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Cuba-u.s. Relations: Summary Of Recent Developments
by Erika Harding
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May 14: The Cuban government requested that the UN Security Council reconvene to discuss a second resolution regarding the 1976 bombing of a Cuban commercial airline plane. The Security Council met informally the previous week to discuss Havana's demand that Washington be condemned for the bombing. The Council decided to continue the discussion pending release of additional information from the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry. (See NotiSur 05/13/92 for previous coverage of Cuban requests to the Security Council linked to the 1976 airliner bombing.) Cuban Ambassador to the UN Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada said Havana is no longer seeking extradition of Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles. Instead, the Cuban government is motivated to obtain justice in the case, and to prevent Washington from supporting and protecting people suspected of involvement in terrorist activities against Cuba. May 18: After reviewing documents pertaining to prosecution of two Venezuelans involved in the bombing, the Security Council decided against a formal session to discuss Cuba's petitions. Cuban vice president Jose Ramon Fernandez told reporters that Coca Cola products will be absent from the 1992 World Cup in Havana, result of the US trade embargo. Coca Cola is an official sponsor of games. According to Fernandez, negotiations are underway to resolve the problem. The original agreement called for Coca Cola's Mexican subsidiary to supply soft drinks, T-shirts, sunglasses and other promotional items. May 19: The UN Security Council announced a formal session on May 21 to consider Cuba's requests. The Council's change in attitude resulted from a "reminder" from Ambassador Alarcon that UN rules require a formal review by the Council of all member-nation petitions. May 20: In a speech commemorating the 90th anniversary of Cuban independence, US President George Bush said he wanted to reiterate his "firm solidarity with the Cuban people as they strive to bring peaceful, democratic change to their country...I reaffirm my commitment to oppose Castro at every turn and not to pursue normal relations until his dictatorship is done." Cuba submitted a proposal to non-aligned members of the UN Security Council for a resolution requesting that the US be required to provide the UN with all information and evidence related to the 1976 airliner bombing. The resolution also called on Washington to "adopt effective means" to prevent the use of US territory for organizing, preparing and executing "terrorist acts against Cuba." On May 21, the Council will review the proposed resolution and Havana's request for "justice" in the bombing incident. According to Reuters, civilian vigilante groups organized by Communist Party authorities, known as "Rapid Action Brigades," were mobilized throughout Havana to quash an anti-government demonstration called by Cuban exile groups in the US. May 21: According to Madrid's daily newspaper ABC, the US government has suspended a program allowing Cubans to leave the island and immigrate to the US via Spain. The report said the cost of the project was one of the justifications for cancellation. Over the past four years, about 2,000 Cubans received assistance from the program. The Miami-based Cuban American National Foundation contributed funds for the program. The UN Security Council ruled Cuba's petitions against the US closed. No Council member was willing to present Cuban resolutions against the US for a vote. Luigi Einaudi, US Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), said Cuba's return to the OAS was "impossible" under current circumstances. May 23: The Cuban Communist Party's official newspaper, Granma, asserted that the UN Security Council has demonstrated a double
standard on terrorism. Jorge Mas Canosa, president of the Cuban American National Foundation, ended the organization's four-month campaign against The Miami Herald, and Spanish-language affiliate El Nuevo Herald. The campaign was triggered by an editorial criticizing a bill in the US Congress that would tighten the trade embargo against Cuba. Mas Canosa accused the newspapers of being "pawns" of Castro and insensitive to Cuban-Americans. The campaign featured billboards, placards on buses and bumper stickers in English and Spanish that read, "I don't believe The Miami Herald." Canosa said the campaign "called the attention of The Herald to our plight," and added that he felt the paper's coverage of Cuba and the exile community had become "more objective."

Publisher David Lawrence denied any change in news coverage and editorials appearing in the two papers. May 24: In Havana, French-Canadian journalist Bertrand de Labrange, who works for the Paris newspaper Le Monde and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), was attacked and wounded by two unidentified assailants outside the home of dissident Vladimiro Roca. De Labrange accused government security forces of organizing the attack. [Sources: Notimex, Deutsche Press Agentur, 05/21/92; Prensa Latina (Cuba), 05/19/92, 05/21/92; Spanish news service EFE, 05/19-22/92; Associated Press, 05/19/92, 05/21-23/92; Reuter, 05/18/92, 05/20/92, 05/21/92, 05/23/92; Agence France-Presse, 05/14/92, 05/18-20/92, 05/24/92]

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