL* (WPB 82352)

BMCS L.F. Conley	11 Aug-6 Sept 1980

USCGC *POINT NOWELL* (WPB 82363)

BMCM R.L. Taliaferro	31 Aug-6 Oct 1980

US Coast Guard Boats

Utility Boat, Large (UTB)

CG-42047	CG-41302	CG-41430	CG-40438
	CG-41318	CG-41431	CG-40487
	CG-41319	CG-41438	CG-40505
	CG-41329	CG-41444	CG-40513
	CG-41341	CG-41459	CG-40515
	CG-41352	CG-41461	
	CG-41423	CG-41472	
	CG-41424	CG-41474	

Utility boat, Medium (UTM)

CG-30590	CG-30591	CG-30592

Utility Boat, Light (UTL)

CG-212506	CG-201500	CG-201512	CG-19002
	CG-201510	CG-201513	CG-192004
	CG-201511		CG-192005

Skiff, Large (SKB)

CG-170302	CG-171007	CG-172530	CG-162518
CG-171004	CG-172529	CG-172531	CG-162528
CG-171005			

US Navy Ships and Patrol Boats

Amphibious Assault Ship (LHA)

USS *SAIPAN* (LHA 2)	5 May-22 May 1980

Amphibious Transport Docks (LPD)

USS *PONCE* (LPD 15)	22 May-2 Jun 1980
USS *SHREVEPORT* (LPD 12)	2 Jun-6 Jun 1980

Tank Landing Ships (LST)

USS *BOULDER* (LST 1190)	5 May-22 May 1980
USS *SAGINAW* (LST 1188)	22 May-2 Jun 1980

Ocean Minesweepers (MSO)

USS *EXULTANT* (MSO 441)	23 May-5 Jun 1980
	26 Sept-1 Oct 1980
USS *LEADER* (MSO 490)	23 May-5 Jun 1980
	14 Sept-26 Sept 1980
USS *ILLUSIVE* (MSO 448)	23 May-5 Jun 1980
	14 Sept-26 Sept 1980
USS *DOMINANT* (MSO) 431)	5 Jun-10 Jun 1980
USS *ENGAGE* (MSO 433)	5 Jun-10 Jun 1980
USS *FIDELITY* (MSO 443)	22 May-24 May 1980
	2 Jun-10 Jun 1980
USS *DASH* (MSO 428)	14 Sept- 1 Oct 1980
USS *FEARLESS* (MSO 442)	14 Sept-1 Oct 1980
USS *IMPERVIOUS* (MSO 449)	26 Sept-1 Oct 1980

Patrol Boats, Mark III 65'

PB 721	14 Sept-1 Oct 1980
PB 722	14 Sept-1 Oct 1980
PB 735	14 Sept-1 Oct 1980
PB 758	14 Sept-1 Oct 1980
PB 759	14 Sept-1 Oct 1980

US Coast Guard Air Stations

	Aircraft	Personnel
Cape Cod, MA	X	X
Brooklyn, NY	X	X
Cape May, NJ	X	X
Washington, DC	X	X
Elizabeth City, NC	X	X
Savannah, GA	X	X
Miami, FL	X	X
Borinquen, PR	X	X
Clearwater, FL	X	X

	Aircraft*	Personnel
Mobile, AL (Aviation Training center)	X	X
New Orleans, LA	X	X
Houston, TX	X	X
Corpus Christi, TX	X	X
Detroit, MI	X	X
Traverse City, MI	X	X
Chicago, IL		X
San Diego, CA		X
Los Angeles, CA		X
San Francisco, CA		X
Sacramento, CA		X
Arcata, CA		X
North Bend, OR		X
Port Angeles, WA		X
Barbers Point, HI		X
Sitka, AK		X
Kodiak, AK		X

* 33 Fixed Wing and 36 Helicopters Flew 9,026 Hours

US Navy Aviation Units

Patrol Wing Two, Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville, FL
(Navy P-3 and S-3 Patrol Aircraft)
NAS Key West, FL
(Aviation Support)
Composite Helicopter Squadron 16, NAS Pensacola, FL
(Night Hover Capable HH-46 Rescue Helicopters)
Second Marine Air Wing, New River, NC
(CH-46, CH-53, and HU-IN Transport Helicopters)
Marine Fighter Attack Squadron, VMFA 312, NAS Key West
(Fighter Support)

Endnotes

CHAPTER 1

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CHAPTER 2

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CHAPTER 5

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2. "Heat On The U.S.," *Newsweek*, 1 February 1960, p. 46.
3. "We Are Perplexed," *Newsweek*, 8 February 1960, p. 57.
4. E.W. Kenworthy, "Castro Assailed By Washington For Press Rule," *The New York Times*, 20 April 1960, p. 1.
5. "Red Oil For The Lamps Of Cuba," *Newsweek*, 11 July 1960, p. 65.
6. Ibid.
7. "The Power And Castro," p. 40.

8. R. Hart Phillips, "Castro Decrees Seizure of Rest of U.S. Property; Cites Cut In Sugar Quota," *The New York Times*, 7 August 1960, p. 1.
9. Kenworthy, "Castro Regime Is Scored," *The New York Times*, 4 January 1961, p. 1. The Cuban Diplomatic note, reprinted in full in *The New York Times*, read as follows:

Havana, January 2, 1961
Year of Education

Mr. Charge d'Affaires:

I have the honor to inform you that the revolutionary Government has decided that under the present circumstances the personnel of the embassy and consulate of Cuba in the city of Washington, whether diplomatic, consular or of other character, whatever their nationality, should not exceed eleven persons.

Likewise it has decided that the personnel of the embassy and consulate of the United States in the city of Havana, whether diplomatic, consular or of other character, whatever their nationality, should likewise be limited to eleven persons.

For the purpose of facilitating the departure of the persons who for this reason must abandon the national territory, a period of forty-eight hours has been fixed from the time of the receipt of this note.

I take the opportunity, Mr. Charge d' Affaires, to reiterate to you the assurance of my reciprocity of your considerations.

CARLOS OLIVARES
Under Secretary-Minister
of Foreign Office

The US State Department reply to the Cuban Diplomatic note, also printed in full in *The New York Times*, said:

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to a note dated 2 January 1961, from the Government of Cuba to the Charge d'Affaires of the United States Embassy in Havana stating that the Government of Cuba has decided that personnel of the embassy and consulate of the United States in the city of Havana, regardless of nationality, shall not exceed eleven persons.

This unwarranted action by the Government of Cuba places crippling limitations on the ability of the United States mission to carry on its normal and diplomatic consular.

It would consequently appear that it is designed to achieve an effective termination of diplomatic and consular relations between the Government of Cuba and the Government of the United States. Accordingly, the Government of the United States hereby notifies the Government of Cuba of the termination of such relations.

The Government of the United States intends to comply with the requirements of the Government of Cuba concerning the withdrawal of all but eleven persons within the period of forty-eight hours from 1:20 A.M. on Jan 3, the time of the delivery of the note under reference.

In addition, the Government of the United States will withdraw its remaining diplomatic and consular personnel in Cuba as soon as possible thereafter.

The government of Cuba is requested to withdraw from the United States as soon as possible all Cuban nationals employed in the Cuban Embassy in Washington and all Cuban consular establishments in the United States.

The Government of the United States is requesting the Government of Switzerland to assume diplomatic and consular representation in Cuba on behalf of the Government of the United States.

I take the opportunity to reiterate to you the assurance of my reciprocity of your considerations.

CHRISTIAN A. HERTER

10. "Cuba A Satellite?", *Newsweek*, 4 July 1960, p. 48.
11. Phillips, "Havana Projects A State Economy," *The New York Times*, 19 June 1960, p. 15; and "Soviet Economic Grip Tightens On Cuba," *The Times of London*, 18 July 1960, p. 7.
12. Tad Szulc, "Last 2 Refineries Seized By Castro; Oil Supplies Low," *The New York Times*, 2 July 1960, p. 1.
13. "The Power And Castro," p. 40.
14. Phillips, "Castro Decrees Seizure Of Rest Of U.S. Property," p. 3; and "Russia Gives New Pledge To Cuba," *The Times of London*, 22 July 1960, p. 12.
15. "100-Plant Pact Reported," *The New York Times*, 27 December 1960, p. 13; and "The Wise Men," *Time*, 2 January 1961, p. 25.

16. Haynes Johnson, *The Bay of Pigs* (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 28.
17. "The Real Story Of The Bay Of Pigs," *U.S. News & World Report*, 7 January 1963, p. 38; and Jose Llanes, *Cuban Americans: Master Of Survival* (Cambridge, Mass.: Abt Books, 1982), p. 63.
18. Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), pp. 98-102.
19. Ibid., pp. 146-50.
20. Ibid., p. 163.
21. Ibid., p. 199.
22. Johnson, pp. 67-69.
23. Ibid., pp. 88, 94.
24. Llanes, p. 72.
25. Manuel Penabaz, "We were Betrayed," *U.S. News and World Report*, 14 January 1963, pp. 46-48; and "The Real Story of the Bay of Pigs," *U.S. News and World Report*, 7 January 1963, pp. 38-41.
26. "90 Dangerous Days For The U.S.," *U.S. News & World Report*, 11 March 1963, pp. 70-71.
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30. Herbert S. Dinerstein, *The Making of A Missile Crisis: October 1962* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 228; and "Secret History of The Cuban Missile Crisis," *U.S. News and World Report*, 17 August 1964, pp. 59-60.

CHAPTER 6

1. John Dorschner, "The Castro Story," *The Miami Herald*, 11 December 1983, p. 11M.
2. Hugh S. Thomas, Georges A. Fauriol, and Juan Carlos Weiss, *The Cuban Revolution: 25 Years Later* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), p. 21.
3. Tad Szulc, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), p. 597.
4. Claes Brundenius, *Revolutionary Cuba: The Challenge Of Economic Growth With Equity* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview

Press, 1984), pp. 54-55; and Antonio Jorge and Jamie Suchlicki, "Castro's Costly Path To Dependency," *Problems of Communism* (September-October 1984), p. 102.
5. Robert L. Bach, "The New Cuban Exodus: Political And Economic Motivations," *Caribbean Review*, Winter 1982, p. 58.
6. Edward Gonzalez, "Castro and Cuba's New Orthodoxy," *Problems Of Communism*, January-February 1976, pp. 4, 5, 9; and Juan M. Clark and Juan A. Figueras, "Totalitarian Repression in Cuba," Undated Preliminary Draft, pp. 12, 13. Received from Dr. Clark during an interview in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985.
7. Luis E. Aguilar, "Castro's Failed Revolution," *Problems Of Communism*, July-August 1983, p. 50.
8. Thomas, p. 12.
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10. Graham Hovey, "Economic Woes Behind The Shake-Up, U.S. Experts Believe," *The New York Times*, 18 January 1980, p. 3.

