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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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June 19, 1978

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: Cyrus Vance CV
SUBJECT: Contact with Castro's Representative,
Jose Luis Padron

Attached (at Tab A) is a summary of the main points of Dave Newsom's talk with Castro's representative, Jose Luis Padron, in New York on June 15. As previously agreed, Dave will brief Congressman Fascell on that portion of the conversation dealing with prisoners on Tuesday morning.

We now have two questions before us:

1. The timing and form of a follow-up on the prisoner aspect of the conversation.
2. Whether, and in what form, to follow-up on the broader political aspects of the conversation.

Prisoner Release

In the various conversations which Padron has had with Cuban exile representatives, he has given them a total of six lists of persons who have been, or currently are, prisoners together with the number of dependents, all of whom presumably are covered by Castro's decision to permit such persons to leave Cuba. The six lists include, with dependents, 1596 persons.

Dave explained both to Padron and the exiles that we cannot respond to this aspect of the approach without further examination of the matter within the U. S. Government and that this could take some time. I believe that we should move promptly to give the Cubans a definitive response on whether we are prepared to receive these people.

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E.O. 12958
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BY LA NARA, DATE 8/2/04

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-2-

I suggest therefore that:

1. With your authority and coordination with the NSC I approach the Attorney General on an urgent basis and seek his authority to tell the Cubans that we will propose parole entry for those in this category permitted to leave Cuba. If approved, funding will have to be worked out with Joe Califano at a later date.
2. That once we can speak more authoritatively on this matter, Dave seek a further meeting with Padron to relay the answer.

The six lists are attached at Tab B. Any further conversations with Padron on the prisoner issue would presumably also deal with the question of the four remaining U. S. citizen prisoners.

Broader Political Issues

David Aaron had one previous conversation with Padron which covered broader aspects of U. S. -Cuban relations. Padron covered this same ground with Dave Newsom. Zbig and I had agreed that David Aaron would continue to be in touch with Padron on the political issues while we in the Department would take care of the prisoner issue. If Padron can be taken at face value, it would seem worthwhile to continue to explore with him Cuban policies. It would seem, in this case, particularly important to follow up on the question of circumstances under which Cuba might be prepared to withdraw its troops from Angola and Ethiopia. Cuban actions towards Puerto Rico suggest another topic.

With your approval, I will be talking to Zbig on how we conduct future conversations with the Cubans on political issues and in particular how we respond to the latest conversation with Padron.

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-3-

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That you authorize me to discuss the question of the admission of these Cuban prisoners with the Attorney General.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

2. That I talk to Zbig about how we follow-up on the political aspects of the two previous conversations with Padron.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

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Attachments:

- Tab A - Summary of June 15 meeting.
- Tab B - Six Lists of Prisoners.
- Tab C - Full Text of June 15 meeting.

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SUMMARY

During a five hour conversation on June 15 in New York, Under Secretary Newsom and Jose Luis Padron, Fidel Castro's Adviser and Special Representative, discussed prisoner releases and Cuban policy in Africa. They agreed to maintain contact and both emphasized the need for ensuring the confidentiality of the meetings. They also agreed to continue to use [REDACTED] as a channel of communication.

Concerning the issue of prisoner releases, Padron reported that his government had taken into consideration approaches from Members of Congress, the intellectual community and businessmen. It hoped by taking positive action on prisoner releases to improve the climate of relations between the US and Cuba and the Cuban Government's relations with Cuban community resident in the US. It also hoped to respond to President Carter's interest in human rights. Specifically Padron said that his government had decided to permit the departure of some 4,000 Cubans, including dependents, who were 1) political prisoners already released; 2) prisoners on parole or; 3) prisoners still detained who wished to leave Cuba. The Cuban Government had made the decision unilaterally and expected nothing in return from the United States. Even if the United States did not wish to accept those released, Cuban Government would allow those released to leave Cuba. Asked whether the Cubans expected us to respond publicly Padron said he would have to check with Castro how the Cubans intended to make their decision public. In reply to Mr. Newsom's question about his government's plans for the four American prisoners in Cuba Padron said that he had no instructions and would have to check with Castro before replying.

With respect to Africa, Under Secretary Newsom explained our policies to Africa and the importance we attach to achieve peaceful and African solutions to the problems of the continent. He outlined our objectives in Southern Africa and our reasons for working with France and Belgium in Shaba. He discussed our concerns with the Horn of Africa. Mr. Newsom noted that while Cuban policy might be separate from Soviet policy, Cuba receives its support from the Soviet Union and Cuba's actions in Africa impede African solutions to African problems. Padron outlined the history of Cuba relations with liberation movements in Africa and recounted how his government came to decide to intervene in Angola. He said that Cuba is prepared to sit down with us and define steps to be taken to discuss solutions to African issues and will contribute to those solutions. Mr. Newsom encouraged the Cuban Government to use its influence with SWAPO to work with the Frontline Presidents to achieve a Namibian settlement. Padron said that Cuba did not intend to impose

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E.O. 12958

per State Lt 1/29/04 re NLC-03-12

BL 6 NARA, DATE 8/2/04

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- 2 -

Maxist-Lenin solutions in Africa and will only act in response to requests from friendly governments. It is prepared to withdraw troops when there are credible assurances that the territorial integrity of its friends will be protected. Cuba is working for a political settlement to the Eritrean problem and is not now or will it participate in military operations against Eritrea.

Returning to the prisoner question Mr. Newsom said that he would report to the President, the Secretary and the National Security Council and our answer to the Cuban Government would have to await full consideration in Washington. Padron agreed that Congressman Dante Fascell should be informed of the fact that we are discussing family reunification with the Cuban Government. He also agreed to look into his government's attitude on the Puerto Rican question and report back.

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