

SEP 16 1964

Exiles Claim They Attacked Ship

A new and shadowy Cuban exile organization claimed "credit" today for attacking a Spanish ship en route to Havana, but its version didn't jibe with survivors' reports of the incident.

Better known exile organizations and the Castro government were accusing each other

of the machine gun attack on the freighter Sierra Aranzazu, killing the captain and two officers.

Seven other crewmen were wounded when two mystery boats converged on the 1,600-ton vessel 50 miles off the eastern tip of Cuba in the Wind-

ward Passage and set it afire, according to the survivors.

A man who identified himself as Telmo Alvarez called a news agency and reported that his new exile group, OSACC, had carried out the attack with "torpedoes." Alvarez said that all other ships, regardless of nationality, would be subject to attack if they traded with Cuba.

The survivors' accounts of the attack did not mention torpedoes.

OSACC, which stands for the Secret Continental Anti-Communist Organization, was reported to have been organized by a group of Cuban freedom fighters two months ago. Establish-
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Nine Survivors Of Spanish Freighter Arrive In Puerto Rico

ed exile groups here expressed doubts that it was an organization with attack capability.

Several weeks ago, OSACG claimed to have sunk a Cuban torpedo boat off the Cuban north coast. The organization's spokesman said it was based in the Caribbean and had no offices here.

Bolstering its own claim of innocence in the affair, the Castro government reported by radio that a Cuban tug had towed the gutted, abandoned hulk of the freighter to Cuba.

The attack — which has Spain embroiled with the U. S. State Department over the question of how well Caribbean waters are patrolled — took place Sunday night.

Havana radio said, "There is reason to believe" that "pirates" financed by the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency made the attack.

Two Cuban exile leaders, Manuel Artime and Manolo Ray, denied their forces were involved.

Backers of Artime blamed Castro forces, saying they sought to discredit the exile group.

The Sierra Aranzazu, laden with textiles, toys, cork and garlic from Spain to Havana, reportedly had veered far off course to avoid the wake of Hurricane Dora.

A Dutch ship, P. G. Thulin, rescued the Aranzazu's survivors from a launch and they were flown to San Juan, Puerto Rico. Later they would be returned to Spain.

Crewmen said minutes before the attack a speedboat sped up to the freighter, blazed its spotlight on the ship's nameplate and roared away.

In Nassau, there was speculation in government circles that Castro gunboats might have fired on the Spanish vessel.

And in Washington, the State Department said, "Whatever the nationality of the attackers, we cannot but deplore this attack on a merchant vessel on the high seas."

The Spanish government at Madrid issued a statement edged with sarcasm:

The attack occurred "in an area very well controlled by U. S. forces and we are much surprised and naturally concerned about it."

In a later broadcast, the Cuban Armed Forces Ministry charged: "The U. S. government knows perfectly well who made the attack since the perpetrators were mercenary elements, equipped, paid and directed by the Central Intelligence Agency."

The broadcast said the attack was part of the United States' policy of "aggression and blockade against Cuba."

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