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20Sep89 CUBA: CUBAN GOVERNMENT CRACKS DOWN ON DOLLARS FOR CITIZENS.

By **Lionel Martin**

HAVANA, Sept 20, Reuters - In a decree aimed at undermining special privileges and black-marketeering, the Cuban government on Wednesday forbade citizens working for foreign firms from receiving any part of their pay in dollars. According to a government decree, Cubans may only be paid in pesos, the national currency which is not convertible on the world money market. The measure follows a crackdown on the amount of hard currency that can be brought into the country by exiles visiting their families.

The crackdowns are aimed at undermining the black market, special privileges and the development of a consumer-society mentality among Cubans.

Until now, hundreds of Cuban employees have been among the privileged few who could buy foreign products at special dollar stores in Havana.

Cubans could buy items at these stores with "C" certificates which they received in exchange for dollars at the Cuban central bank. It is illegal for Cubans to physically possess cash in dollars or any other hard currency.

The average Cuban is paid in pesos and must buy at austere provisioned stores where almost no foreign products are available and where food, clothing and household goods are either rationed, in short supply or simply not available.

With "C" certificates, Cubans could buy a wide range of household goods as well as food, clothing and shoes.

Cubans who had "C" certificates would queue up daily in the Havana dollar stores to buy color televisions, video cassette recorders, radio cassettes and refrigerators.

According to Cuban officials, part of the dollar purchases were used to feed a thriving black market in products not available to the average Cuban.

The new law is an outgrowth of Cuban President Fidel Castro's campaign against corruption, the black market and ideological backsliding.

In numerous speeches, Castro has rejected market-economy policies for his island nation. Castro also insists that Cuban socialism can survive only by emphasising ideological purity.

The crackdown on the dollar income of Cuban employees of foreign firms comes on the heels of the drug trafficking scandal in July which barred corruption in Cuba.

In recent weeks, the Cuban government has also announced laws limiting the amount of dollars and products that returning Cubans or Cuban exile visitors may bring into the country.