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## 23Nov92 CUBA: U.S. CITIZENS IN CUBA ON EMBARGO-BREAKING HUMANITARIAN MISSION.

By **Lionel Martin**

HAVANA, Cuba, Nov 23, Reuter - More than 100 U.S. citizens, most of them from American churches, arrived in Cuba to meet a ship carrying 12 tonnes of medicines, food products, school supplies, bicycles and Bibles in defiance of the U.S. economic embargo on trade with Cuba.

The Cuban ship, Pinar del Rio, which is scheduled to arrive in Havana on Wednesday from Tampico, Mexico, will carry donations collected in 90 U.S. cities.

The Rev. Lucius Walker, head of the Pastors for Peace group that organised the humanitarian effort, announced on his arrival in Havana late on Sunday, "We broke the blockade." He said the U.S trade embargo is inhuman and unjust.

For more than three decades the strict embargo on trade with Cuba has made it illegal for U.S. citizens to send any U.S.-made products to the communist Caribbean island without a special licence from the Treasury Department. Except in the case of some medicines, the department generally turns down requests for licences.

Organisers of the campaign refused to apply for the Treasury licence. After being held up by U.S. border guards in Laredo, Texas, the 50-truck caravan carrying the donations was permitted to cross into Mexico.

If the U.S. government decides to prosecute the organisers for defying the embargo they could face heavy fines and long prison sentences.

Walker said that the donation is part of a campaign to end the U.S. embargo. "We won't back up until the devillish blockade ends," he said.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and other East European communist nations dealt a heavy blow to the Cuban economy. Food is rationed and there is a shortage of virtually all consumer products.

The 103 U.S. citizens were greeted at the airport by the Rev. Raul Suarez, director of the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Centre of Havana, and by Jose Carneado, chief of the office of religious affairs of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.