

Exiles vow not to go into Cuban territory

MIAMI (AP) - Leaders of a Cuban exile flotilla pledged to stay in international airspace and waters Saturday when they commemorate the deaths of four people shot down by Cuban fighter planes.

"Anybody who deviates, we consider them a provocateur," said Jose Basulto, head of the Cuban-exile search-and-rescue group Brothers to the Rescue.

Under Coast Guard escort, 13 airplanes and 13 boats were to head for the spot where two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft were downed by Cuban MiGs last Saturday.

President Clinton on Friday declared a national emergency to provide authority for the Coast

Guard to take whatever steps necessary to prevent U.S. vessels from entering Cuban waters. Coast Guard cutters are armed with mounted machine guns but are not part of the military in peacetime, and report instead to the Transportation Department.

Mr. Clinton said he was motivated by "Cuba's demonstrated willingness to use reckless force, including deadly force, in the ostensible enforcement of its sovereignty."

The U.S. Navy had three vessels in the area to support the Coast Guard, and the Air Force was sending more F-15 and F-16 fighter jets to the

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region. Pentagon officials wouldn't say where the jets would be during the flotilla.

The flotilla faced literal rough water: Saturday's forecast was for 5- to 7-foot seas, possibly increasing to 9 feet, and 23 mph winds, with thunderstorms that could produce 40 mph gusts. Small boats were cautioned to avoid open seas.

"It's a moderate-to-high risk," National Weather Service forecaster Jim Lushine said. "I myself would think twice about going out in those conditions."

Participants on the water planned to hold a prayer service and lay floral wreaths at the same time of day the planes were shot down. The air convoy was also to throw flowers on the same spot before heading back to a memorial service at Miami's Orange Bowl.