CHAPTER 7

1. Mercedes Lopez, interview in Miami, Fla., on 11 December 1985. Mrs. Lopez came to Florida by boat from Mariel, Cuba, with her family after spending 10 days at the Peruvian Embassy in Havana and 18 days in isolation at their apartment.
2. Hugh S. Thomas, Georges A. Fauriol, and Juan Carlos Weiss, *The Cuban Revolution: 25 Years Later* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), p. 49.
3. Juan M. Clark and Juan A. Figueras, "Totalitarian Repression in Cuba," Undated Preliminary Draft, p. 23. Received from Dr. Clark during an interview in Miami, Florida, on 10 December 1985.
4. Thomas, p. 24; Juan M. Clark, Jose I. Lasaga, and Rose S. Reque, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect* (Washington, DC: Council for Inter-American Security, 1981), p. 2; and John E. Cooney, "Cuban Clan, The Garcias of Havana Strongly Back Castro Despite The Problems," *The Wall Street Journal*, 31 December 1979, p. 1.
5. Lopez interview.
6. Liz Balmaseda, "Life in Cuba Today," *The Miami Herald*, 18 December 1983, p. 14M; and Jose I. Lasaga, interview in

Miami, Fla., 9 December 1985. Dr. Lasaga is a psychiatrist and an author and expert on the Cuban society.
7. US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Directorate of Intelligence, *The Cuban Economy: A Statistical Review*, June 1984, p. 43 (Because of the exodus of 125,000 Cubans in 1980, the Cuban population decreased that year); and Balmaseda, "Cuba Today," p. 14M.
8. Antero Fong interview in Miami, Fla., 10 December 1985. Mr. Fong attended the University of Havana and had been an accountant and statistician in Havana. He emigrated to the United States from Mariel, Cuba, on 9 May 1980 on the fishing boat *Peggy Sue*.
9. CIA, *The Cuban Economy*, p. 14.
10. Cooney, p. 1; and Delfin Hernandez interview in Miami, Fla., 10 December 1985. Mr. Hernandez was a blacksmith in Cuba and emigrated to the United States with his family from Mariel in May 1980 on the yacht *Rosee*.
11. Lopez interview.
12. Juan M. Clark, *Religious Repression In Cuba* (Miami, Fla.: Miami-Dade Community College, 1985), pp. 11, 12, 63; and Clark, *1980 Mariel Exodus*, p. 2.
13. Claes Brundenius, *Revolutionary Cuba: The Challenge of Economic Growth With Equity* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 78, 99, and 137.
14. Thomas, p. 51.
15. Lopez interview; Juan M. Clark interview in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Dr. Clark is author of the Special Report, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect* (Washington, DC: Council for Inter-American Security, 1981); and Clark, "Totalitarian Repression," p. 45.
16. Hernandez interview.
17. Cooney, p. 1; and Brundenius, p. 117.
18. Brundenius, p. 118. (Based on a 1980 Official Peso Exchange Rate of 1 Cuba Peso = $1.41 (US).)
19. Fong interviews.
20. Cooney, p. 1; and Fong interview.
21. Brundenius, p. 118; and Clark interview.
22. Thomas, p. 46.
23. Clark, "Totalitarian Repression," p. 38.
24. Fong interview.
25. Clark, *Religious Repression*, pp. 63, 66; and Lasaga interview.
26. Liz Balmaseda, "My Hometown, A Place I Never Knew," *The Miami Herald*, 18 December 1983, p. 23M; and Clark, "Religious Repression," p. 21.

27. Andres Oppenheimer, "Only A Handful of Cuban Jews Profess Faith," *The Miami Herald*, 13 December 1983, p. 16M.
28. Clark, "Religious Repression," p. 22.
29. Thomas, pp. 48, 49; and Clark, "Totalitarian Repression," p. 40.
30. Clark, "Totalitarian Repression," pp. 19, 21.
31. Ibid., p. 32; and Thomas, pp. 49, 50.
32. "Amnesty Plea To Cuba By The United States Urged," *The New York Times*, 14 March 1977, p. 32.
33. "Last Travel Curbs Removed By Carter," *The New York Times*, 10 March 1977, p. 10; and Graham Hovey, "U.S. Will Allow Citizens to Spend Dollars In Cuba," *The New York Times*, 20 March 1977, p. 1.
34. Guillermo Martinez and Guy Gugliotta, "The Trauma Of Separation And Reunion," *The Miami Herald*, 11 December 1983, p. 18M; and Clark, *Mariel Exodus*, p. 2.
35. "The Flight From Havana," *Newsweek*, 28 April 1980, p. 43.
36. Martinez, "The Trauma," p. 19M.
37. "Fleeing From Fidel's Rule," *Time*, 21 April 1980, p. 28.

CHAPTER 8

1. "65 Hijack A Barge From Cuba To Keys," *The New York Times*, 2 February 1980, p. 6; and "Cubans Seize Ship and Reach Key West," *The New York Times*, 17 February 1980, p. 17.
2. "Cubans Seize Ship"; and "26 From Cuba Seize Boat and Go Aground in Florida," *The New York Times*, 26 February 1980, p. 12.
3. Wayne S. Smith, *The Closest of Enemies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), pp. 202-03.
4. US Congress, House, Permanent Select Committee On Intelligence, Subcommittee On Oversight, *The Cuban Emigres: Was There A U.S. Intelligence Failure?*, June 1980.
5. Wayne S. Smith, interview in Washington, DC, 12 November 1985. Dr. Smith was Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana, Cuba, during the "Exodus." He later resigned from the State Department in protest over Reagan administration policies with regard to Cuba. A Cuban affairs expert, he took a teaching position at The Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies.

6. John Scanlan and Gilburt Loescher, "U.S. Foreign Policy, 1959-1980: Impact On Refugee Flow From Cuba," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 467 (May 1983), p. 135.
7. US Congress, House, Staff Report, *The Cuban Emigres.*
8. Ronald Copeland, "The Cuban Boatlift of 1980: Strategies in Federal Crisis Management," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 467 (May 1983), pp. 138-50.
9. Tom Fiedler and Carl Hiaasen, "U.S. Talked Tough But Did Little," 16 June 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980, pp. 25, 26.
10. Juan M. Clark, interview in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Dr. Clark is author of the Special Report, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: Assessment and Prospect*, "Religious Repression in Cuba," and is working on the report, "Totalitarian Repression in Cuba."
11. Juan M. Clark, Jose I. Lasaga, and Rose S. Reque, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect* (Washington, DC: Council for Inter-American Security, 1981), p. 4.
12. Robert Rivas and David Hume, "First Few Boats of Exile Flotilla Reach Key West," 22 April 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980, p. 7.
13. Robert L. Sheina, "The Cuban Exodus of 1980," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* (October 1980), pp. 44 and 46. Dr. Sheina is Historian of the US Coast Guard; and Copeland, "Cuban Boatlift of 1980," p. 144.
14. Dennis A. Williams, "Sea Lift From Cuba to Key West," *Newsweek*, 5 May 1980, p. 59.
15. "Voyage From Cuba," *Time*, 5 May 1980, p. 42; and Copeland, p. 144.
16. Guy Gugliotta, "How A Trickle Became A Flood," 5 May 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980 p. 10; and Dennis A. Williams, p. 60.
17. "News From Mariel," *Granma Weekly Review*, 27 April 1980 (published 22 April 1980), p. 9.
18. Robert Rivas, "First Few Boats," p. 6.
19. Delfin Hernandez interview in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Mr. Hernandez emigrated with his family from Mariel in May 1980 and is now employed as a security guard in Miami.
20. Mercedes Lopez interview in Miami, Fla., on 11 December 1985. Mrs. Lopez came to Florida by boat from Mariel, Cuba, with her family, after spending 10 days in the Peruvian

Embassy in Havana and 18 days in isolation in their apartment.
21. Antero Fong interview in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Mr. Fong attended the University of Havana and had been an accountant and statistician in Havana. He emigrated to the United States from Mariel, Cuba, 9 May 1980 on the fishing boat *PEGGY SUE*.
22. Janet Fix, "In Mariel: 'We're Wondering Why Castro Changed His Mind'," 25 April 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980. p. 6.
23. Fix and Murry Sill, "Uncertainty Stretches Hours In Mariel," 27 April 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980, p. 6.
24. Vern E. Smith, "In The Flotilla At Mariel," *Newsweek*, 12 May 1980, p. 63.
25. Richard Woodbury, "Escape From Bedlam And Boredom," *Time*, 12 May 1980, p. 38; and Dennis Williams, Jerry Buckley, Stryker McGuire, and Larry Rohter, "Coping With Cuba's Exodus," *Newsweek*, 12 May 1980, p. 60.
26. US Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Seventh District, *Cuban Sealift, Situation Report No. 26*, Miami, Fla., 14 May 1980.
27. "When A Strong State Is Unprincipled In Its Politics And Its Government Is Unethical," *Granma Weekly Review*, 25 May 1980 (published 19 May 1980), p. 1.

CHAPTER 9

1. Samuel J. Dennis interview in Norfolk, Va., on 1 December 1985. Commander Dennis, USCG, a 34-year-old Lieutenant Commander during the Cuban Exodus, continued to command the rapidly expanded Coast Guard activities in Key West throughout the operation.
2. US Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Seventh District, *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. 5.
3. "Cuban Refugees," *Department of State Bulletin*, June 1980, p. 68.
4. Edwin E. Crusoe IV, interview in Key West, Fla., on 13 December 1985. Captain Crusoe was the Harbor Pilot for the Port of Key West and was very much involved in the Cuban boatlift of 1980.
5. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. 6.
6. James W. Decker, interview in Alexandria, Va., on 3 March 1986. Lieutenant Decker, USCG, then a 26-year-old

Lieutenant (junior grade), was in command of the 95-foot Coast Guard Cutter *CAPE YORK* with a crew of 14.
7. Robert L. Scheina, "The Cuban Exodus of 1980," *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 1980, p. 46.
8. Homer A. Purdy interview in Washington, DC, on 28 February 1986. Captain Purdy, USCG, then a commander, commanded the 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter *DILIGENCE*, homeported in Key West. *DILIGENCE* spent more days underway on Cuban Operations than any other ship.
9. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift*, p. 6.
10. William J. Brogdon, Jr., interview in Washington, DC, on 20 February 1986. Captain Brogdon, USCG, was the first Commodore of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON).
11. *Report On The Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. 6.
12. Decker interview.
13. Ibid.
14. Purdy interview; *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift*, pp. A15-A17; Vern E. Smith, "In the Flotilla at Mariel," *Newsweek*, 12 May 1980, p. 63; and Scheina, p. 46.
15. US Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Seventh District, *SITREP FOURTEEN—Cuban Refugees*, Miami, Fla., 3 May 1980.
16. Brogdon interview.
17. Ibid.
18. Purdy interview.
19. *Report on Cuban Sea Lift*, p. A2; and US Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, Flag Plot (G-OFP-74) "Cuban Refugees—Straits of Florida," *Daily Operations Highlights*, 5 May 1980, p. 1.
20. Brogdon interview.
21. Ibid.
22. Alan F. Miller interview in Washington, DC, on 26 February 1986. Captain Miller, USCG, a commander during the Cuban Operations, commanded the Medium Endurance Cutter *COURAGEOUS*, homeported in Port Canaveral, Fla.
23. Brogdon interview.
24. "The Jets Roar In," *Time*, 26 May 1980, p. 15.
25. Graham Hovey, "Cuba Apologizes For MIG Buzzing," *The New York Times*, 17 May 1980, p. 11.
26. Miller interview.
27. Personal observation of the author while serving as Commodore of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON).

28. Brogdon interview.
29. Miller interview.
30. Alan F. Miller, "The *Olo Yumi* Incident," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* (October 1980), p. 51.
31. Mont Smith, Jr., and James p. Sutherland, "The United States Coast Guard's Air War at Sea," *Wings of Gold*, Association of Naval Aviation, Vol. 8, No. 4, Winter 1983, p. 29.
32. Miller, p. 51; and US Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Flag Plot (G-OFP/74), "Cuban Refugees—Straits of Florida," *Daily Operational Highlights*, 19 May 1980, p. 3.
33. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift*, pp. B-16-17.
34. "When A Strong State Is Unprincipled In Its Politics and Its Government Unethical," *Granma Weekly Review* (Published 19 May 1980), 25 May 1980, p. 1.
35. Juan M. Clark, Jose I. Lasaga, and Rose S. Reque, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect* (Washington DC: Council for Inter-American Security, 1981), p. 14.

