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We are meeting here to explore the possibilities for a more normal relationship between our two countries. We do this against a background with which we are all familiar and which makes this effort particularly delicate. It is essential, in the first instance, to determine whether there exists an equal determination on both sides to settle the differences that exist between us. In this context, it is equally important that neither side does anything to worsen the existing situation between our countries.

The mood in our two countries will, of course, be important to such talks. We have noted the recent public expressions of Premier Castro about President Ford and Secretary Kissinger. By the same token, the Government of Cuba will have seen that our own recent public statements about Cuba have been temperate and measured. Restraint on the two sides can, we think, contribute importantly to the improvement of the environment in which such talks as these can take place. We propose, therefore, to continue to give the most careful consideration to our public declarations on the Cuban issue, which is, of course, a matter of some sensitivity in our country.

The ideological differences between us are wide. But the fact that such talks will not bridge the ideological differences does not mean that they cannot be useful in addressing concrete issues which it is in the interest of both countries to resolve. The United States is able and willing to make progress on such issues even with socialist nations with whom we are in fundamental ideological disagreement, as the recent progress in our relations with the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China has shown.

There is a long agenda of matters of concern on both sides. Meanwhile, we, as a unilateral gesture, will do the following:

- The Government of the United States will move now to permit the travel of the Cuban diplomats, accredited to the United Nations, from New York to Washington.

-- The United States considers it appropriate that Cubans begin to participate more actively in the intellectual life of the United States. No purpose is served in attempting to embargo ideas. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the Government of the United States may begin to grant additional visas from time to time to Cubans to visit this country for cultural, scientific and educational meetings and for other similar purposes, in order that such scholars and experts may begin to communicate more effectively with their colleagues in this country.

We recognize that there are a number of issues on both sides. We anticipate that many of these issues must be resolved over time between us for important substantive reasons, while a number of them are essential for Cuba or for the United States to settle for symbolic reasons.

It would, therefore, be helpful for both sides to identify and define the issues which may be discussed, and in what order we might best discuss them. We are prepared now to consider how talks on these issues could go forward, where, at what level and at what pace. We will look at these suggestions carefully and respond quickly and in a cooperative spirit.

January 11, 1975