1988 RR-88-113

UU ISA LEN BAS FBA CAN
:AM-CUBA-U.S PRISONERS
CONDITIONS FOR U.S. DRUG TRAFFICKERS IN CUBAN JAILS IMPROVES
BY LIONEL MARTIN
HAVANA, ~~JAN 23~~, REUTER - THE QUALITY OF MEALS AND GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR SIXTEEN U.S. CITIZENS NOW IN A CUBAN JAIL TO THE EAST OF HAVANA HAVE IMPROVED OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS, A CONSULAR OFFICIAL AT THE U.S. INTEREST SECTION IN HAVANA TOLD REUTER SATURDAY.

THE SIXTEEN AMERICANS AT THE COMBINADO DEL ESTE PRISON WERE CAUGHT IN CUBAN TERRITORIAL WATERS WHILE RUNNING MARIGUANA FROM JAMAICA OR COLOMBIA TO FLORIDA IN SMALL BOATS.

THE CONSULAR OFFICIAL SAID HE COULD NOT EXPLAIN THE IMPROVEMENT IN FOOD AND LIVING CONDITIONS FOR THE PRISONERS. +IT MIGHT HAVE TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT THE U.N HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WILL MEET IN GENEVA IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH AND IS SLATED TO TAKE UP THE U.S. CHARGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CUBA.+ HE SAID THAT IN RECENT MONTHS THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOWED MANY FOREIGNERS TO VISIT THE COMBINADO DEL ESTE PRISON..

A CUBAN OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE IMPROVEMENT IN FOOD MIGHT BE THE RESULT OF THE GREATER AVAILABILITY DURING JANUARY OF FRESH VEGETABLES SUCH AS LETTUCE, CUCUMBERS, CABBAGE AND TOMATOES. ALL THESE PRODUCTWS ARE SEASONAL AND ARE IN SCARCE SUPPLY FOR THE GENERAL POPULATION DURING MOST OF THE YEAR.

THE U.S OFFICIAL SAID THAT MANY OF THE JAILED AMERICANS SUFFER FROM FEELINGS OF ISOLATION AND DEPRESSION AND SEVERAL ARE BEING GIVEN PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT BY CUBAN DOCTORS. THEY ALL HOPE THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT WILL LET THEM GO BACK TO THE UNITED STATES SOON, HE SAID.

ACCORDING TO CUBAN STATISTICS, OVER ONE HUNDRED U.S DRUG RUNNERS WERE CAPTURED AND JAILED FOR ENTERING CUBAN TERRITORIAL WATERS OR LANDING ON CUBAN TERRITORY BERWEEN 1970 AND AUGUST 1986. UP-TO-DATE FIGURES ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

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ALL BUT THE PRESENT SIXTEEN AMERICANS NOW IN A CUBAN JAIL WERE RELEASED AND EXPELLED FROM CUBA IN RESPONSE TO APPEALS TO PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO BY U.S. POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS PERSONALITIES.

MORE THAN TWENTY U.S. CITIZENS WHO HAD SERVED TIME IN CUBAN JAILS RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES WITH THE REV. JESSE JACKSON FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO CUBA IN 1984.

ACCORDING TO THE U.S. CONSULAR OFFICIAL, THE U.S CITIZENS IN CUBAN JAILS WERE EITHER OWNERS OF SMALL BOATS OR PART OF THEIR CREW. +THEY ARE REALLY SMALL FRY,+ HE SAID.

IN AN ARTICLE LAST FRIDAY, THE HAVANA NEWSPAPER +TRIBUNA+ TOLD OF A U.S.REGISTERED BOAT, +MISS KATHY AND TERRY+ LADEN WITH THREE TONNES OF MARIGUANA, CAPTURED BY A CUBAN PATROL BOAT SOME SIX MILES FROM CUBA'S WESTERNMOST TIP AS IT HEADED NORTHWARD TOWARD THE UNITED STATES.

ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, THE CAPTAIN OF THE BOAT, JAMES BOWLAN, 35, OF KEY WEST, FLORDIA, HAD BEEN OFFERED 75,000 DOLLARS BY +AN INDIVIDUAL OF CUBAN ORIGIN ALIAS EL FLACO+ IN KEY WEST TO PICK UP A LOAD OF MARIGUANA IN JAMAICA AND TAKE IT BACK TO FLORIDA. A CAPTURED CREW MEMBER, CHARLES MUSGROVE, 39, OF STOCK ISLAND, FLORIDA, CONFESSED THAT HE HAD BEEN OFFERED 50,000 DOLLARS TO DO THE JOB.

THE U.S. CONSULAR OFFICIAL SAID THAT MOST OF THE U.S. CITIZENS WERE CONVICTED OF VIOLATING CUBAN TERRITORY AND OF DRUG TRAFFICKING AND HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO TERMS RANGING FROM 8 TO 14 YEARS IN JAIL.

THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT A U.S. OFFICIAL VISITS THE AMERICAN PRISONERS AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH. HE SAID THE PRISONERS ARE GIVEN TABLETS TO PURIFY DRINKING WATER, SKIMMED OR CANNED MILK AND VITAMINS. BOOKS AND MAGAZINES ARE DONATED TO THE PRISONERS BY STAFF MEMBERS OF THE U.S. INTEREST SECTION IN HAVANA, HE SAID.
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THE CONSULAR OFFICIAL SAID THE PRISONERS COMPLAIN THAT THEY ARE BORED AND NEED MORE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES. HE SAID THEY ARE ALLOWED TO GO OUT INTOT A PATIO NEAR THE CELL BLOCK DAILY AND ONTO AN ATHLETIC FIELD ONCE A WEEK.

THE INTEREST SECTION ALSO SUPPPLIES THE PRISONERS WITH GAMES. HE SAID THAT CUBAN AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT ALLOW THE PRISONERS TO HAVE PLAYING CARDS BECAUSE IT MIGHT ENCOURAGE GAMBLING.

CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO HAS OFTEN DENIED CHARGES MADE IN THE UNITED STATES THAT CUBA IS INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH A U.S. JOURNALIST CASTRO SAID +WE HAVE CAUGHT THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF DRUG SMUGGLERS OF ANYONE IN THE CARIBBEAN... THE FACT IS THAT WE ARE THE POLICEMEN OF THE CARIBBEAN. WE OFTEN WONDER WHY THE UNITED STATES DOESN'T PAY US ANYTHING FOR ALL THIS...+
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