CHAPTER 10

1. Interview with Raymond J. Copin in Seattle, Wash., on 3 April 1986. Captain Copin, USCG, Retired, was Chief of the Operations Division of the Seventh District during the Cuban Exodus. He was deeply involved in decisions that affected all aspects of the Cuban Operations; and interview with John E. Shkor in Savannah, Ga., on 4 September 1986. Commander Shkor, USCG, was the District Legal Officer during the Boatlift. He conferred frequently with, and provided legal guidance to, the District Commander.
2. US Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, Seventh District, *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, January 1981, p. 16.
3. Interview with Benedict L. Stabile in Washington, DC, on 28 February 1986. Vice Admiral Stabile, USCG, as a Rear Admiral, was Commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District, with headquarters in Miami, Fla. He was in command of Coast Guard and Naval forces taking part in the Cuban Boatlift Operations.
4. Copin interview.
5. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. 45.
6. Ibid.
7. Interview with John D. Costello in San Francisco, Calif., on 1 April 1986. Vice Admiral Costello, USCG, as a Rear Admiral, was Chief of the Coast Guard's Office of Operations in

Washirgton, DC. During the Cuban Boatlift, he worked full time on the operation and was the USCG's principal liaison with the White House.
8. Stabile and Costello interviews.
9. Ibid.
10. Costello interview.
11. Interview with Jack H. Watson, Jr., in Atlanta, Ga., on 30 July 1986. The Honorable Jack Watson was Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Secretary to the Cabinet at the beginning of the Exodus. Before the Boatlift was over, he replaced Hamilton Jordan as the President's Chief of Staff.
12. Interview with Samuel J. Dennis in Norfolk, Va., on 1 December 1985. Commander Dennis, USCG, a 34-year-old Lieutenant Commander during the Exodus, continued to command the rapidly expanded Coast Guard activities in Key West throughout the entire Cuban operation.
13. Interview with James W. Decker in Alexandria, Va., on 3 March 1986. Lieutenant Decker, USCG, then a 26-year-old Lieutenant (junior grade), commanded the Key West-based 95-foot USCGC *CAPE YORK*, one of the first units involved in the Boatlift.
14. Stabile and Dennis interviews; and *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. 8.
15. Dennis interview.
16. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. 43.
17. The Memorandum from William J. Beckham, Jr., Acting Secretary of Transportation, said,

> Subject to your approval, I intend to authorize the call up of Coast Guard Reserve Forces for involuntary active duty to meet the domestic emergency occasioned by the Cuban Refugee operation.
>
> The draw down of active duty personnel from the various Coast Guard Districts to meet the extraordinary needs in the Seventh Coast Guard District has caused serious reduction in the capability of the Coast Guard to perform its missions elsewhere.
>
> To provide direct and indirect support of the active service, not more than 2,500 officers and enlisted personnel will be recalled for not more than 14 days each during the next 90 days. The initial group will be required to report 48 hours after your approval is given.
>
> I request your approval in accordance with Public Law 92-479 (14 USC 764).

18. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, pp. 3, B-19.
19. Ibid., p. 34.
20. Interview with James P. Sutherland in Washington, DC, on 27 February 1986. Commander Sutherland, USCG, then a Lieutenant Commander, was an HH-52 helicopter pilot and Assistant Operations Officer at Coast Guard Air Station Miami when the Exodus began. As air operations escalated, he was assigned to the Coast Guard's Seventh District as an assistant to the Chief of Operations for Aviation.
21. US Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, "Cuban Refugees—Straits of Florida," *Daily Operational Highlights*, 6 May 1980, p. 1.
22. Mont J. Smith, Jr., and James p. Sutherland, "The United States Coast Guard's Air War At Sea," Association of Naval Aviation, *Wings of Gold*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Winter 1983, p. 29; and Sutherland interview.
23. Stabile interview.
24. Sutherland interview.
25. Ibid.
26. Smith and Sutherland, "Air War at Sea," p. 32.

CHAPTER 11

1. Interview with John D. Costello in San Francisco, Calif., on 1 April 1986. Vice Admiral Costello, USCG, as a Rear Admiral, was Chief of the Coast Guard's Office of Operations in Washington, DC. During the Cuban Boatlift, he worked full time on the operation and was the USCG's principal liaison with the White House.
2. US Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, *Briefing Paper for Mr. Jack Watson—The White House: The Cuban Situation*, G-OLE/TP-31, 26 April 1980, p. 1.
3. Interview with Harry D. Train, II, in Washington, DC, on 25 April 1986. During the period of the Cuban Exodus in 1980, Admiral Train, USN, now retired, was Commander in Chief, Atlantic, Atlantic Fleet, and Western Atlantic Area, and also was Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic. He was responsible for providing Navy units to assist the Coast Guard.
4. Interview with Benedict L. Stabile in Washington, DC, on 28 February 1986. Vice Admiral Stabile, USCG, as a Rear Admiral, was Commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District, with headquarters in Miami, Fla. He was in command of

Coast Guard and Naval forces taking part in Cuban Boatlift operations.
5. US Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, Seventh District, *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. 22.
6. US Department of Defense, Navy, Commanding Officer, USS *SAIPAN* (LHA-2), *Command History, 1980 (OPNAV Report 5750-1), file 5750, serial 310*, 7 April 1981, Encl. 3, p. 2.
7. US Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, Seventh District, "Navy Ships to Work With Coast Guard," *CCGD7 Release*, 2 May 1980; ibid., p. 3; and John Moore, ed. *Jane's Fighting Ships*, 1980-81 (London: Jane's Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 666, 670.
8. USS *SAIPAN*, *Command History*, Encl. 3, pp. 2, 3.
9. US Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, "Cuban Refugees—Straits of Florida," *Daily Operational Highlights*, 5 May 1980, p. 1.
10. Interview with William J. Brogdon, Jr., in Washington, DC, on 20 February 1986. Captain Brogdon, USCG, was Commodore of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON), responsible for Coast Guard operations south of Latitude 24° North.
11. Interview with John J. Kingston, Jr., at Portsmouth, Va., on 28 April 1986. Captain Kingston, USN, was Commodore of Amphibious Squadron Four (PHIBRON FOUR), which took part in Cuban Rescue Operations from 22 May to 10 June 1986.
12. *Cuban Sea Lift Report*, p. A-9.
13. US Department of Defense, Navy, USS *SAGINAW*, *Command History for Calendar Year 1980*, file 5750, 31 July 1981.
14. US Department of Defense, Navy, USS *ILLUSIVE* (MSO-448), *Command History 1980, file 5750, Ser. 37-82*, 17 August 1982.
15. Kingston interview.

CHAPTER 12

1. Interview with Kenneth E. Gray in Miami, Fla., on 12 December 1985. Lieutenant Commander Gray, USCG, as a Lieutenant, was in charge of a Marine Safety Detachment at Key West during the Exodus. This detachment inspected the boats for violations of US law.
2. Interview with Wayne S. Smith in Washington, DC, on 12 November 1985. Dr. Smith was Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana during the Exodus.

3. Interview with Myles R.R. Frechette in Washington, DC, on 4 August 1986. Ambassador Frechette was Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, and Country Director for Cuba at the State Department during the Cuban Exodus.
4. Interview with Juan M. Clark in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Dr. Clark is author of *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: Assessment and Prospect* and *Religious Repression in Cuba*, and is working on the report, *Totalitarian Repression in Cuba*.
5. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), 31 January 1979.
6. US Congress, House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Oversight, *The Cuban Emigres: Was There an Intelligence Failure?* June 1980, pp. 1, 2.
7. Ibid., pp. 3, 4; and Barry Sklar, *Cuban Exodus—1980, The Context*, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 25 July 1980, pp. 5, 6.
8. Msgr. Bryan O. Walsh interview in Miami, Fla., on 11 December 1985. Msgr. Walsh, involved in refugee affairs in south Florida for 25 years, is a recognized authority on Caribbean migration.
9. Michael Taber, ed., *Fidel Castro Speeches: Cuban Internationalist Foreign Policy 1975-80* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1981), p. 276.
10. Robert A. Pastor, personal letter to the author, 29 October 1986.
11. Taber, p. 282.
12. Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Lisandro Perez, "Cuba: The Demography of Revolution," *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 36, No. 1, April 1981, pp. 22, 23, 24.
13. Diaz-Briquets, p. 27; and Juan M. Clark, Jose I. Lasaga, and Rose S. Reque, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect* (Washington, DC: Council for Inter-American Security, 1981), p. 7.
14. Gaston A. Fernandez, "Comment—The Flotilla Entrants: Are They Different?" *Cuban Studies*, 11:2/12:1 (July 1981-January 1982), pp. 51-53.
15. Ibid.
16. Carlos Harrison, "Mariel Refugees Still Feel Isolated, Study Says," *The Miami Herald*, 13 January 1987, p. 3B.
17. US Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, *Caribbean Migration. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Immigration Refugees, and International Law*, 96th Cong., 2nd session, 1980, p. 72.

18. Clark, Lasaga, and Reque, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus*, p. 7.
19. US Department of State, Cuban-Haitian Task Force, *A Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force*, 1 November 1980, p. 55.
20. Mario A. Rivera, "Refugee Chess: Policy By Default," *Caribbean Review*, Vol. XIII, No. 4 (Fall 1984), p. 37.
21. House, *Caribbean Migration*, pp. 65-67.
22. *A Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force*, p. 80; and Mario A. Rivera, *An Evaluative Analysis of the Carter Administration's Policy Toward the Mariel Influx of 1980* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1982), pp. 171-174.
23. Interview with Andrew J. Carmichael in Washington, DC, on 22 April 1987. Carmichael was acting Associate Commissioner for Examinations for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the Mariel Boatlift. At the time of the interview, he had been called out of retirement to serve as a Special Assistant to the INS Commissioner.
24. Nick Nichols, "Castro's Revenge," *The Washington Monthly*, March 1982, pp. 39, 41, 42.
25. Selwyn Raab, "A Defector Tells of Drug Dealings By Cuba Agents," *The New York Times*, 4 April 1983.
26. Mary Thornton, "Four Cuban Officials Indicted In Drug Smuggling," *The Washington Post*, 6 November 1982.
27. *Castro and the Narcotics Connection* (Washington, DC: Cuban American National Foundation, 1983), pp. 35, 37.

CHAPTER 13

1. Interview with John D. Costello in San Francisco, Calif., on 1 April 1986. Vice Admiral Costello, USCG, then a Rear Admiral, was principal Coast Guard liaison with the White House throughout the Exodus.
2. Jimmy Carter, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1981), pp. 625, 626.
3. US Department of State, "Cuban Refugees," *Department of State Bulletin*, June 1980, p. 68.
4. Interview with Myles R.R. Frechette in Washington, DC, on 4 August 1986. Ambassador Frechette was Coordinator for Cuban Affairs and Country Director for Cuba for the State Department at the time of the Exodus.
5. Interview with Robert A. Pastor in Atlanta, Ga., on 6 November 1986. Dr. Pastor was a Latin American specialist

on the National Security Council staff at the beginning of the Boatlift. He took part in White House discussions throughout the crisis and prepared daily one-page briefing papers for President Carter; and Tom Fiedler and Carl Hiaasen, "Dilemma of Cuban Exodus: Does the US Try to Halt Boatlift and Risk Unrest as a Result?", 15 June 1980 Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980, p. 24.

6. Interview with Jack H. Watson, Jr., in Atlanta, Ga., on 30 July 1986. Watson was Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Secretary to the Cabinet at the beginning of the Exodus. Before the Exodus was over, he replaced Hamilton Jordan as the President's Chief of Staff.

7. Carter, p. 782.

8. "Carter and the Cuban Influx," *Newsweek*, 26 May 1980, p. 24; and Frechette interview.

9. "Cuban Refugees," *Department of State Bulletin*, June 1980, p. 68; and Ronald Copeland, "The Cuban Boatlift of 1980: Strategies of Federal Crisis Management," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Social Science*, May 1983, p. 145.

10. Costello interview.

11. Watson interview.

12. Tom Fiedler and Carl Hiaasen, "U.S. Talked Tough But Did Little," 16 June 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980, p. 25.

13. Interview with Brian O. Walsh in Miami, Fla., on 11 December 1985. In 1980, Monsignor Walsh was director of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Miami; he had been active with refugee issues for the previous 25 years.

14. Interview with Jose I. Lasaga in Miami, Fla., on 9 December 1985. Dr. Lasaga is a psychiatrist, author, and expert on Cuban society; interview with Juan M. Clark in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Dr. Clark is author of *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: Assessment and Prospect* and *Religious Repression in Cuba*, and is working on the report, *Totalitarian Repression in Cuba*; and interview with Guillermo Martinez in Miami, Fla., on 9 December 1985. Mr. Martinez was a prominent Cuban-American newsman in Miami with a position on the editorial board of *The Miami Herald*.

15. Interview with Leon A. Kellner in Miami, Fla., on 5 and 8 September 1986. Kellner, US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, was assigned by the Justice Department in 1982 to chair an interagency group tasked with preparing a *Mass Migration Plan* for response to another Mariel-type situation.

