

Six Held in Cuba Raid Plan

ORLANDO (UPI) — Two Americans and four Cuban exiles, preparing for an apparent air assault on communist Cuba, were arrested near here Thursday night by customs agents who confiscated 18 "aerial bombs."

The Americans, identified by Deputy U.S. Marshal Jack F. Peeples as William J. Johnson and Frank Rafferty, were released following a hearing before a U.S. commissioner after posting \$1,000 bond each.

The Cubans, described as members of the Revolutionary

Insurrectional Recovery Movement (MIRR), were held in federal custody when they failed to post a total of \$8,000 bail.

Dr. Orlando Bosch, MIRR leader and mastermind of a series of raids and attempted raids against the Fidel Castro regime, was among those being held. His bond was set at \$5,000 compared to \$1,000 each for his Cuban companions.

All six men were believed to be from the Miami area where the MIRR has headquarters.

A spokesman at the State Department's Cuban affairs office in Miami said no information about the two Americans was immediately available except that Johnson "appears to be" the same William Johnson who was formally warned by government against pro-exile activities.

Cuban sources claimed that the bombs, seized in a house in the Zellwood area of Orlando, were to be loaded aboard a B-26 for an air raid on Cuba.

Federal authorities said no aircraft of any kind was seized in the raid. "However, it is to be assumed that a plane was going to figure in this thing," a federal official commented.

Customs agents bucked all inquiries about the raid to the Miami State Department office.

The MIRR has been one of the most militant exile groups, staging both air and sea raids on Cuba over the past three years.

It reported two previous raids so far this year, one in Janu-

ary and the other in February. Both were against sugar mills in Pinar del Rio province.

The U.S. government has viewed each of these reported raids with skepticism, even though the Castro regime "confirmed" the one said to have been staged in January.

Bosch, who protested last summer that he and his men were "being persecuted by customs agents who trail us night and day," said at the start of 1965 that this would be a "now or never year" for toppling Castro.

He has always claimed that all anti-Castro operations are "staged from a secret base somewhere in the Caribbean." But the alleged base has never been seen by or otherwise described to curious newsmen.

Bosch's three Cuban companions were identified as Jose Diaz Morejon, Gerulio Gutierrez and Marcos Rodriguez Ramos.

The four remained in the custody of the marshal's office. The case is slated to go before a grand jury, probably at Tampa, officials indicated.

All six were specifically charged with "conspiring" to export munitions of war illegally.

In September 1963 a tight federal crackdown against Americans seeking to help Cuban exile raiders was put into effect with a series of "strong warnings" issued by the customs department in Miami to six U.S. citizens.

Among those receiving them was a William Johnson. The warnings said that customs agents "developed evidence which strongly indicates that you may have been and now may be engaged in activities in violation of the provisions of the munitions control laws of the United States."