

# US Demands Cuba Give Up Captain

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KEY BISCAYNE — (UPI) — The U.S. will demand the immediate return of Capt. Jose Villa, skipper of the Miami-based freighter seized by a Cuban gunboat, the White House said today.

Presidential press secretary Ronald Ziegler disclosed the U.S. determination to obtain the release of Villa after President Nixon met with Villa's wife, Isabelle, and her three children.

## 'Unconscionable'

"This act by Cuba is deplorable," said Ziegler. "The fact that a Panamanian (registered) vessel was seized in this way is an unconscionable act by the Cuban government and it is an act that cannot be tolerated in the international community."

The press secretary said Nixon expressed his "deep personal concern" for Capt.

Villa, who is a Cuban-born naturalized U.S. citizen.

Ziegler said the U.S. has received information that Villa is alive in Cuba. Several crewmen of the freighter were wounded in the attack, and at one point Villa radioed he was dying.

## 'A Violation'

Ziegler said that the U.S. will demand the return of Villa through the Swiss embassy in Havana, which handles U.S. affairs there.

Ziegler deplored seizure of the ship as "clearly a violation of international practice and the right of freedom of navigation."

Asked what steps the U.S. would take if Cuban Premier Fidel Castro failed to reply, Ziegler said, "We expect to receive a positive response from the Cuban government."