16. Interview with Eugene Eidenberg in Washington, DC, on 4 November 1986. Dr. Eidenberg was the deputy of Jack Watson and later succeeded Watson as Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, when Watson was promoted to Chief of Staff. Eidenberg was the White House's liaison to the Cuban-American community in South Florida.
17. Pastor interview.
18. Author's personal experience as Chief of Search and Rescue in Miami and Commodore of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON).
19. Interview with Atlee W. Wampler, III, in Miami, Fla., on 9 September 1986. Wampler, with offices in Miami, was acting US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and primary representative of the Justice Department throughout the period of the Cuban Boatlift. Prior to his appointment in early 1980, he was in charge of the US Attorney's "Major Crime Strike Force."
20. Dr. Robert A. Pastor, letter to the author, 29 October 1986.
21. Interview with John E. Shkor in Savannah, Ga., on 4 September 1986. Commander Shkor, USCG, was the Legal Officer for the Seventh USCG District during the Boatlift. He conferred frequently with, and provided legal guidance to, the District Commander.
22. Wampler interview.
23. Carter, pp. 780, 834.
24. Interview with Edwin E. Crusoe, IV, in Key West, Fla., on 13 December 1985. Captain Crusoe was Harbor Pilot for the Port of Key West and was very much involved in the Cuban Boatlift of 1980.
25. David Cobb, "FEMA and the Freedom Flotilla," *Emergency Management*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Fall 1980), p. 11; and Carter, p. 818.
26. Mario A. Rivera, *An Evaluative Analysis of the Carter Administration's Policy Toward the Mariel Influx of 1980* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1982), p. 62.
27. Watson interview.
28. Cobb, p. 11; and US Department of State "Exodus From Cuba," *Department of State Bulletin*, July 1980, p. 80.
29. US Department of Transportation, USCG, "Cuban Refugees-Southern Florida," *Flag Plot INCIDENT MEMO*, 04-01b, 29 April 1980, pp. 1, 2; and US Department of Transportation, USCG, *STATUS REPORT—CUBAN SITUATION*, 1600, 29 April 1980.

30. US Federal Emergency Management Agency, "Executive Summary-Cuban Refugee Situation," *Memorandum for Jack H. Watson, Jr.*, 30 April 1980, p. 1.
31. Carter, p. 818.
32. US Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, "Cuban Refugee Processing Alternative," *Briefing Paper for Mr. Jack Watson—The White House*, 28 April 1980, pp. 1-2.
33. Pastor interview.

CHAPTER 14

1. Interview with Robert A. Pastor in Atlanta, Ga., on 6 November 1986. Dr. Pastor was a Latin American specialist on the National Security Council at the beginning of the Boatlift. He took part in White House discussions throughout the crisis and prepared daily one-page briefing papers for President Carter.
2. Interview with Eugene Eidenberg in Washington, DC, on 4 November 1986. Dr. Eidenberg was the Deputy of Jack Watson and later succeeded him as Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs.
3. Pastor interview.
4. Eidenberg interview.
5. Ronald Copeland, "The Cuban Boatlift of 1980: Strategies in Federal Crisis Management," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Social Science*, 467 (May 1983), p. 145.
6. Eidenberg interview.
7. Interview with Leo N. Schowengerdt in Seattle, Wash., on 2 April 1986. Captain Schowengerdt, USCG, was Chief of the Law Enforcement Division of the Office of Operations in Washington, DC. During the Exodus, he virtually was committed full time as Assistant to the Chief of Operations, working on the Cuban Operations.
8. Interview with Wayne S. Smith in Washington, DC, on 12 November 1985. Dr. Smith was director of the State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs. 1977-79, and chief of the US Interests Section in Havana, 1979-82.
9. Michael Taber, ed., *Fidel Castro Speeches: Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy 1975-80* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1981), pp. 274, 275, 281, 287.
10. US Department of State, "Cuban Refugees," *Department of State Bulletin*, pp. 68, 69.

11. "*Granma* Never Lies," *Granma Weekly Review*, 18 May 1980, p. 1. (Originally published on 8 May 1980.)
12. Wayne S. Smith, *The Closest of Enemies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987).
13. Tom Fiedler and Carl Hiaasen, "Dilemma of the Cuban Exodus: Does US Try to Halt Boatlift and Risk Unrest as a Result?" 15 June 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980, p. 25.
14. "Calling a Spade a Spade," *Granma Weekly Review*, 18 May 1980, p. 3. (Originally published 7 May 1980.)
15. "Cuba's Dignified Reply," *Granma Weekly Review*, 1 June 1980, p. 3. (Originally published 23 May 1980.)
16. US State Department, "Cuban Refugees," *Department of State Bulletin*, August 1980, p. 74.
17. US Transportation Department, Coast Guard, *Cuban Refugee Situation* (Memorandum for Jack Watson from Admiral John B. Hayes, G-OLE/31), 7 May 1980.
18. United Nations, Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), 42nd Session, Agenda Item 2, *Implementation of Instruments and Related Matters, Port State Effort to Give Effect to Provisions of SOLAS: Note by the United States* (MSC XLII/2/7), 16 May 1980.
19. UN, IMCO, MSC, 42nd Session, INF. 5, *Statement by the Delegation of Cuba: Cuba's Position with Regard to Document MSC XLII/2/7 of 16 May 1980, presented by the United States* (MSC XLII/INF. 5), 22 May 1980.
20. UN, IMCO, MSC, 42nd Session, Agenda Item 2, *Implementation of Instruments and Related Matters; Drafting Group Report* (MSC XLII/WP. 7), 22 May 1980.
21. US State Department, "President's Statement," *Department of State Bulletin*, August 1980, pp. 74, 75.
22. Robert L. Scheina, "The Cuban Exodus of 1980" (*US Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 1980), p. 50; and interview with Alan F. Miller in Washington, DC, on 26 February 1986. Captain Miller, USCG, a Commander during the Cuban Operations, commanded the Medium Endurance Cutter *COURAGEOUS* at Cape Canaveral, Fla.
23. Pastor interview.
24. Smith, *Closest of Enemies*, p. 232.
25. Pastor interview.

CHAPTER 15

1. Tom Fiedler and Carl Hiaasen, "Dilemma of Cuban Exodus: Does US Try to Halt Boatlift and Risk Unrest as a Result?", 5 May 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980, p. 25.
2. "Can Miami Cope With The New Flood Of Refugees?", *US News and World Report*, 12 May 1980, p. 55; and "Carter And The Cuban Influx," *Newsweek*, 26 May 1980, p. 25.
3. Interview with John E. Shkor in Savannah, Ga., on 4 September 1986. Commander Shkor, USCG, was the Seventh USCG District Legal Officer during the Boatlift. He conferred frequently with and provided legal guidance to the District Commander.
4. Howell Raines, "Cuban Backlash Grows in Florida As Influx of Refugees Nears 30,000," *The New York Times*, 10 May 1980, pp. 1, 12.
5. Fiedler and Hiaasen, "Dilemma of Cuban Exodus."
6. Jimmy Carter, *Public Papers of the President of the United States* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1981), pp. 913-14.
7. Interview with Eugene Eidenberg in Washington, DC, on 4 November 1986. Dr. Eidenberg was the Deputy of Jack Watson and later relieved him as Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, when Watson was promoted to Chief of Staff. Eidenberg was the White House's liaison to the Cuban-American community in South Florida.
8. Interview with Jack H. Watson, Jr., in Atlanta, Ga., on 30 July 1986. Watson was Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Secretary to the Cabinet. During the Exodus, he was promoted to be the President's Chief of Staff.
9. "When A Strong State Is Unprincipled In Its Politics And Its Government Unethical," *Granma Weekly Review*, 25 May 1980, p. 1. (Originally published 19 May 1980.)
10. "Carter Orders A Cuban Cutoff," *Time*, 26 May 1980, p. 15; and "Carter And The Cuban Influx," *Newsweek*, 26 May 1980, p. 24.
11. Robert Pear, "President Toughens Curbs On Ferrying Of Cuban Refugees," *The New York Times*, 15 May 1980, p. 12.
12. "The Cuban Tide Is A Flood," *Newsweek*, 19 May 1980, p. 29.
13. Robert Pear, "President To Treat Cubans As Applicants For Asylum," *The New York Times*, 21 May 1980, p. 24.

14. US State Department, Assistant Secretary J. Brian Atwood, "The Cuban Exodus," *Foreign Affairs Memorandum*, May 1980, pp. 5, 6.
15. "Double Standard for Cuban, Haitian Refugees?", *US News & World Report*, 5 May 1980, p. 42.
16. Graham Hovey, "Comparable Aid Is Urged," *The New York Times*, 8 May 1980, p. 13.
17. Bryan O. Walsh, "The Boat People of South Florida," *America*, 17 May 1980, p. 421.
18. Edward M. Kennedy, "Refugee Act of 1980," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1981), p. 141.
19. Kennedy, p. 141; and Mario A. Rivera, *An Evaluative Analysis of the Carter Administration's Policy Toward the Mariel Influx of 1980* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1982), p. 26.
20. US Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, "Law Enforcement Policy on Transportation of Cubans to the United States," *Memorandum For: Atlee Wampler, US Attorney, Southern District of Florida*, 14 May 1980, p. 1. In his memorandum, the Attorney General also provided the following procedural guidance for carrying out the law enforcement portion of the President's program:

> (1) The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will continue to issue notices of intent to fine to those unlawfully bringing Cubans to this country. (Title 8, US Code, Section 1323 (8 USC 1323.)) As fines become due, they will, with consideration being given to mitigating circumstances, be collected.
>
> (2) Anyone who seeks to unload persons brought from Cuba at ports other than those designated for entry by INS will be subject to arrest and criminal prosecution. (8 USC 1321.)
>
> (3) All vessels used to unlawfully carry Cubans to this country after President Carter's announcement will be seized. Pursuant to such seizures, the boats, at the government's discretion, will be marked and left in the custody of their owners, with the express agreement that they stay in their regular berths. Such seizures are valid under a number of bases, including the following:
>
> —Vessels, the owners of which have been noticed of fines under the immigration law, 8 USC 1323, or noticed of possible customs violations (for example, 19 USC 1431, 1433, 1436, and 1454) may be seized pursuant to customs law under 19 USC 1581(e).

—Vessels which carry aliens into this country in violation of the criminal immigration statute, 8 USC 1323, may be seized pursuant to this statute.

—Vessels which are used for travel to Cuba in violation of the Department of Treasury's regulations, 31 CFR 515.415, under the Trading With the Enemy Act may be seized.

(4) Anyone who removes property which has been lawfully seized will be subject to arrest and separate criminal prosecution under 18 USC 2223.

(5) The Coast Guard will continue to review each vessel that returns to the United States for violations of boat safety law. (*See* 46 USC 1461 and 1483.) Those found to be in gross violation of the law will be subject to criminal prosecution and additional fines. Furthermore, boats which are found to be safety hazards will be detained.

(6) Any individual who has been noticed by INS for unlawfully bringing Cubans into the country who makes a second trip will be subject to arrest and criminal prosecution. Boats used for such repeated trips will be seized for forfeiture proceedings. (8 USC 1324.)

(7) Any individual who leaves the United States to unlawfully bring Cubans to this country after the President's announcement will be subject to criminal prosecution of violating the Treasury Department's regulations under the Trading With the Enemy Act. Boats used to make such unlawful trips will be subject to seizure. (31 CFR 515.415.)

21. US Justice Department, *Alternate Flow Proposal: Law Enforcement (Draft)*, 13 May 1980, pp. 3, 4; and US Transportation Department, Coast Guard, Seventh District, *Report On The Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, January 1981, p. 39.
22. *Alternate Flow Proposal*, p. 4.
23. US Treasury Department, Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Cuban Assets Control Regulations; Transportation of Certain Cuban Nationals," *Federal Register, Rules and Regulations*, Vol. 45, No. 98, 19 May 1980, p. 32671.
24. US Treasury Department, Customs Service, Miami Region Commissioner, "Narrative of Previous Flotilla Actions," 29 July 1980, p. 3, *Attachment 3 to Memorandum—Refugee Flotilla Contingency Plan*, 4 November 1980.
25. Shkor interview.
26. *Report On The Cuban Sea Lift*, pp. 27, 28, 32.

