

REFUGEES CALLED AN ASSET TO MIAMI

Study Says Federal Aid to Cubans Can Be Reduced

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MIAMI, Oct. 1—A study by the University of Miami has concluded that Cuban refugees in the Miami area are an economic and cultural asset to the community "far outweighing" problems caused at the beginning by their massive influx.

The study of the impact of Cuban immigration on Miami and surrounding Dade County also recommended that the present policy of immediate resettlement of new refugees arriving here from Cuba should be reviewed. It said the reason for adoption of the policy—a fear that a larger number of Cubans would create economic dislocations—had proved unfounded.

The report, which took 18 months to complete and is scheduled to be made public tomorrow, was financed by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Ford Foundation.

It called for a gradual reduction of Federal aid to the refugees. As the first area for such action, it suggested financial assistance being given through the public school system in Dade County, where some 150,000 Cubans—about half the refugees in the United States—live. In 1966 the county's schools received \$6-million from the refugee pro-

Benefits Are Reported

The Miami area has benefited considerably by the large influx of Cuban refugees, the study asserts.

"Downtown Miami was saved by the Cuban exodus as well as other sections of the city, which were on the way to becoming blighted areas," it said. "Cubans created new businesses and employment. The displacement of Negroes by Cubans and an assumption that Cubans depressed wages—allegations which became an emotion charged political issue in 1961—were not borne out by fact."

Dade County's unemployment rate of 3.5 per cent is lower than that of the national average, the report pointed out. It added that the percentage of refugees receiving public wel-

fare assistance in the Miami area had been steadily decreasing.

It went on: "Miami is becoming a truly bilingual city, a unique phenomenon in the United States, and the community is only beginning to capitalize on the asset value of the Cubans. Heretofore, both the community and the Federal Government have tended to regard the refugees as a problem rather than a cultural and economic opportunity."

Eased Doctor Shortage

The study emphasized that among the refugees, whose level of education is proportionally high, there are more than 2,000 physicians who have helped ease the shortage of doctors in this area and the rest of the United States.

Explaining its recommendation for "phasing down or out of programs relating to the early emergency," the study said that Cubans in Miami were "shouldering their proportional share of the burdens of community services, including the cost of education, through direct and indirect tax contributions."

The refugee program was created in February, 1961, and is run by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. To date it has spent some \$250-million—\$180-million of it in Dade County. Its annual allocations have averaged \$35-million for the last three years.

The program provides for welfare and health services, education and resettlement, and, according to the study, "represents and outstanding success" from the human and economic standpoint.

Center Made Study

The study was conducted by the University of Miami Center for Advanced International Studies, directed by Dr. Mose L. Harvey.

Dr. Clyde C. Wooten, director of the center's Research Institute for Cuba and the Caribbean, which last year received a \$152,000 Ford Foundation grant, managed the study's research and analysis.

In an interview, Dr. Wooten said that the process of assimilation of Cuban refugees, who today represent almost 14 per cent of the Miami population, has been exceptionally devoid of friction.

"Almost anywhere in the world, the sudden arrival of a large mass of alien people would have created serious social problems," Dr. Wooten said.