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Deborah Tyroler

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Cubana Airliner Plane Arrives In San Salvador Carrying Aid To Earthquake Victims Worth Estimated $500,000

by Deborah Tyrolier
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On the evening of Oct. 20, a Cubana airliner arrived at the Comalapa international airport in San Salvador carrying five Red Cross officials and 22 tons of goods for earthquake victims valued at about $500,000. The cargo included blood plasma; antibiotics; equipment for serum and blood transfusions; analgesics; vaccines for tetanus, parasites and malaria; orthopedia surgical equipment, and 300 kerosene stoves and cooking utensils for hospitals. Dr. Alberto Cespedes headed the Red Cross mission, and was accompanied by a PRENSA LATINA news crew. Official sources informed PRENSA LATINA that an offer to donate a fully equipped field hospital staffed by a Cuban medical brigade was rejected by the Salvadoran government. The Cubana liner carried the first contributions from the government of President Fidel Castro permitted entry into the country by the Duarte regime since the earthquake disaster on Oct. 10. An elated Salvadoran customs officer, who preferred to remain anonymous, told the Cuban reporters, "Thank Fidel Castro." Other military personnel were not so enthusiastic. The PRENSA LATINA television camera crew was prevented from filming the entire unloading operation and eventual delivery to Red Cross installations in San Salvador.

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