CHAPTER 16

1. Telephone interview with William J. Brogdon, Jr., from Kinston, N.C., on 26 August 1986. Captain Brogdon, USCG, now retired, was the first Commodore of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON). He was in command of the Coast Guard's at-sea operations from 27 April until 7 June 1980, and also was the Squadron's last Commodore, embarked in USCGC *DUANE* 24 September through 1 October 1980.
2. US Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Seventh District, *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, January 1981, p. 18.
3. Interview with James W. Decker in Alexandria, Va., on 3 March 1986. Lieutenant Decker, USCG, then a 26-year-old Lieutenant (junior grade), commanded the Key West-based 95-foot USCGC *CAPE YORK*, one of the first units involved in the Boatlift.
4. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. 8; and Robert L. Scheina, "The Cuban Exodus of 1980," *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 1980, p. 48.
5. Joseph P. Treaster, "Coast Guard Vessels and Aircraft Deployed to Cut Off Boats to Cuba," *The New York Times*, 18 May 1980, pp. 1, 32.
6. US Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Seventh District, *Cuban Sealift Operations, OPERATION ORDER 30D-1980*, 3 September 1980, pp. A-1 through A-8.
7. Ibid, pp. B-1 through B-8. ANNEX BRAVO of the Cuban Sealift Operations Order, "Legal Guidance," listed Federal laws and regulations applicable to the situation. The Annex described six laws and regulations and provided basic legal guidance for their enforcement. Governing laws and regulations, and basic elements of proof, were as shown at table 8. The Seventh Coast Guard District Commander received authority to redelegate his authority to make a "manifestly unsafe voyage" determination to the Commander of Group Key West and the Commanding Officers of High and Medium Endurance Cutters (WHECs and WMECs) assigned to the Seventh District Cuban Sealift operations. The propriety of the District commander redelegating blanket authority to make such a determination to an operational commander was questionable, however.
8. Experienced by the author.
9. Interview with Raymond J. Copin in Seattle, Wash., on 3 April 1986. Captain Copin, USCG, now retired, was Chief of

Table 8
Elements of proof for Federal laws and regulations

—*Immigration Laws*, 8 USC 1323 and 8 USC 11234. Elements of proof:
* For 8 USC 1323:
  —An illegal alien was aboard the vessel.
  —The illegal alien was destined for the United States.
* For 8 USC 1324, an additional element of proof was required: That it was a knowing and willing act.

—*Customs Laws*, Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 31 CFR Part 515. Elements of proof:
* Evidence of intent to travel to Cuba. (The more proximate to Mariel, the greater the evidence.)
* Evidence of transporting Cuban nationals to the United States. (Specific Regulation Amendment of 15 May 1980.)

—*Conspiracy*, 18 USC 371. Element of proof: Evidence of an agreement or a plan to commit an offense.

—*Seized Property Act*, 18 USC 2232 and 18 USC 2233. Elements of proof:
* 18 USC 2232—Evidence of the destruction or removal of property to prevent seizure.
* 18 USC 2233—Attempted to obtain property that has been seized.

—*Monetary Law*, 31 USC 1101. Element of proof: Transporting to or from the United States monetary instruments in excess of $5,000 without declarations.

—*Boating Safety Law*, 33 CFR 177. Elements of proof:
* Insufficient lifesaving or firefighting devices.
* Vessel overloaded.
* Other unsafe conditions. (For example, leaking fuel system; improper navigation lights; fuel in the bilges or compartment other than a fuel tank; improper ventilation; improper flame arresters; manifestly unsafe vessel for a specific voyage due to the following: improper design or configuration, improper construction or inadequate material condition; or improper or inadequate operational or safety equipment).

the Operations Division of the Seventh District during the Cuban Exodus. He was deeply involved in decisions affecting all aspects of the operations.
10. Ibid.
11. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift*, p. 23.
12. Ibid.

13. Interview with William J. Brogdon, Jr., in Washington, DC, on 20 February 1986. Captain Brogdon, USCG, was the first Commodore of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON).
14. Interview with Richard A. Appelbaum in Miami, Fla., on 5 September 1986. Captain Appelbaum, USCG, a Commander in 1980, commanded the Medium Endurance Cutter *VIGOROUS* homeported in New London, Ct. In addition to being an operational commander, Commander Appelbaum also was a trained legal officer.
15. Interview with Mark J. Sikorski in Washington, DC, on 26 February 1986. Lieutenant Sikorski, USCG, then a Lieutenant (junior grade), celebrated his 24th birthday while deployed to the Cuban Operations. He commanded the Charleston, S.C.-based 95-foot USCGC *CAPE KNOX*.
16. Interview with Alan F. Miller in Washington, DC, on 26 February 1986. Captain Miller, USCG, a Commander during the Cuban Operations, commanded the Medium Endurance Cutter USCG *COURAGEOUS* homeported in Port Canaveral, Fla.
17. Interview with Alan C. Dempsey in Key West, Fla., on 12 June 1986. Captain Dempsey, USCG, was the Coast Guard's second COMSERON, in command of cutters operating between Mariel and Key West.
18. From the author's experiences as COMSERON, embarked in *DALLAS* from 18 July to 29 August 1980.
19. Brogdon interview in Washington, DC, on 20 February 1986.
20. Robert L. Scheina, "The Cuban Exodus of 1980," *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 1980, p. 50.
21. Interview with Mariano Faget in Miami, Fla., on 9 September 1986. Faget, Supervising Immigration Examiner for the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), was sent to Key West on 24 April 1980 to process arriving Cubans.
22. Miller interview in Washington, DC, on 26 February 1986.
23. Scheina, p. 50.
24. *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift*, pp. 28, 29.
25. US Department of Transportation, Coast Guard, Seventh District, Rear Admiral Benedict L. Stabile Letter of 2 July 1980 to Vice Admiral Robert J. Price, Commander, Atlantic Area.
26. "U.S. Seizes Empty Ship After It Departs Cuba," *The New York Times*, 6 July 1980, p. 22.

27. Copin interview in Seattle, Wash., on 3 April 1986.
28. Interview with Homer A. Purdy in Washington, DC, on 28 February 1986. Captain Purdy, USCG, then a Commander, commanded the 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter *DILIGENCE*, homeported in Key West, Fla.

CHAPTER 17

1. Interview with Harold B. Shoffeitt in Key West, Fla., on 13 June 1986. Mr. Shoffeitt was Port Director of Customs for the Port of Key West at the time of the Cuban Boatlift.
2. Interview with Jim Dingfelder in Miami, Fla., on 11 June 1986. During the Cuban Boatlift, Mr. Dingfelder was Public Affairs Officer for the US Customs Service Southeast Region, with headquarters in Miami.
3. "Can Miami Cope With New Flood of Refugees?" *U.S. News and World Report*, 12 May 1980, p. 56.
4. Interview with Vann Capps in Miami, Fla., on 5 September 1986. Capps was a Supervisory Inspector, Cruise and Cargo, at the Miami Seaport when the Cuban Boatlift began. Throughout the Boatlift, he was in charge of US Customs Service operations in Key West. At the time of the interview, he was in charge of the US Customs Service Contraband Enforcement Team in Miami.
5. Shoffeitt interview.
6. Capps interview.
7. Interview with Kenneth E. Gray in Miami, Fla., on 12 December 1985. Lieutenant Commander Gray, USCG, as a Lieutenant, was in charge of a Marine Safety Detachment assigned to Key West during the Cuban Boatlift. The detachment of 15 Marine Inspectors boarded the returning boats and inspected them for violations of US law.
8. Interview with Mariano Faget in Miami, Fla., on 9 September 1986. Supervisory Immigration Examiner Faget, USINS, was sent to Key West on 24 April 1980 to process arriving Cubans. Faget, born in Cuba and bilingual, was greatly disturbed by the character of the arrivals and was taken off the Key West detail at his request.
9. Edward K. Burns, "The Cuban Boatlift," *INS Reporter*, Winter 1981-82, p. 4.
10. Interview with Jim Brown in Miami, Fla., on 8 September 1986. Patrol Agent Brown was assigned as temporary Deputy Chief of the Border Patrol in Miami when the Boatlift began.

11. Joseph B. Treaster, "Refugee Flow Slows, Easing Pressure on Key West," *The New York Times*, 9 May 1980, p. 14; and US Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Federal Coordinating Officer Notes*, 5 June 1980.
12. Interview with Samuel J. Dennis in Norfolk, Va., on 1 December 1985. Commander Dennis, USCG, a Lieutenant Commander at the time, was commander of the Coast Guard's Key West Group.
13. Interview with Bill L. Boggs in Rockville, Md., on 21 October 1986. Mr. Boggs was on-scene coordinator for US Public Health Service support of Federal response to the Cuban Boatlift.
14. Interview with Thomas R. Casey in Kill Devil Hills, N.C., on 5 November 1986. Mr. Casey of the Federal Emergency Management Agency went to Florida on 27 April 1980 and was appointed Federal Coordinating Officer on 6 May, when the President declared an emergency for the State of Florida.
15. David L. Cobb, "Freedom Flotilla," *Emergency Management*, Fall 1980, p. 11.
16. Casey interview; and interview with James p. Dokkens in Washington, DC, on 20 October 1986. Mr. Dokkens, senior Programs Officer in FEMA, was Director of FEMA's Program Support Office during the Exodus.
17. Casey interview; and interview with Alan C. Dempsey in Key West, Fla., on 12 June 1986. Captain Dempsey, USCG, was the Coast Guard's representative to FEMA in Miami and took part in all of the meetings.
18 Casey interview.
19. Interview with Benedict L. Stabile in Washington, DC, on 28 February 1986. Vice Admiral Stabile, USCG, a Rear Admiral then, was Commander of the Seventh Coast District with headquarters in Miami, Fla.
20. US Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Questions and Preliminary Answers for the South Florida Situation*, 4 May 1980, p. 1.
21. US President, Letter, "Declaration of an Emergency under Public Law 93-288," 6 May 1980. President Carter's letter to the Director of FEMA said,

> I have determined that the impact on State and local governments in Florida due to the arrival of large numbers of undocumented aliens beginning on or about April 13, 1980, is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a declaration of emergency under Public Law 93-288. I

> therefore declare that such an emergency exists in the State of Florida. Further, the humanitarian aspects of this exodus from Cuba cannot be ignored.
>
> In order to provide appropriate Federal assistance, you are authorized under Public Law 93-288 to take those measures which are necessary to assist State and local governments to control this unusual event and relieve hardship or damage to individuals and public bodies. You are authorized further to allocate funds available for these purposes in such amounts as you find necessary for administrative expenses.
>
> I expect regular reports on progress made in meeting the effects of this emergency, the extent of Federal assistance already made available and a projection of additional assistance required, if any.

22. Gray interview.
23. Robert L. Scheina, "The Cuban Exodus of 1980," *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 1980, p. 48; and US Department of Transportation, US Coast Guard, Seventh District, *Report on the Cuban Sea Lift of 1980*, p. B-21.
24. US Transportation Department, US Coast Guard, Seventh District, Legal Officer, Memorandum, *Law Enforcement; Cuban Refugee Situation*, 26 May 1980, p. 2.
25. Capps interview.
26. Cobb, p. 12.
27. Interview with Eugene Eidenberg in Washington, DC, on 4 December 1986. Dr. Eidenberg was the deputy of Jack Watson and later succeeded him as Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs. He was the White House liaison with the Federal organizations in south Florida.
28. Joseph B. Treaster, "Skippers Tell Of Trips From Mariel 1980," *The New York Times*, 16 May 1980, p. 14.
29. Interview with John E. Shkor in Savannah, Ga., on 4 September 1986. Commander Shkor, USCG, was the Seventh USCG District Legal Officer during the Boatlift. He conferred frequently with, and provided legal guidance to, the District Commander.
30. Cobb, p. 13; and US State Department, Cuban-Haitian Task Force, *A Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force*, 1 November 1980, pp. 6, 10, 11.

CHAPTER 18

1. Guillermo Martinez and Robert Rivas, "Final Boats Carry Only Frustration," *The Miami Herald*, 27 September 1980, p. 1A.
2. "Tears In a Cuban Port Marked End Of Refugee Sealift," *The New York Times*, 28 September 1980, p. 21.
3. Steven R. Weisman, "Havana Government Unilaterally Cuts Off Refugee Boat Exodus," *The New York Times*, 27 September 1980, pp. 1, 6.
4. US State Department, Cuban-Haitian Task Force, *A Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force*, 1 November 1980, p. A-17.
5. Don Bohning, "Fidel Calls Off Crises for Carter," *The Miami Herald*, 27 September 1980, p. 1A.
6. Michael Taber, ed., *Fidel Castro Speeches: Cuban Internationalist Foreign Policy 1975-80* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1981), p. 285.
7. "When A Strong State Is Unprincipled In Its Politics And Its Government Is Unethical," *Granma Weekly Review*, 25 May 1980 (published 19 May 1980), p. 1.
8. Alan Riding, 'Castro, in Nicaragua, Chides U.S. but Meets Officials, *The New York Times*, 20 July 1980, p. 1; and Don Bohning, "Fidel Calls Off Crises for Carter," *The Miami Herald*, 27 September 1980, p. 1A.
9. Bohning, "Fidel Calls Off," p. 12A.
10. Interview with Eugene Eidenberg in Washington, DC, on 4 December 1986. Dr. Eidenberg was the deputy to Jack Watson and later succeeded him as Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs. He coordinated the Federal response to the Cuban Exodus from the beginning.
11. Ibid.; and Mario A. Rivera, *An Evaluative Analysis of the Carter Administration's Policy Toward the Mariel Influx of 1980* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1982), p. 28.
12. Interview with Robert A. Pastor. Dr. Pastor was a Latin American specialist on the National Security Council at the beginning of the Boatlift. He participated in White House discussions throughout the crisis; and interview with Kenneth N. Skoug, Jr., in Washington, DC, on 12 January 1987. Mr. Skoug, a career Foreign Service Officer, at the time of the interview was Director of the Office of Cuban Affairs, US Department of State.

