

Cubans

By Dan Kurzman

Washington Post Staff Writer

Hoping to head off a threatened stampede of Cuban refugees into the country, the United States warned yesterday against "hasty, disorganized and dangerous" attempts to leave Cuba in small boats.

A State Department spokesman said that such attempts were unnecessary since the U.S. was ready to provide "regular, reliable and safe transportation of the refugees at no cost to them or their relatives."

He sternly added that persons bringing unlawfully documented aliens to this country will be subject to stiff penalties under both civil and criminal laws.

The warning was issued after a group of 15 Cubans arrived in the Florida keys on Thursday in a small boat. The boat's two crewmen, who had earlier fled Cuba, returned there to pick up their families and friends following the announcement by Premier Fidel Castro that Cubans were free to leave the island.

Another 37 refugees landed yesterday at Cay Sal, a small island in the Florida Straits about 35 miles off the north coast of Cuba. A Coast Guard cutter picked them up. One man was bleeding from a cut artery and was flown by helicopter to a Key West hospital.

Eight other small boats, according to a Cuban government broadcast, were preparing to leave for Florida with more refugees.

Hundreds of exiles in Miami, meanwhile, were trying to organize a fleet of small boats for a mass evacuation of relatives in Dunkirk style. Many feared that Castro would clamp down on emigration before their loved ones could be brought out.

The State Department spokesman said that refugees arriving in small boats would be permitted into the country, though those responsible for bringing them could be prosecuted. The case of the 15 refugees who arrived on Thursday

is now under investigation, he said.

He indicated that refugees would be brought over under a priority system, with relatives of exiles to be given the first opportunity, and political prisoners probably next in line.

"We fully understand and sympathize with the anxieties

Warned on Hasty Exit

of members of divided Cuban families," the spokesman said. But that didn't mean, he added, that the U.S. could ap- prove unlawful dangerous ac- tions. He emphasized that the situ- ation now differs from that in the past; when persons arriv- ing from Cuba in small boats were welcomed, Cubans could only leave the island clandes-

THE WASHINGTON POST

Saturday, Oct. 9, 1965

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tinely then, he said, but now they can leave with the approval of the Cuban government.