

## Wild Turnout Greets Cuban Fishermen

HAVANA, Feb. 21 (AP) Twenty-nine Cuban fishermen returned home today from 18 days of detention in Florida to a tumultuous reception on Havana's waterfront and told Fidel Castro the Yankees robbed them.

"This was piracy," Castro said.

Ships' horns hooted, thousands of waterfront watchers cheered and a Mig 21 jet fighter squadron flew overhead in salute the fishermen and their four government trawlers were released after the four captains paid \$500 fines imposed by a Florida court for poaching.

At the welcoming ceremony Castro, who cut off the water to the U.S. Guantanamo Naval Base in retaliation after the fishermen were arrested in American waters Feb. 2, declared:

"They were the victims of an illegal and arbitrary act."

He added, "They were harassed, but they resisted."

He indicated that his gov-

ernment may reconsider its decision to return the shrimp boat Johnny Reb, owned by the Morgan Sea Food Co. of Savannah, Ga.

The Johnny Reb was sailed to Havana from Key West, Fla., two weeks ago by a fisherman, Dennis Kirby, 22, who said he was dissatisfied with the American way of life and wanted to compensate Cuba for the seizure of the trawlers. He asked asylum.

Of their detention in Florida, spokesmen for the 29 made these charges:

- They were mistreated. There were "pressures and blackmail to try to induce us to ask asylum."

- Money and personal belongings were stolen by the Yankees.

- The boats were stripped of almost everything and "even some food we had aboard them was taken." Engines were damaged. A Cuban flag was taken.

At this point Castro commented angrily, "They will have to return that flag before we return the fishing boat."

The prime minister said Cuba wants peaceful relations with all countries. He said it proved this in the quick return of pilot Richard Wright, 23, of Miami, and his plane. Two Cubans forced Wright to fly to Havana at gunpoint Tuesday. He said Cuba is ready to do the same in other cases.