13. Don Bohning, "Sealift Halted As Castro Eyes Nov. 4 Election," 27 September 1980, Special Reprint, *The Miami Herald*, 1980, p. 31.
14. Interview with Myles R.R. Frechette in Washington, DC, on 4 August 1986. Ambassador Frechette was Coordinator for Cuban Affairs and Country Director for Cuba for the State Department at the time of the Exodus.
15. Frechette interview.
16. "120 Cubans Reach U.S. As Airlift From Havana Begins," *The New York Times*, 20 November 1980, p. 18.
17. Interview with Wayne S. Smith in Washington, DC, on 12 November 1985. Dr. Smith was Director of the State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs, 1977-79, and Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana, 1979-82.

CHAPTER 19

1. Interviews with Craig O. Raynsford in Washington, DC, on 25 March 1987 and 22 April 1987. Raynsford, an Associate General Counsel for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), had several meetings with the Cubans concerning the return of Mariel "excludables" and the immigration of long-term political prisoners.
2. Interview with Kenneth N. Skoug, Jr. in Washington, DC, on 12 January 1987. Mr. Skoug, a career Foreign Service Officer, was Director of the Office of Cuban Affairs, US Department of State, at the time of the interview.
3. Juan M. Clark, Jose I. Lasaga, and Rose S. Regue, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect* (Washington, DC: Council for Inter-American Security, 1981), p. 6.
4. Jorge I. Dominquez, "Cuba in the 1980s," *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1981, p. 83.
5. US Congress, Joint Economic Committee, *Cuban Exodus—1980: The Context*, by Barry Sklar, Joint Committee Print (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 112.
6. Ibid., p. 115.
7. Interview with Robert A. Pastor in Atlanta, Ga., on 6 November 1986. Dr. Pastor was a Latin American specialist on the National Security Council during the Cuban Boatlift. He participated in White House discussions and planning throughout the crisis and prepared daily one-page briefing papers for President Carter.

8. Skoug interview.
9. Interview with Myles R.R. Frechette in Washington, DC, on 12 November 1986. Ambassador Frechette was Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, and Country Director for Cuba at the State Department during the Cuban Exodus; and interview with Wayne S. Smith in Washington, DC, on 12 November 1985. Dr. Smith was Chief of the US Interests Section in Havana during the 1980 Boatlift.
10. US Department of State, Cuban-Haitian Task Force, *A Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force*, 1 November 1980, pp. 4, 5, 6, A-29.
11. US Department of State, Thomas O. Enders, "Cuban and Haitian Migration," *Department of State Bulletin*, October 1981, p. 78.
12. US Department of State, *A Report of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force*, p. 110.
13. Ibid., pp. 43-50.
14. Interview with Atlee W. Wampler, III, in Miami, Fla., on 9 September 1986. Wampler, with offices in Miami, was acting US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, and primary representative of the Justice Department throughout the Cuban Boatlift.
15. "1,813 Cubans Lose Battle for Release," *The Washington Post*, 18 October 1986, p. 11.
16. Interview with Andrew J. Carmichael in Washington, DC, on 22 April 1987. Carmichael was acting Associate Commissioner for Examinations for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the Mariel Boatlift. At the time of the interview, he had been recalled from retirement to serve as a Special Assistant to the INS Commissioner.
17. Interview with Jim Brown in Miami, Fla., on 8 September 1986. Brown, Assistant Chief Patrol Agent in Miami, was assigned as a temporary Deputy Chief of the Border Patrol in Miami when the Boatlift began.
18. Interview with Brian O. Walsh in Miami, Fla., on 11 December 1985. In 1980, Monsignor Walsh was director of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Miami; he had been active with refugee issues in South Florida for 25 years.
19. Interview with Guillermo Martinez in Miami, Fla., on 9 December 1985. Martinez, the son of a noted Cuban journalist, was a prominent Cuban-American newsman in Miami with a position on the Editorial Board of *The Miami Herald*.

20. Interview with Juan M. Clark in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Dr. Clark is author of *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: Assessment and Prospect* and *Religious Repression in Cuba*, and is working on the report, *Totalitarian Repression in Cuba.*
21. US Department of State, "U.S., Cuba Resume Normal Migration," *Department of State Bulletin*, February 1985, p. 44.
22. Skoug interview; and John M. Goshko, "Reagan Orders Halt to Immigration by Cubans Through Third Countries," *The Washington Post*, 23 August 1986, p. A-13.
23. Tad Szulc, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), p. 43.
24. Raynsford interview.
25. Skoug interview.
26. Ibid.
27. Raynsford interview.

CHAPTER 20

1. Tad Szulc, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), p. 39.
2. Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Lisandro Perez, "Cuba: The Demography of Revolution," *Population Bulletin*, April 1981, pp. 22, 36.
3. Jorge I. Dominques, "Cuba in the 1980's," *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1981, pp. 54, 55.
4. Dominques, "Will There Be Another Mariel Boatlift," *The Miami Herald*, 11 January 1987, p. 5C.
5. Interview with Myles R.R. Frechette in Washington, DC, on 4 August 1986. Ambassador Frechette was Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, and Country Director for Cuba at the State Department during the Cuban Exodus.
6. Interview with Kenneth N. Skoug, Jr., in Washington, DC, on 12 January 1987. Mr. Skoug, a career Foreign Service Officer, was Director of the Office of Cuban Affairs, US Department of State, at the time of the interview.
7. Interview with Guillermo Martinez in Miami, Fla., on 9 December 1985. Martinez, the son of a noted Cuban journalist, was a prominent Cuban-American newsman in Miami with a position on the editorial board of *The Miami Herald.*

8. Interview with Robert A. Pastor in Atlanta, Ga., on 6 November 1986. Dr. Pastor was a Latin American specialist on the National Security Council staff at the beginning of the Boatlift. He took part in White House discussions throughout the crisis and prepared daily one-page briefing papers for President Carter.
9. Thomas O. Enders, "Cuban and Haitian Migration," *Department of State Bulletin*, October 1981, p. 78.
10. Interview with Wayne S. Smith in Washington, DC, on 12 November 1985. Dr. Smith was Director of the State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs, 1977-79, and chief of the US Interests Section in Havana, 1979-82.
11. Andres Oppenheimer, "Capitalistic Lures Are Tested To Stimulate Economy," *The Miami Herald*, 18 December 1983, p. 14M.
12. Ibid.
13. Interview with Juan M. Clark in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Dr. Clark is co-author of the Special Report, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect* (Washington, DC: Council for Inter-American Security, 1981).
14. "Free Market Try in Cuba Abandoned," *The Washington Times*, 10 June 1986, p. 7.
15. Tad Szulc, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait*, pp. 649, 650; "Castro Says Cuba Is In Bad Shape," *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland), 17 January 1987; and Skoug interview.
16. "Cuba Warned Of Economic Hard Times," *The Washington Post*, 4 December 1986, p. 31; and Terri Shaw, "Soviets Boost Aid to Cuba by 50 Percent," *The Washington Post*, 12 April 1986, p. A-20.
17. Tad Szulc, "Why Sanctions Against Cuba Are Useless," *The Miami Herald*, 6 September 1986; "Castro Says Cuba Is In Bad Shape: U.S. Fears Dead-end Revolution," *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland), 17 January 1987; and "Cuba Warned of Economic Hard Times," *The Washington Post*, 4 December 1986, p. 31.
18. Interview with Paul W. Schmidt in Washington, DC, on 24 February 1987. Schmidt was Acting General Counsel of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the Mariel Boatlift, serving in that capacity from October 1979 until May 1981. At the time of the interview, he once again was General Counsel of the INS.
19. Skoug interview.

CHAPTER 21

1. US Department of Justice, US Attorney, Southern District of Florida, *Results of Cuba/Haitian Boat Flotilla Task Force Executive Committee Meetings of 10/24/80 and 10/30/80* (Memo To The File dated 3 November 1980), pp. 1-5.
2. Interview with Leon B. Kellner in Miami, Fla., on 5 and 8 September 1986. Kellner was US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida at the time of the interview. In 1982, he was assigned by the Justice Department to lead an interagency group tasked with preparing a Mass Migration Contingency Plan for reponse to another Mariel-type situation.
3. Interview with Robert A. Adams, Jr., in Washington, DC, on 25 March 1987. Adams, Chief Patrol Agent for the US Border Patrol in Miami, worked on the Mass Migration Plan from 1982 until he was reassigned in 1984. He was chairman of the committee that prepared the law enforcement section of the plan. At the time of the interview, he was Deputy Chief of the Central Office of the Border Patrol in Washington, DC.
4. Kellner interview.
5. Interview with John W. Kime in Washington, DC, on 1 April 1987. Rear Admiral Kime, USCG, as a Captain, was Chief of the Operations Division, Seventh Coast Guard District in Miami from the summer of 1982 to the summer of 1984. He was the Coast Guard's liaison with the US Attorney's Office during preparation of the Mass Migration Plan. At the time of the interview, he was Chief of the Coast Guard's Office of Merchant Marine Safety in Washington, DC.
6. Adams interview.
7. Kime interview.
8. Ibid.
9. Kime interview.
10. Interview with Andrew J. Carmichael in Washington, DC, on 22 April 1987. Carmichael was acting Associate Commissioner for Examinations for the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the Mariel Boatlift. At the time of the interview, he had been called out of retirement to serve as a Special Assistant to the INS Commissioner.
11. Interview with Atlee W. Wampler, III, in Miami, Fla., on 9 September 1986. Wampler, with offices in Miami, was Acting US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and primary representative of the Justice Department throughout

the Cuban Boatlift. Wampler, no longer with the Federal Government, was with a law firm in Miami at the time of the interview.

12. Interview with Paul W. Schmidt in Washington, DC, on 24 February 1987. Schmidt was Acting General Counsel of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the Mariel Boatlift. He served in that capacity from October 1979 until May 1981. At the time of the interview, he once again was Acting General Counsel for the INS.

13. Wampler interview.

14. Ibid.

15. Interview with John E. Shkor in Savannah, Ga., on 4 September 1986. Commander Shkor, USCG, was the Seventh Coast Guard District's Legal Officer during the Boatlift. He conferred frequently with, and provided legal guidance to, the District Commander, Admiral Stabile. At the time of the interview, Commander Shkor was commanding officer of the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office in Savannah.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Carmichael interview.

19. Interview with Craig O. Raynsford in Washington, DC, on 25 March 1987. Raynsford, an Associate General Counsel for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, had been negotiating with the Cubans for the return of the Mariel "excludables" since 1983. He made several trips to Cuba to arrange the immigration of long-term political prisoners.

20. US Department of Justice, Attorney General, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Legal Counsel, *Federal Authority to Exclude Boats from the Causeway Leading to Key West and Adjacent Islands*, Memorandum, 31 July 1980, p. 1, 6.

21. US Department of Justice, Associate Deputy Attorney General, *Possible Institution of a Checkpoint on U.S. Route 1 to Impede Boats Bound for Mariel*, Memorandum, 3 September 1980, pp. 1, 2, 3.

22. Interview with Richard A. Appelbaum in Miami, Fla., on 5 September 1986. Captain Appelbaum, USCG, a Commander during the 1980 Boatlift, commanded the Medium Endurance Cutter *VIGOROUS*, assigned to the Cuban Operations. In addition to being an operational commander, Appelbaum also was a Coast Guard Legal Officer. At the time of the interview, he was chief of the Seventh District's Intelligence

and Law Enforcement Branch; he recently had been relieved as the District's Legal Officer.
23. Kellner interview.

