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# U.S. Repeats Offer on Cuban Refugees, Says Castro Misunderstood Terms

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The United States reiterated its willingness yesterday to accept an exodus of Cuban refugees and brushed aside Prime Minister Fidel Castro's angry rejection of the U.S. terms as a "misunderstanding."

A State Department spokesman, Marshall Wright, said the United States has offered to begin immediate negotiations with the Castro government through the Swiss Embassy in Havana. He said the Embassy was notified shortly after President Johnson's Sunday announcement that the United States will admit any refugees permitted to leave Cuba.

His statement came on the heels of Castro's sharp reaction to what he termed the "conditions" set by Mr. Johnson. In a Havana speech on Sunday night, Castro objected to Mr. Johnson's proposal that the International Red Cross be brought in.

Wright said Castro apparently had "misinterpreted" the President's suggestion and thought Mr. Johnson wanted

the Red Cross to act as intermediary in the discussions.

In actuality, the spokesman continued, the United States views the Red Cross role as one of "assistance in the orderly processing and moving of refugees" after an agreement is reached. Actual negotiations, he said, would be handled by the Swiss, who have represented U.S. interests in Havana since U.S.-Cuban relations were broken in 1961.

However, another possible bar to an agreement was raised by Castro in his Sunday remarks. Although he repeated his offer to allow the departure of any Cubans who want to leave, he also added new points to the proposal:

- That the United States allow unrestricted travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens.
- That Cubans living in the United States be allowed to visit relatives in Cuba and then return to the States.
- That Cubans on the island be allowed to visit relatives in the United States and then return home.

State Department spokesmen declined immediate comment on these new proposals.

Privately, however, U.S. sources said that the request to the Swiss embassy had involved only the matter of Cubans wishing to leave the island as refugees.

These sources said it was not immediately clear whether Castro had offered these new proposals as matters for discussion or whether he was attaching them as conditions to continuance of his original offer.

Current U.S. policy on travel between Cuba and the United States is governed by a regulation issued by the Secretary of State under his discretionary power to regulate foreign policy.

It prohibits travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens except in the case of accredited newsmen or persons on a humanitarian mission. Similarly, traffic back and forth by Cubans has been limited to humanitarian cases.

Underlying this restriction is a cooperative effort by the United States and other members of the Organization of American States to limit travel between Cuba and the rest of the Western Hemisphere to prevent subversion.

*Ideological dispute with Castro believed behind mystery of Che Guevara.*  
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