1984

RR-86-109

UU GMW BRJ
POL:DISSIDENT:
SILENCE SURROUNDS CUBAN DISSIDENT IN FRENCH EMBASSY IN HAVANA:
BY LIONEL MARTIN
HAVANA, AUG 29, REUTER - THE FRENCH EMBASSY HAS CLAMPED A HERMETIC SEAL OF SILENCE AROUND THE CUBAN DISSIDENT, RICARDO BOFILL WHO ENTERED THE EMBASSY IN THE MIARAMAR RPT MIRAMAR SECTION OF HAVANA
ON WEDNESDAY AND DECLARED THAT WAS NOT GOING TO LEAVE.
THE FIFTY-TWO YEAR OLD FORMER HAVANA UNIVERSITY PHILOSOPHY PROFESSION, WHO SPENT ALMOST A DECADE IN CUBA JAILS SINCE 1968, HAS BEEN REFUSED PERMISSION BY CUBAN AUTHORITIES TO EMIGRATE AND JOIN HIS WIFE, MARIA ELENA BOFILL WHO LIVES IN MAIMI.
FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICIALS HERE HAVE TURNED DOWN REQUESTS BY FOREIGN JOURNALISTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH BOFILL AND, ACCORDING TO A FRENCH SOURCE, HAVE PROHIBITED HIM FROM CONTACTING JOURNALISTS BY TELEPHONE.
IN PARIS, AN OFFICIAL FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT BOFILL REFUSED TO LEAVE THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN HAVANA. THE STATEMENT DECLARED THAT + +THE EFFICACY OF OUR ACTIONS DEMANDS THE GREATEST POSSIBLE DISCRETION.+
IT WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT BOFILL, WHO HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OVER PAST YEARS OF NUMEROUS FOREIGN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, HAS SOUGHT SAFE REFUGE AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY. IN APRIL 1983 HE REFUSED TO LEAVE THE EMBASSY FOR SEVERAL HOURS BUT DID SO VOLUNTARILY AFTER FRENCH AMBASSADOR PIERRE DESCAMPS WAS TOLD BY CUBAN PRESIDENT CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ THAT BOFILL WOULD NOT BE JAILED AND THAT HIS PHYSICAL INTEGRITY WOULD BE GUARANTEED, ACCORDING TO A FRENCH DIPLOMAT HERE.
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UU GNW BRJ
POL:DISSIDENT BOFILL
HAVANA

ACCORDING TO A MIAMI HERALD INTERVIEW WITH BOFILL'S WIFE IN MIAMI PUBLISHED OCTOBER 1, 1983, BOFILL WAS A MEMBER OF THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY UNTIL L967 WHEN HE WAS ARRESTED FOR ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITY WITHIN AN ~~ANTI-CASTRO~~ SPLINTER GROUP ~~WITHIN~~ THE COMMUNIST PARTY. SHE SAID HE SERVED SEVEN AND A HALF YEARS IN JAIL.

A WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCE SAID THAT BOFILL WAS JAILED IN 1968 AND RELEASED IN 1974 AND THAT FROM 1976 TO 1978 HE WORKED AT A METALLURGICAL INTERPRISE FROM WHICH HE WAS FIRED. THE SOURCE SAID HE WAS DETAINED AGAINST IN L980 AND RELEASED IN 1982.

FOLLOWING HIS RELEASE FROM HIS SECOND STINT IN CUBAN JAILS, BOFILL PERIODICALLY VISITED FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AND WESTERN EMBASSIES, ESPECIALLY THE FRENCH AND SPANISH EMBASSIES, HERE IN HAVANA.

IN DECEMBER 1983, BOFILL WAS ARRESTED AFTER HAVING GRANTED A PROLONGED INTERVIEW TO TWO FRENCH JOURNALISTS WHO HAD COME TO CUBA ON TOURIST VISAS. THE JOURNALISTS WERE EXPELLED FROM CUBA AFTER HAVING BEEN HELD FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

BOFILL TOLD BOTH JOURNALISTS AND DIPLOMATS ALIKE THAT HE WANTED TO LEAVE CUBA BUT THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO ALLOW HIM TO DO SO.

ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATS HERE, FRENCH PRESIDENT MITTERAND HAS IN THE PAST INTERCEDED IN BEHALF OF BOFILL WITH CUBAN PRESIDENT CASTRO.

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UU GMW BRJ
FOL=DISSIDENT JHAVANA

WHILE FRENCH DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL IN HAVANA WOULD SAY VIRTUALLY NOTHING, WESTERN DIPLOMATS SPECULATED THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD FOLLOW A COURSE OF QUIET DIPLOMACY TO CONVINCE THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT TO GRANT BOFILL PERMISSION TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

THE DIPLOMATS SAID THAT BOFILL HAD CHOSEN A STRATEGIC MOMENT TO SEEK SAFE HAVEN AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY INASMUCH AS THE SUMMIT MEETING OF THE NON-ALINGED NATIONS, WHICH CUBAN PRESIDENT IS EXPECTED TO ATTEND, BEGINS IN ZIMBABWE NEXT WEEK.

THE DIPLOMATS ALSO SAID THAT BOFILL'S ACTION DAMPENS THE POSITIVE EFFECTS FOR CUBA OF CASTRO'S DECISION, AFTER AN APPEAL FROM U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS, TO RELEASE 75 POLITICAL PRISONERS AND ALLOW THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES.

THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT DISCRIBED THE RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS AS A +GESTURE OF GOOD WILL+.

U.S. IMMIGRATION AND STATE DEPANTMENT OFFICIALS BEGAN SCREEN THE PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN HAVANA LAST WEEK: THEY ARE ALSO INTERVIEWING FAMILY MEMBERS OF A GROUP OF 26 POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO WERE RELEASED AND FLEW TO THE U.S. FOLLWOING A MEETING OF THE REVERAND JESSE JACKSON WITH FIDEL CASTRO IN JUNE 1984 IN HAVANA.

MOREOVER, THE U.S. OFFICIALS WILL ALSO INTERVIEW POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO CASTRO AGREED TO RELEASE AT THE BEHEST OF JACQUES COUSTEAU, THE FRENCH SCIENTISTS AND EXPLORER.
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