EPILOGUE

1. Neil A. Lewis, "U.S. Hints It will Ease Cuban Deportation Plan," *The New York Times*, 25 November 1987, p. 86.
2. Ronald Smothers, "Cuban Inmates Riot in Louisiana Over New Threat of Deportation," *The New York Times*, 23 November 1987, p. B14; and Robert Pear, "Behind the Prison Riots: Precautions Not Taken," *The New York Times*, 6 December 1987, p. 36.
3. "Hostage was More Afraid of What Happened Outside," *The New York Times*, 30 November 1987, p B10.
4. Michael Rezendes, "Ex-Hostages Say Inmates Kept Order," *The New York Times*, 1 December 1987, p. A11.
5. "17 Cubans Escape Texas Center; 14 Recaptured," *The New York Times*, 23 November 1987, p. B14.
6. Smothers, "Cuban Inmates Riot," p. B14; and Pear, "Behind the Prison Riots," p. 36.
7. Robert D. McFadden, "Cubans in 2nd Jail Riot Over Fears of Deportation," *The New York Times*, 24 November 1987, p. A1.
8. Ibid.
9. Smothers, "Little Hope Seen for Quick Release of Riot Hostages," *The New York Times*, 25 November 1987, p. A1; and Jerry Schwartz, "Cuban Exiles Meet with Atlanta Inmates and Reach Tentative Accord on Hostages," *The New York Times*, 27 November 1987, p. B12.
10. Smothers, "Little Hope," p. B6; and "Who are the Detainees?", *The Washington Post*, 1 December 1987, p. A20.
11. Smothers, "Little Hope Seen," p. B6.
12. Ibid., p. A1; and McFadden, "Cubans in 2nd Jail," p. B12.
13. Pear, "Military Hostage Specialists Sent to Help FBI at Atlanta Prison," *The New York Times*, 26 November 1987, pp. A1, D17.
14. Lindsey Gruson, "Pact to Release 26 Hostages Fails; Talks are Put Off," *The New York Times*, 28 November 1987, pp. 1, 28.
15. "Bishop's Message to Cubans," *The New York Times*, 30 November 1987, p. B10. 15. The message, in its entirety, said,

Dear Brothers. I come from the Shrine of Charity Church, where we have prayed for you the whole week. I come as a brother to visit my brothers as shepherd in search of his flock, to tell you that during the week I have prayed especially for those who are in your hands.

My dear brothers, I have read the document that you have prepared and I see that you have wanted to negotiate. I have read it in detail and have consulted with my lawyer, Dr. Rafael Pena Verde.

I have previously traveled to Washington, DC, where I saw the Attorney General of the United States, Edwin Meese, and I have seen his desire to see that everything is complied with.

I have high hopes, with hopes that there will be a complete change in your lives.

I come with the hope that all of those who are in your hands, employees of the jail, return to their families.

This is a moment of peace. It is a day which must be a beginning for you. This is what I desire. I want you to release the prisoners that are in your custody, and I want you to demonstrate to the world the good will that every Christian should have in his heart.

I hope you will begin a new life, and that is precisely that which, as a priest, fills me with consolation.

The past will end, and the future will begin. Sign the document. You can be sure that what you have done is good.

We have reviewed the document in detail, and I can tell you there is nothing missing in it. It is my great desire that this matter end this evening, and that a new life will begin for you.

I give you my blessings. May the blessing of the Almighty God, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit descend upon you.

16. "Text of Oakdale Agreement," *The New York Times*, 30 November 1987, p. B10.
17. Gruson, "Cubans Gain Very Little in Pact, Sympathizers Say," *The New York Times*, 1 December 1987, p. B8.
18. Ibid.
19. Smothers, "Hostages Recall Fright as Well as Inmate Discipline and Consideration," *The New York Times*, 5 December 1987, p. 34.

20. Don Phillips and Morris S. Thompson, "Negotiators, Detainees Make Progress in Atlanta as One Hostage is Freed," *The Washington Post*, 2 December 1987, p. A-7.
21. Phillips and Thompson, "Atlanta Negotiations Move Slowly as Inmates Seek 'Clarifications,'" *The Washington Post*, 3 December 1987, p. A-16; and Phillips and Thompson, "Officials, Inmates Agree to End Prison Siege," *The Washington Post*, 4 December 1987, pp. A-1, A-10.
22. "11 Days of Fear, Uncertainty in Atlanta Siege," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 December 1987, p. A-1; and Public Broadcasting Service, "FOCUS—Trading for Hostages," *The MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour*, 4 December 1987.

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Personal Interviews

WHITE HOUSE

Eidenberg, Eugene—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 4 December 1986. Dr. Eidenberg was the deputy to Jack Watson, the President's Assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Secretary to the Cabinet, and later was appointed to succeed him in those positions. He was the White House's coordinator for the Federal response to the influx of Cuban refugees. At the time of the interview, Eidenberg was President of the Pacific Division of MCI Telecommunications Corporation.

Pastor, Robert A.—Interviewed in Atlanta, Ga., on 6 November 1986. Dr. Pastor was Coordinator for Latin American and Caribbean Affairs on the National Security Council (NSC) staff during the Cuban Boatlift. He participated, as the NSC's representative, in White House discussions and planning throughout the crisis. He prepared daily one-page briefing summaries for President Carter. At the time of the interview, Pastor was Professor of Political Science at Emory University, Atlanta, and Director of Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the Carter Center at Emory University.

Watson, Jack H. Jr.—Interviewed in Atlanta, Ga., on 30 July 1986. Watson was Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Secretary to the Cabinet at the beginning of the Cuban Exodus. He took charge of responding to the Cuban influx at the White House when the Exodus became a domestic crisis. In June, while the Exodus was in progress, he was appointed Chief of Staff to the President. At the time of the interview, Watson was practicing law in Atlanta.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Frechette, Myles R.R.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 4 August 1986. Ambassador Frechette was Coordinator for Cuban Affairs and Country Director for Cuba for the Department of State during the Cuban Exodus. He participated as the State Department's representative at White House meetings. At the time of the interview, Frechette was the American Ambassador to Cameroon.

Skoug, Kenneth H. Jr.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 12 January 1987. Skoug, a career Foreign Service Officer, was Director of the Department of State's Office of Cuban Affairs at the time of the interview.

Smith, Wayne S.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 12 November 1985. Dr. Smith was chief of the US Interests Section in Havana before, during, and after the Boatlift (1979-82). He had had previous assignments in Cuba and as Director of the State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs (1977-79). No longer with the State Department, he was teaching at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies at the time of the interview.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Attorney General

Kellner, Leon B.—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 5 and 8 September 1986. Kellner was US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida at the time of the interview. In 1982, he was assigned by the Justice Department to lead an interagency group tasked with preparing a Mass Migration Contingency Plan for response to another Mariel-type situation.

Wampler, Atlee W. III—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 9 September 1986. Wampler, with offices in Miami, was acting US Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and the primary representative of the Justice Department throughout the Cuban Boatlift. Wampler, no longer with the Federal Government, was with a law firm in Miami, Fla., at the time of the interview.

Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS)

Carmichael, Andrew J.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 22 April 1987. Carmichael was the acting Associate Commissioner for Examinations of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the Mariel Boatlift. He was responsible for the inspection and disposition of the arriving Cubans. He retired from the Service in May 1987, but was recalled as a Special Assistant to the Commissioner to work on the INS response to immigration legislation.

Faget, Mariano—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 9 September 1986. Faget was acting Chief Examiner for INS in Miami when the Boatlift began in 1980. On 24 April 1980, he was sent to Key West to be in charge of processing the arriving Cubans. At the time of the interview, Faget was a Supervisory Immigration Examiner with INS in Miami, Fla.

Raynsford, Craig O.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 25 March 1987 and 22 April 1987. Raynsford, an Associate General Counsel for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), has represented the United States in negotiations for the return of Cuban criminals (Excludables) since 1983. He has coordinated the immigration of long-term political prisoners from Cuba. At the time of the interview, he was assigned to the INS General Counsel's Office in Washington.

Schmidt, Paul W.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 24 February 1987. Schmidt was the Acting General Counsel of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service during the Mariel Boatlift, serving in that capacity from October 1979 until May 1981. At the time of the interview, he was once again Acting General Counsel of the INS.

US Border Patrol

Adams, Robert A., Jr.—Interviewed in Washington DC, on 25 March 1987. Adams, as Chief Patrol Agent for the US Border Patrol in Miami in 1982, was assigned to chair the Law Enforcement Committee during the drafting of the Justice Department's Mass Migration Contingency Plan. At the time of the interview, Adams was Deputy Chief of the Central Office of the US Border Patrol.

Brown, Jim—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 8 September 1986. Brown was US Border Patrol agent in charge in

Orlando, Fla., when the Boatlift began. He was immediately reassigned to duty in Miami as temporary Deputy Chief of Border Patrol; he coordinated assignments and support of additional agents brought in during the crisis. At the time of the interview, he was Assistant Chief Patrol Agent in Miami.

US COAST GUARD

Washington, DC

Costello, John D.—Interviewed in San Franciso, Calif., on 1 April 1986. Vice Admiral Costello, USCG, was Chief of the Office of Operations at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC, during the Cuban Boatlift. As the situation intensified, he devoted his total efforts to the Federal response to the Exodus. He was the Coast Guard's principal liaison with Jack Watson and Gene Eidenberg at the White House. At the time of the interview, Costello was in command of the Coast Guard's Pacific Area, with headquarters in San Francisco.

Schowengerdt, Leo N.—Interviewed in Seattle, Wash., on 2 April 1986. Captain Schowengerdt, USCG, was Chief of the Coast Guard's Law Enforcement Division, Office of Operations, in Washington, DC. During the Exodus, he was committed virtually full time as assistant to the Chief of Operations, working on the Cuban Operations. At the time of the interview, Schowengerdt was commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter *BOUTWELL* (WHEC 719).

Miami, Fla.

Copin, Raymond J.—Interviewed in Seattle, Wash., on 3 April 1986. Captain Copin, USCG, Retired, was Chief of the Operations Divison of the Seventh Coast Guard District in Miami during the Cuban Exodus. He was deeply involved in decisions that affected all aspects of the operations. At the time of the interview, Copin was retired in Seattle.

Dempsey, Alan C.—Interviewed in Key West, Fla., on 12 June 1986. Captain Dempsey, USCG, was the Seventh Coast Guard District's representative to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Miami. On 6 June 1980, he

relieved Captain Brogdon as Commodore of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON), operating between Mariel and Key West. At the time of the interview, Dempsey was Commander of Coast Guard Group Key West.

Kime, John W.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 1 April 1987. Rear Admiral Kime, USCG, as a Captain, was Chief of the Operations Division, Seventh Coast Guard District, in Miami. From the summer of 1982 to the summer of 1984, he was the Coast Guard's liaison with the US Attorney's Office during preparation of the Mass Migration Contingency Plan. At the time of the interview, he was Chief of the Office of Merchant Marine Safety at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington.

Shkor, John E.—Interviewed in Savannah, Ga., on 4 September 1986. Commander Shkor, USCG, was the Seventh USCG District Legal Officer during the Boatlift. He conferred frequently with, and provided legal guidance to, Admiral Stabile, the District Commander. At the time of the interview, Commander Shkor was commmanding officer of the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office in Savannah.

Stabile, Benedict L.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 28 February 1986. Vice Admiral Stabile, USCG, as Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District, was in command of all Coast Guard and Naval forces during the Cuban Operations. At the time of the interview, Stabile was Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard.

Sutherland, James, P.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 27 February 1986. Commander Sutherland, USCG, then a Lieutenant Commander, was an HH-52 helicopter pilot and Assistant Operations Officer at Air Station Miami. As the tempo of the Cuban Operations increased, he was assigned to the Seventh District Operations Division as a liaison officer and assistant for aviation. At the time of the interview, Sutherland was assigned to Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC.

Key West, Fla.

Dennis, Samuel J.— Interviewed in Norfolk, Va., on 1 December 1985. Commander Dennis, USCG, was a 34-year-

old Lieutenant Commander in command of the Coast Guard's Group Key West when the Boatlift began. He remained in command of the Group— rapidly expanded to include several cutters and helicopters and more than 600 personnel— throughout the Cuban Operations. At the time of the interview, Dennis was a liaison officer with the Navy's Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANT).

Gray, Kenneth E.—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 12 December 1985. Lieutenant Commander Gray, USCG, as a Lieutenant was in charge of a Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment assigned to Key West, Fla., during the Cuban Boatlift. The detachment of 15 marine inspectors boarded returning boats and inspected them for violations of US law. At the time of the interview, Gray was a Coast Guard attorney assigned to the legal staff of the Seventh Coast Guard District.

