

U.S., Cuba Agree on Refugees

3000 to 4000 Can
Enter Monthly for
Unlimited Period

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The United States and Cuba formally agreed yesterday to permit 3000 to 4000 refugees a month from that Communist regime to enter this country over an unlimited time.

A Cuba-to-Florida air shuttle will carry 100 to 200 men, women and children a day to political asylum in the United States, starting on or before Dec. 1. A preliminary group of about 2000 refugees may begin to move to the United States by ship this week.

An estimated 100,000 persons, in categories restricted by Premier Fidel Castro, may come to the United States in the next two years, unless the accord is breached. With no cutoff date on the agreement, some sources estimate the flight of self exiles might reach 400,000 in later years. First priorities go to immediate or close relatives of the 270,000 Cubans now in the United States.

Sets a Precedent

There is no direct precedent for such an open-end accord between a Communist and a non-Communist nation.

Refugees have come out of Communist countries in large numbers for limited periods of time, either by short-term agreement, by tacit understanding, or illegally. But no continuing flow of refugees from Communist jurisdiction for an unlimited period previously has been officially authorized or permitted.

President Johnson, at his ranch near Johnson City, Tex., announced the agreement, which has been under negotiation for a month through Swiss diplomats in Havana

and here.

American officials believe the decision may produce significant international effects. While Castro may gain some benefits for permitting the exodus, United States officials believe that those will be far outweighed by gains for the non-Communist world in continuing evidence of the flight from Communist rule if the door is opened to permit it.

Follows Johnson Pledge

President Johnson first offered asylum to Cuban refugees on Oct. 3, as he signed a historic new immigration bill in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty. He challenged Castro then to make good on an offer he first mentioned on Sept. 28 and repeated two days later in a formal statement, saying he would allow Cubans to emigrate who wished to do so.

The President said yesterday:

"I am pleased with the understanding which has been reached. It is an important step forward in carrying out the declaration made on Oct. 3 to the Cuban people. I said that those who seek refuge here will find it. That continues to be the policy of the American people."

The United States expressed "regret" that the Castro government is not permitting the departure of political prisoners, of draft-age men between 15 and 26, and of persons with certain technical skills until the latter category can be "replaced."

Disagreements about how to refer to those restricted categories delayed the airlift announcement during the past week. Ten pages of documents See REFUGEES, A17, Col. 1

tation were made public yesterday, including an 18-point memorandum.

White House Press Secretary Bill D. Moyers said safeguards have been set up to prevent admission of subversive elements. "The United States," he stressed, "will have final control over all persons leaving Cuba."

Officials of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Public Health Service of the United States, will accompany each plane going to Cuba. Charter of the planes, for

which the United States will pay the costs, is now being arranged through Military Air Transport Service.

The planes will fly from Varadero Airport, about 60 miles east of Havana, where processing by American and Cuban authorities will take place.

Resettlement Plans

The refugees will be flown to the Miami International Airport, and plans for resettlement will be made at the Miami refugee center. A major effort will be made to spread the refugees around the Nation, as the Miami area already is heavily crowded with Cuban refugees.

Before the 1962 Cuban missile crisis cut the flow, the rate of refugees from Cuba to the United States reached 8000 a month. In addition, about 9000 Cubans came to the United States in 1963, many of them in the exchange arrangement of American drugs and supplies for prisoners taken in the abortive 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion attempt.

Officials emphasized yesterday that no similar exchange or payment of any kind is involved in the current agreement.

State Department Press Officer Marshall Wright emphasized yesterday that the present agreement is intended purely for humanitarian purposes, and in no way constitutes a restoration of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

The United States broke diplomatic relations with Cuba in January, 1961.

The current agreement, said Wright, "is not related in any way to the fundamental issues which exist between the Cuban regime and the other countries of the Western Hemisphere. Until there is a basic change in the policies of Havana, I see no prospect for a fruitful discussion with the Cuban regime on broad policy matters . . ."

While the complex negotiations were under way through the Swiss in recent weeks, a hodge-podge armada of small boats, many of them unsea-

worthy, risked the 90-mile passage from Cuba to Key West for refugees fearful that Castro would never culminate the agreement.

About 2800 refugees made that trip, and more than 45 died, 39 of them in one tragedy Wednesday night in the sea near Yucatan, Mexico.

That exit route, from the small port of Camarioca, Cuba, was blocked this week, leaving about 2000 refugees stranded there.

By separate agreement, the United States now is arranging to charter a ship to bring them to the United States, at the rate of about 800 or 900 a week. All who are cleared by Cuba will be allowed to enter the United States.

Under the broader agreement, the first priority for entry of relatives will be given to "immediate relatives." That is defined to mean parents of unmarried children, spouses, unmarried children under age 21 and brothers and sister under age 21.

Problems Expected

"Close relatives" of such persons who reside "in the same household" with them also will be included in that category. But it will take a complex procedure for the two governments to verify, through Swiss intermediaries, who should be in that group.

Barred by Cuba are "certain persons who, by reason of the social function they perform or because of legal obligations from which they cannot be excused, are subject to certain restrictions" on leaving the country, along with technicians and draft-age men. The draft bar hits not only men in the compulsory military service age of 17 to 26, but those who would be called up in the next two years, that is, the 15-year-old group.

The cost of the airlift to bring the refugees to the United States is estimated at \$400,000 a year. For general expenditures of aid to Cuban refugees, Congress has authorized a present total of \$42.6 million for the fiscal year 1966.

U.S. Thanks Swiss

American officials expressed great appreciation yesterday for the work of the Swiss government in reaching the agreement. Officially, the United States did not sign anything; the accord was in the form of notes exchanged

between Swiss Ambassador Emil Stadelhofer and Cuban Foreign Minister Raul Roa.

Among the recurring questions about the exchange agreement were: Why did Castro do it? What was in it for the United States; what for Castro?

The version of American of-

ficial sources is that Castro originally made what was intended to be a grandstand propaganda play which he expected the United States to snub, with rebounding benefits for him.

When the United States, instead, picked up the offer, according to this analysis, Castro was taken aback and began to hedge. He added, they said, new conditions; at one point Castro said he would release political prisoners if a host of other Latin American countries would release "revolutionary" prisoners.

There is strong suspicion in Washington that the Soviet Union, which is spending an estimated \$1 million a day to support Castro's regime, probably urged him to restrict his offer to avoid opening a devastating economic drain through the loss of vital technicians.

Views of Analysts

As American analysts see it, the flow of refugees will represent a "constant hemorrhage" for Cuban communism in the eyes of the world, while the refugees' escape from communism is likely to produce envy in many Communist countries.

For Castro, it is likely to mean some measure of approval in the world for allowing the refugees to leave; that could give him some important benefit in Latin American eyes.

In addition, Castro gains a "safety value," the removal of many non-productive persons, and persons hostile to his regime.

His regime, critically short of housing, also gains the houses they will abandon, plus the money, jewels and other possessions they are forbidden to take with them. Perhaps most important in the long run, