

Freighter Seized by Cuban

MIAMI, Fla. (AP) — A Cuban exile-owned freighter, crippled by machine-gun fire from a Cuban gun boat, was under tow toward the Communist island Thursday as the captain's wife made a personal appeal for help to President Nixon.

The captain's family spent about 15 minutes with the President at the White House on Key Biscayne.

Mrs. Jose Villa said Nixon promised to "do his best. All I can tell you is that we are very, very happy . . . I want to go to church and pray He

gave us a lot of hope.

Presidential press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler, told newsmen, "We deplore the action of the Cuban government which we feel is clearly a violation of the international practice and the right of freedom of navigation."

Following the attack on the high seas yesterday, Capt. Jose Villa radioed: "The deck is covered with blood. I am dying, chico." His message, which alluded to "dying and wounded" crew members, was the last received from the beleaguered Johnny Ex-

press.

Isabel Villa said today in her Miami home she would appeal to Nixon for aid in rescuing her husband.

"He is an American citizen and has been gravely wounded," said Mrs. Villa as her three children huddled near. "He has the right to be returned to me."

HAVANA radio, official voice of the Castro regime, announced the Johnny Express was attacked because it was a ter-revolutionary activities against Cuba.

THE STATES-ITEM

Gun Boat Is Under

The ship is operated by Mi-
pirate ship engaged in coun-
a m i b a s e d Bahama Lines
which is owned by four Cuban
exile brothers who have been
prominent in efforts to unseat
Castro since he took power in
1959.

Teofilo Babun, one of the
brothers and president of the
line, has denied any of his
ships have been used in raids
against Cuba.

But the Cuban broadcast
said the Johnny Express, at-
tacked at noon yesterday
while sailing from Haiti to Mi-
ami about 120 miles off

Cuba's eastern coast, was
being towed to port by the
gunboat and no leniency
would be shown to "pirate
ships intercepted any distance
from our coasts that perpe-
trate such crimes against our
fatherland, sailing under any
flags."

THERE was no mention of
the condition of Villa, 55, or
two other crew members who
reportedly were wounded
when the gunboat strafed the
unarmed freighter with ma-
chine guns.

Yesterday, the Coast Guard

said it had a report that the
wounded men had been airlift-
ed to Cuban hospitals.

The Johnny Express, with
14 persons aboard at the time
it was attacked, was the sec-
ond Bahama Lines vessel to
be taken over. On Dec. 5, the
freighter Lyla Express was
seized in the same general
area and while on a return
run to Miami from Haiti.

At last report, the Lyla Ex-
press and her 14 crew mem-
bers were still in Cuba.

THE COAST Guard did not
intervene in yesterday's three

NEW ORLEANS

Tow to Red Island

hour episode, saying: "It's not
a U.S. ship and not in U.S.
waters. Our hands are tied."
However, three airplanes with
medics were dispatched to the
scene, but failed to find the
Johnny Express.

The Lyla Express showed
no resistance and was not at-
tacked. But Villa radioed that
he would not surrender and
was making a run for it.

Havana radio said of the at-
tack: "She was ordered to
stop in order to be boarded
and seized. The pirate ship
disobeyed the order and tried
to escape. Minutes later . . . it

was forced to obey the order
and seized."

Students Stage Fast To Aid Pakistanis

BRIDGEWATER, Va. (AP)
— A day-long fast at Bridge-
water College raised \$220 for
old to refugees in East Paki-
stan.

The college food supplier
donated the money that other-
wise would have been spent
on meals Tuesday.

Taking part were the 369
full-time students, plus facul-
ty, staff and night students.