At Sea, Straits of Florida

Appelbaum, Richard A.— Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 5 September 1986. Captain Appelbaum, USCG, a commander during the 1980 Boatlift, commanded the Medium Endurance Cutter *VIGOROUS* assigned to the Cuban Operations. In addition to being an operational commander, Appelbaum was a Coast Guard Legal Officer. At the time of the interview, he was chief of the Seventh District's Intelligence and Law Enforcement Branch in Miami.

Brogdon, William J. Jr.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 20 February 1986; and telephone interview from Kinston, NC, on 26 August 1986. Captain Brogdon, USCG, was the first Commodore of the Coast Guard's Southeast Squadron (COMSERON). He was in command of the Coast Guard's at-sea operations from 27 April until 7 June 1980 and also was the Squadron's last Commodore, embarked in the Coast Guard Cutter *DUANE* 24 September 1980 through 1 October 1980. At the time of the interview, Brogdon was Deputy Chief of the Coast Guard's Office of Navigation in Washington, DC.

Decker, James W.—Interviewed in Alexandria, Va., on 3 March 1986. Lieutenant Decker, then a 26-year-old Lieutenant (junior grade), was in command of the 95-foot Coast Guard Cutter *CAPE YORK* with a crew of 14. Decker was

heavily involved in rescue work during early phases of the Boatlift. At the time of the interview, Decker was assigned to the Coast Guard's Electronics Laboratory in Alexandria, Va.

Miller, Alan F.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 26 February 1986. Captain Miller, USCG, a Commander during the Cuban Operations, commanded the Medium Endurance Cutter *COURAGEOUS* during the Cuban Operations. *COURAGEOUS*, with its helicopter and boats, rescued 38 of the 52 people aboard the P/C *OLO YUMI* when it sank after sailing from Mariel. At the time of the interview, Miller was assigned to Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC.

Purdy, Homer A.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 28 February 1986. Captain Purdy, USCG, then a Commander, was commanding officer of the 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter *DILIGENCE*, homeported in Key West, Fla. *DILIGENCE* spent more days underway on Cuban Operations than any other ship. At the time of the interview, Purdy was assigned to Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC.

Sikorski, Mark J.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 26 February 1986. Lieutenant Sikorski, USCG, then a Lieutenant (junior grade), celebrated his 24th birthday while deployed to the Cuban Operations. He commanded the Charleston, SC-based 95-foot Coast Guard Cutter *CAPE KNOX*. At the time of the interview, Sikorski was working on Shipboard Electronic Systems at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC.

US NAVY

Kingston, John J. Jr.—Interviewed at Portsmouth, Va., 28 April 1986. Captain Kingston, USN, was Commodore of Amphibious Squadron Four (COMPHIBFOUR), deployed for Cuban Rescue Operations from 22 May to 10 June 1980. At the time of the interview, Kingston was in command of the Naval Sea Support Center Atlantic.

Train, Harry D. II—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 25 April 1986. Admiral Train, USN, Retired, was Commander in Chief, Atlantic, Atlantic Fleet, and Western Atlantic Area, and Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic during the Cuban

Exodus in 1980. At the time of the interview, Train was taking part in the Capstone Program at the National Defense University, Washington, DC, as an adviser.

US CUSTOMS SERVICE (USCS)

Capps, Vann—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 5 September 1986. Capps was a supervisory inspector, Cruise and Cargo, for the US Customs Service (USCS) at the Miami Seaport when the Cuban Boatlift began. During the first week of the influx, he was detached from his duties in Miami and assigned to Key West to be in charge of all US Customs Service operations. At the time of the interview, Capps was Chief of the USCS Contraband Enforcement Team in Miami.

Dingfelder, James M.—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 11 June 1986. During the Cuban Boatlift, he was Public Affairs Officer for the USCS Southeast Region, with headquarters in Miami. At the time of the interview, Dingfelder was Staff Coordinator for the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System in Miami.

Shoffeitt, Harold B.—Interviewed in Key West, Fla., on 13 June 1986. Shoffeitt was the USCS Port Director of Customs for the Port of Key West throughout the Boatlift, a position in which he continued to serve at the time of the interview.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

Casey, Thomas R.—Interviewed in Kill Devil Hills, N.C., on 5 November 1986. Casey, Deputy Director of FEMA's Program Disaster Response and Recovery Office, was sent to South Florida on 27 April 1980 to coordinate Federal resources in responding to the influx of Cuban refugees. He was formally appointed Federal Coordinating Officer on 6 May 1980, when the President declared the situation an emergency. At the time of the interview, Casey was retired and living in Kill Devil Hills.

Dokkens, James P.—Interviewed in Washington, DC, on 20 October 1986. Dokkens was Director of FEMA's Programs

Support Office during the Cuban Boatlift emergency. At the time of the interview, he was Senior Programs Officer for FEMA.

US PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (PHS)

Boggs, Bill L.—Interviewed in Rockville, Md., on 21 October 1986. He was on-scene coordinator for Public Health Service support for the Federal response to the Cuban influx. At the time of the interview, Boggs was on the Migrant Health Staff at PHS headquarters.

MIAMI/KEY WEST

Clark, Juan M.—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Dr. Clark, a co-author of the 1981 Special Report for the Council for Inter-American Security, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect*, had done extensive research and writing about repression in Cuba. At the time of the interview, Clark was a professor at Miami-Dade Community College in Miami.

Crusoe, Edwin E. IV—Interviewed in Key West, Fla., on 13 December 1985. Captain Crusoe was Harbor Pilot for the Port of Key West during the 1980 Cuban Boatlift and was very involved with activities at the Key West waterfront. At the time of the interview, he was still serving as Key West Harbor Pilot.

Lasaga, Jose I.—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 9 December 1985. Dr. Lasaga, a psychiatrist and scholar, was a co-author of the 1981 Special Report for the Council for Inter-American Security, *The 1980 Mariel Exodus: An Assessment and Prospect*. He has researched and written about the Cuban society for many years. At the time of the interview, Lasage was a psychiatrist practicing in Miami.

Martinez, Guillermo—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 9 December 1985. At the time of the interview, he was a prominent Cuban- American newsman in Miami with a position on the editorial board of *The Miami Herald*.

Walsh, Bryan O.—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 11 December 1985. Monsignor Walsh was director of Catholic Charities

for the Archdiocese of Miami in 1980 and had been active with refugee issues in south Florida for the previous 25 years. At the time of the interview, Walsh was continuing his work with refugee affairs for the Archdiocese of Miami.

CUBAN REFUGEES

Fong, Antero—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Born and raised in Havana, Cuba, Fong had attended the University of Havana and had worked as an accountant and statistician before leaving Cuba. He emigrated to the United States from Mariel on 9 May 1980 on board the fishing boat *PEGGY SUE*.

Hernandez, Delfin—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 10 December 1985. Hernandez had been a blacksmith in Cuba and emigrated to the United States with his family from Mariel in May 1980 on board the yacht *ROSEE*. (Jose S. Zamora of the Department of Health and Human Services' Miami Office of Refugee Resettlement translated during the interview.)

Lopez, Mercedes—Interviewed in Miami, Fla., on 11 December 1985. Lopez had worked in a shoe factory in Havana. She came with her family to Florida by boat from Mariel, Cuba, after they spent 10 days at the Peruvian Embassy and 18 days in isolation at their apartment. (Jose S. Zamora of the Department of Health and Human Services' Miami Office of Refugee Resettlement translated during the interview.)

Abbreviations

ADP	automated data processing
AFB	Air Force Base
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AINC	aviator-in-charge
AK-	letters designating a Soviet type of submachine gun (*Avtomat Kolashnikov*)
APS	Airborne Pulse Search (radar)
AR&SC	Aviation Repair and Support Center
AVDET	Coast Guard Aviation Detachment
BOP	US Bureau of Prisons
BSD	Boating Safety Detachment
C-	letter designating a Cargo or Transport type of aircraft in US military terminology
CAT	Crisis Action Team
CCCJTF	Commander, Joint Caribbean Task Force
CCGD7	Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District
CGD7	Seventh Coast Guard District
CDR	Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (Cuban)
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CH-	letters designating a cargo type of helicopter
CHOP	Change Operational Control (US Coast Guard)
CHTF	Cuban-Haitian Task Force
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COMCGFOSOTF	Commander, Coast Guard Forces South of Twenty Four North
COMPAT	Commander, Patrol Squadron
COMPHIBRON	Commander, Amphibious Squadron
COMSERON	Commodore, Coast Guard Southeast Squadron
COTP	Captain of the Port
CTSCD	Coalition to Support Cuban Detainees
CVS	Commercial Vessel Safety
DEFCON	Defense Condition

DGI	Directorate of General Intelligence (Cuban)
DOD	Department of Defense
E-	Letter designating a US military aircraft with special electronic capability
EJT	Youth Army of Work (Cuban)
EMT	emergency medical technician
ETA	estimated time of arrival
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FCO	Federal Coordinating Officer
FDC	Federal Detention Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FEU	Federation of University Students (Cuban)
FHP	Florida Highway Patrol
FMP	Florida Marine Patrol
FTG	Fleet Training Group
FY	fiscal year
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
GNP	gross national product
G-O	US Coast Guard Chief of the Office of Operations
G-OLE	Coast Guard's Operational Law Enforcement Division
GRT	gross ton
GSA	General Services Administration
HCO	Helicopter Control Officer
HH-	letters designating rotary wing aircraft
ICAP	Cuban Institute for Friendship to People
IMCO	Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, a deliberative body within the United Nations
INS	US Immigration and Naturalization Service
JP-	letters designating jet petroleum
KGB	Soviet State Security Committee (Secret Police)
KHZ	kilohertz
LCU	letters designating US Navy Landing Craft, Utility

LHA	letters designating US Navy Amphibious Assault Ship (Landing Helicopter Assault)
LPD	letters designating US Navy Amphibious Transport Dock (Landing Platform, Dock)
LRS	long-range search
LST	letters designating US Navy Landing Ship, Tank
MALDEF	Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
MEDICAID	Medical Aid (Federal program providing financial assistance for medical expenses of individual needy citizens)
MIG	letters designating Soviet-built aircraft (named for the designers, *Mikoyan* and *Gurevich*)
MIO	Marine Inspection Office
MSO	Marine Safety Office
MSO	letters designating US Navy Minesweeper, Ocean
M/V	motor vessel
NAS	Naval Air Station
NM	nautical mile
NSC	National Security Council
OAS	Organization of American States
OPNAV	Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
OPORD	Operations Order
OSC	on-scene commander
P-	letter designating a patrol type of aircraft in US military terminology
P/C	pleasure craft
PGT	Guatemalan Labor Party
PHS	US Public Health Service
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSS	Port Safety and Security
RBDF	Royal Bahamian Defense Force
R&R	rest and recuperation
S-	letter designating an antisubmarine or scouting type of aircraft in US military terminology
SAR	search and rescue
SERON	US Coast Guard Southeast Squadron
SITREP	Situation Report

SKB	letters designating a US Coast Guard Large Skiff
SLAR	Side-Looking Airborne (or Aerial) Radar
SMG	General Military Service (Cuban)
SOLAS	Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
SSI	Supplementary Security Income
SWAT team	special weapons and tactics team
TCC	Transportable Communications Center
TECS	Treasury Enforcement Computer System
TELEX	commercial telegraph message
TGF	Cuban Border Guard
U-	letter designating a utility aircraft in US military terminology
UJC	Young Communist League (Cuban)
UMIB	Urgent Marine Information Broadcast
US	United States
USC	United States Code
USCG	US Coast Guard
USCGC	US Coast Guard Cutter
USCS	US Customs Service
USP	US Penitentiary
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UTB	letters designating a US Coast Guard Utility Boat, Large
UTL	letters designating a US Coast Guard Utility Boat, Light
UTM	letters designating a US Coast Guard Utility Boat, Medium
VHF	very high frequency
VMFA	letters designating a US Marine Corps Fighter Attack Squadron
WHEC	letters designating a US Coast Guard High Endurance Cutter
WLB	letters designating a US Coast Guard Buoy Tender, Seagoing
WLM	letters designating a US Coast Guard Buoy Tender, Coastal
WMEC	letters designating a US Coast Guard Medium Endurance Cutter
WPB	letters designating a US Coast Guard Patrol Boat (large patrol craft, 95- and 82-foot)

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