

*P. M. 3/16/44*  
**'Cuban Raid  
Is Linked to  
Ship Blast**

NASSAU, Bahamas, Sept. 15 (AP)—Machine gun fire "supposedly" from Cubans raked a Spanish freighter before she was razed Thursday night by an explosion and fire that killed her captain and two officers, a Bahamas official said today.

The report came from Neville E. Bosfield, commissioner of the tiny island of Inagua, 50 miles off the Eastern tip of Cuba and not far from the scene of the attack on the Sierra Aranzazu.

In Washington, the State Department confirmed that an attack was made by two small, fast boats, but had no information on their identity.

The three dead men and 17 survivors were taken to Inagua by the Dutch vessel P.G. Thulin, which picked them off a raft 12 miles from the burning freighter.

Bosfield's report as received at Nassau did not say whether the attackers were Cuban navy gunners or anti-Castro exiles on a raiding mission.

Reports Monday night from

Panama and Caracas said groups of Cuban exiles had boasted of attacking a ship owned by the Castro government. Today, however, spokesmen for various exile organizations in the Caribbean area denied any knowledge of such an attack.

In Madrid, the vessel's owner, Compania Maritima del Norte, said she had wandered far off her normal course to Havana to avoid rough seas churned up by Hurricane Dora. She carried coke and coal.

Bosfield reported that the P. G. Thulin, with the survivors aboard, was stopped by three Cuban torpedo boats and a boarding party demanded that the Spaniards be taken to Havana.

But the master of the vessel, who was not identified, insisted upon carrying out instructions from the U.S. Coast Guard to proceed to Mathew Town, where injured survivors were treated at a small hospital.

Robert J. McCloskey, State Department press officer in Washington, said sketchy accounts from the survivors indicated that the attack, launched without warning, set the freighter ablaze. The site was 100 miles northeast of the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, on Cuba's south coast.