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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

937.52/6-1052

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

2095  
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

JUN 11 1952  
June 10, 1952

REF : ---

(1 Encl.)

18 For Dept. Use Only mcb	ACTION ARA REC'D JUNE 12	DEPT. I N F O OTHER	REP	DCR	OLI	E
				CAB	COMM	

SUBJECT: Current Difficulties of EXPRESO AEREO INTER-AMERICANO.

The Embassy has received an informal copy of a memorandum of a conversation held in Washington on May 26, 1952 between Messrs. Alberto ESPINOSA (Cuban Embassy) and J. L. Topping (MID) regarding pending aviation matters between Cuba and the United States. In this document it is noted that Dr. Espinosa made the statement that the Cuban permit of Expreso Aereo Inter-Americano was suspended on May 10 and that the operations of this company had ceased. It is true that Expreso's permit was suspended on May 10, but, as pointed out in Embassy despatch 1946, May 15, 1952, it was reinstated a few days later and the airline has continued to operate since that time. This explanation is being made to correct any impression that may exist in Washington that Expreso has discontinued its operations between Habana and Miami.

While there is no doubt that Cuba Aeropostal would like to see Expreso out of business, especially if this move would make it possible for Aeropostal to take over Expreso's U.S. permit, it is not considered likely to happen at this time. While it is true that Expreso has probably been guilty of a number of irregularities in its previous operations, it is not believed they are serious enough to warrant the cancellation of the company's permit. It is understood that Expreso has about fifty Cuban employees who would lose their jobs in the event the line were forced to suspend its operations and it is not believed the government would be likely to take a step which would incur the enmity of these people at this time and which might lead to a general strike at the airport.

On the other hand, if it can be proven that Rafael ("Pilin") MENDOZA, President and major stockholder of Expreso, is engaged in revolutionary activity against the government, it could use this as a pretext to close the line. Last week Mr. Mendoza was put under arrest briefly while he was explaining an unauthorized return at midnight from a trip to Guatemala via Mexico in an Expreso Lockheed Lodestar. There is attached a copy of an account of this incident as reported in the HAVANA HERALD of June 8, 1952.

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RLHarrell/ecv  
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ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

HF

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Mr. Carlos MUSSO, Vice President of Expreso, recently stated to an Embassy official that he has quarreled with Mr. Mendoza and that a fight is now going on between the two of them for control of the airline.

For the Ambassador:

*Raymond L. Harrell*  
Raymond L. Harrell  
Attache

Enclosure: *1/11*  
Copy of article  
from the HAVANA HERALD,  
June 8, 1952

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From the HAVANA HERALD of  
June 8, 1952.

SEVEN PERSONS HELD FOR ILLEGAL ENTRY

Seven individuals arrested Friday night for landing illegally at Rancho Boyeros in a plane inbound from Mexico were still being held yesterday at Rural Guard Headquarters in Rancho Boyeros.

Military authorities revealed that passengers and crew of the unauthorized flight were under investigation, not only for landing without permission, but because they were travelling under cover of darkness.

Those arrested have been identified as: Pilin Mendoza, David Cartaya, Steve Murray, Cristobal Zorrilla, Jose Williams Ayers, Adela Blanco and José Grande Benito. The first four named above are the alleged crew of the plane CUT-498, of Cuban register.

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