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Monitoring of Cuban Migrant Refugees - 95 / 96

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COMMENTS:

*For clearance, please.
Thanks.*

**United States Department of State***Washington, D.C. 20520***Office of Cuban Affairs
September 20, 1995****UPDATE ON MONITORING OF CUBAN MIGRANT RETURNEES**

As of September 1, 144 undocumented Cuban migrants had been picked up at sea attempting to enter the U.S. since the May 2 Joint Statement by the U.S. and Cuban governments. Of these, 103 had been returned to Cuba under the terms of the Joint Statement. The rest had been taken to the Guantanamo naval base pending further disposition. In addition, 20 Cuban migrants entered the base illegally in the May 2-September 1 period, of whom seven had been returned to Cuba. The rest awaited further disposition.

The U.S. Interests Section in Havana continues to monitor closely the treatment of the returned migrants, 50 of whom were visited or revisited at their homes in August. Many others have visited the Interests Section, making use of passes given to them by USINT officers. Others have telephoned the Interests Section. All but seven of the 103 returnees had been visited by the end of August.

Most of the migrants report no harassment since their return to Cuba. Two were arrested in August and the Interests Section has raised both cases with the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but neither arrest appears related to the attempts by the two to emigrate to the U.S.

The Interests Section continues to monitor as well the case of Professor Alvaro Zamora, who lost his faculty position at the University of Las Villas following his attempt to leave Cuba in May. While he continues to receive his salary as a professor, the three new positions he has been offered carry salaries about one-third less than this. Officers from the Interests Section visited him at his home on August 18 and August 20. He had no new incidents to complain about, but said that he had not yet received any new job offers. We continue to monitor his case closely.

The Interests Section continues to follow closely the cases of these and all other migrants returned to Cuba under the May 2 agreement. The Department of State is regularly sending temporary-duty Spanish-speaking officers to Havana to help in this monitoring effort.

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① keep on file
② for to Al Cumming

Office of Cuban Affairs
January 29, 1996

UPDATE ON MONITORING OF CUBAN MIGRANT RETURNEES
DECEMBER 1995

Fifty-five Cuban citizens attempting to immigrate illegally to the United States were returned to Cuba in December under the terms of the Joint Statement issued by the U.S. and Cuban governments on May 2, 1995: 26 had been interdicted at sea and were returned to Cuba by the U.S. Coast Guard, and 29 were returned from the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. By the end of the month a total of 223 migrants had been returned to Cuba since the May 2 Joint Statement.

Forty-eight Cuban citizens attempting to immigrate illegally to the United States were interdicted in the Florida Straits by the U.S. Coast Guard in December. By early January the Coast Guard had returned to Cuba all but six: one who was medevaced to the Naval Base hospital at Guantanamo Bay (and a week later returned to Cuba from the base), one who was medevaced to the United States (with her husband), one who was found by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to have protection concerns and taken to the Naval Base, and two who had departed from the Bahamas and were returned there. Three Cuban citizens entered the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base illegally in December; all three were repatriated. All Cuban citizens who were interdicted at sea or who entered the Naval Base were interviewed by an INS officer about any concerns they might have regarding their repatriation.

The migrants returned to Cuba by Coast Guard cutter were met at the dock by officers of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, who spoke to them aboard the cutter, explaining their options for immigrating legally to the United States, giving them passes to visit the Interests Section at any time, and informing them that officers of the Section would soon visit them in their homes. Migrants returned from the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base were similarly counseled by a Department of State representative there before leaving the base.

By the end of the month officers of the Interests Section had made initial visits to the homes of 34 of the migrants returned in December, and followup visits to the homes of 59 of the migrants returned earlier. Monitors were unable to travel more extensively during the month, however, due to the lack of travel funds resulting from the lapse in Department of State appropriations.

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The Interests Section continues to monitor the case of Professor Alvaro Zamora, who lost his university teaching position following his attempt to leave Cuba in May. The university has offered him the job of research professor and salary negotiations are close to completion. The Interests Section has also asked the Cuban government to investigate the cases of four returnees dismissed from their jobs, to determine why they were dismissed.

By the end of the month, 16 returnees were in prison or facing arrest, all for reasons unrelated to their most recent attempt to leave Cuba: nine on charges of committing common crimes, six on charges of escaping from prison or violating parole in connection with earlier attempts to exit or enter Cuba--prior to the May 2 Joint Statement--in violation of Cuban laws restricting freedom of movement, and one on charges of violating these exit laws following his repatriation. Officers of the Interests Section have spoken with the families or friends of all 16, and the Section is following all cases closely and seeking full information from the Cuban government on the reasons for the arrests and the judicial status of each case.

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