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by lionel martin

havana, nov11, reuter -- the cuban government challenged the u.s. government +to show one bit of proof+ that four cuban government officials were involved in running drugs from colombia to florida as charged in a federal grand jury indictment in miami on november 5.

the challenge, directed especially at vice-president bush and under-secretary of state, thomas anders, came in a three column, front page editorial in the official communist newspaper, granma today.

the editorial said that +as a reply to this diswitted and vulgar policy, the cuban government decided in days past to suspend all collaboration between our frontier guards and the united states' coast guarrrd.+

the editorial used such terms as +lie+, +nausiating+, +indignant farse+, and +ridiculous+ to describe the charge that the four cuban government officials participated in the shipment to florida of five million tablets of methaquelon and at least five hndred kilogrammes of marihuana.

the federal grand jury charged fourteen persons in its indictment including the four cubans. the remaining ten are colombians and u.s. citizens, including florida-based cuban exiles. several of those charged are in florida jails for other crimes.

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the cuban officials charged by the grand jury are: fernando ravelo, cuba's ambassador in colombia, vice-admiral aldo santamaria of the cuban navy, gonzalo bassols, cuban diplomat in colombia and rene rodriguez, president of the cuban institute of international friendship (icap).

+the government of reagan and the cia are openly behind this campaign,+ the editorial said in reference to repeated charges made this year that cuba is involved in drug running to the united states. +cuba is the cleanest country on this continent,+ the editorial said in speaking about drug running and drug use.

the editorial said that cuba is known to give severe penalties to narcotics users and dealers.

since 1970, it said, cuba has captured 36 boats and 21 airplanes which violated cuban territorial waters or air space while transporting drugs from other latin american nations to the united states. during this period, it sentenced 230 drug traffickers to jail, 77 of them u.s. citizens, 109 colombians, 21 cuban-exiles residing in miami and 21 of other nationalities.

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in 1980 cuba released the u.s. citizens in cuban jails on drug running and territorial violation charges after appeals to president fidel castro by u.s. public figures.

since the mass release, the editorial said, cuban authorities have captured seventeen boats and airplanes laden with drugs headed for u.s. shores. seventy nine persons were sentenced to jail for from seven to fifteen years, twenty five of them u.s. citizens.

the most recent case took place on october 29 when a yacht with u.s. registry was captured off cuba's north coast with two million dollars worth of marihuana aboard, the editorial said.

granma warned that +the entire responsability will fall on the united states, if, as a consequence of the circumstances derived from this campaign of calumnies and lies launched against cuba by the government of the united states, our nation decides to suspend its enormous effort to pursue and discourage drug trafficking.+

--reuter/lem