

U.S. Takes The Cubans For a Ride

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New Orleans

Federal agents loaded 22 unwelcomed Cubans into six cars and drove them through peak rush-hour traffic at 75 miles an hour yesterday and confined them inside a Naval air station 30 miles away.

Security was immediately tightened around the naval facility, 30 miles south of New Orleans in Belle Chasse.

Immigration officials would not say why the Cubans were taken to the air station.

The Cubans came uninvited to the United States for the International Sugar Cane Congress and refused to leave when ordered to do so by the State Department.

HEAD

Franchia Metre, the head of the Cuban delegation, said:

"We told the immigration people if the Sugar Congress was in Paris, Europe or any other place we could have gone."

There was also a mounting feeling among the 700 delegates from the 53 sugar-producing nations attending the congress that the Cubans should be allowed to attend.

"If they accept the conference, they must accept whoever comes to the conference," said Michael D'Pompigona of the Martinique delegation about U.S. officials. "We are technicians. This is not politics."

"The Cubans are among the first people in sugar cane

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technology. I suppose we miss a great deal about technology from them."

'PITY'

"I think it's a pity this is the kind of world where this sort of thing has to happen," said Frederick A. Seaford, a member of the sugar cane delegation from England.

A group of "free Cubans" picketed the motel where the Cubans had stayed since their arrival Tuesday.

The State Department refused visas to the Cuban delegation one month ago but the group came anyway — in a Russian - built airplane. Despite the State Department order to return home, the Cubans said they would not leave voluntarily until the sugar cane meeting ends November 5.

Radio Havana called the U.S. decision to expel the Cubans "a new aggression" and said it was "the latest manifestation of the arbitrary and

imperialistic politics of the Yankee government."

There also was a dispute over who would pay the motel bill for the Cubans, who are being served breakfast in bed and lunch and dinner in their rooms daily.

"We assume the Cuban government will be paying the hotel bill," a State Department spokesman said.

"We assume the State Department is paying," said Lorenzo Benavides, a member of the Cuban delegation.