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NSC/RMO PROFILE

RECORD ID: 9505737
RECEIVED: 24 JUL 95 16

TO: BERGER

FROM: SCHWARTZ

DOC DATE: 24 JUL 95
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: CUBA MIGRATION

MEDIA

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: BERGER Q+A RE MIAMI HERALD ARTICLE ON CUBAN - AMER FLOTILLA

ACTION: NOTED BY BERGER

DUE DATE: 27 JUL 95 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: SCHWARTZ

LOGREF:

FILES: WH

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T D I S T R I B U T I O N

FOR ACTION

FOR CONCURRENCE

FOR INFO
NSC CHRON
SCHWARTZ

COMMENTS: _____

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DOC 1 OF 1

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ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

RECORD ID: 9505737

DOC ACTION OFFICER

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CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

Z 95072519 FOR INFORMATION
X 95080210 NOTED BY BERGER

UNCLASSIFIED

National Security Council
The White House

REC'd 7/25
530 PM

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Sens	_____	_____	_____
Soderberg	_____	_____	_____
Berger	<u>2</u>	_____	_____
Lake	_____	_____	_____
Situation Room	_____	_____	_____
West Wing Desk	<u>3</u>	<u>MC 7/26</u>	<u>N</u>
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A = Action I = Information D = Dispatch R = Retain N = No Further Action

CC:

COMMENTS:

25 JUL 95 2:13 PM

Exec Sec Office has diskette _____

National Security Council
The White House

REC'd 7/25
5:30 PM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

5737

July 24, 1995

Deputy Natl Sec Advisor
has seen

NOTED

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR SAMUEL BERGER

FROM: ERIC SCHWARTZ *ES*

SUBJECT: Attached Article and Note From You on Cuban-
American Flotilla

I'm not the culprit on this one, as I didn't handle any press queries on the flotilla issue. I don't speak to the press without authorization from the NSC Press Office. I will also coordinate any future press guidance on Cuban migration through Rick.

cc: Rick Nuccio
Mort Halperin
Dick Clarke

Attachment
Tab I Article With Your Note

Exile pilot says he flew over capital to divert Cuban authorities

By ALFONSO CHARDY
Herald Staff Writer

Jose Basulto, leader of Brothers to the Rescue, sat behind the controls of his twin-engine Cessna Skymaster feeling helpless as Cuban government gunboats sideswiped the Democracia carrying a load of exile protesters.

"I had to do something to help," Basulto said Friday.

At that moment, Basulto decided to switch to his emergency plan. He got on the radio and asked fellow pilot and life-long friend Bill Schuss to follow him. In an attempt to divert attention away from the flotilla, the Basulto and Schuss broke off from the formation of exile planes over the drama below and flew south, deliberately violating Cuban airspace. For 13 minutes Thursday they flew over Havana, dropping thousands of bumper stickers bearing the slogan: "Not Comrades, Brothers."

Basulto and Schuss were instant celebrities in Miami, interviewed Friday on exile stations and hailed as heroes.

But officials with the Federal Aviation Administration view it differently: They say they are gathering evidence that could be used against Basulto, Schuss and some or all of the eight other pilots who participated in the incident.

Planes belonging to Brothers to the Rescue and other organizations flew overhead as Democracia led a flotilla of boats into Cuban waters to mark the anniversary of an encounter that happened a year ago Thursday, when a Cuban gunboat rammed and sank a tugboat commanded by Cubans to flee the island.

Kathleen Bergen, an FAA spokeswoman, said some of the pilots in Thursday's formation and perhaps the two who flew over Havana violated rules prohibiting unauthorized entry into another country's airspace.

Bergen said the FAA will try to acquire tapes from television stations that covered the incident and gather other evidence such as tapes of radio conversations

The courageous act was deemed heroic by many exiles. The FAA, however, was not pleased.

between pilots and air traffic controllers. Sanctions could range from letters of reprimand to unspecified fines to suspension or revocation of pilot licenses, said Bergen.

Basulto and Schuss said they were ready to face sanctions.

"We are proud of what we did," said Basulto. "Ultimately, it serves as a message to the people of Cuba [that] the regime is not invulnerable."

Basulto said his group had decided several weeks ago to accompany the Democracia and planned to drop the bumper stickers over any boats that met the flotilla. Flying over Havana

was reserved as an option in the event there was trouble, he said. "It was a plan B in case something went awry," said Basulto. "Had the attack against the Democracia not occurred we would have not overflown Havana. As it happened, Democracia was attacked."

He acknowledged that the action took Brothers to the Rescue, a humanitarian organization created to find rafters, into the realm of political activism. But dropping the bumper stickers was in keeping with the organization's character as a peaceful group and does not signal a change in its mission, he said.

"On a case by case basis we will decide whether to participate or initiate certain actions," Basulto said. "But our basic mission of rescuing rafters remains. It is true the number of rafters has diminished dramatically, but we will continue looking for them. But I would also say that flying into Cuban airspace and showing solidarity with the Cuban people is itself a rescue action."



HECTOR GABINO / Herald Staff

HAPPY HUG: Ramon Saul Sanchez, who directed the lead boat, and Sylvia Irlondo of Mothers Against Repression say mission was a success.

patrol boats reacted to the incident and said there would be no additional response until the report comes in. The boat was damaged, and three of the protesters were injured, including

boats to turn back before two gunboats collided with it in a pincer movement. The Democracia then turned back. Another administration official said the White House had asked the Coast Guard to evaluate how Cuban

PLEASE SEE CUBA, 12A

Samuel R. Berger

7/18

Eric -
Let's coordinate all
press comment on
Cuba through Rich.
Max.

Q

REBOREDO'S TREATMENT, 12A
13 MINUTES OVER HAVANA, 12A

CHRISTOPHER MARQUEZ,
NN LANTIGUA and MERTA OJITO
Herald Staff Writers

Cuban-American protesters, whose boat was sideswiped and turned back by patrol boats in Cuban waters Thursday, found no safe harbor in the Clinton administration today.

Although an official statement pressed "regret" over the incident, the White House official praised the Cuban government for having "exercised restraint" when dealing with the boat and with the exile airplanes it briefly flew over Havana.

He noted that Cuban aircraft had been close enough to some of the trailing airplanes to write down their tail numbers and, instead of noting them down, reported the numbers to U.S. aviation officials. The official also said the vessel, Democracia, had received repeated warnings from the Cuban patrol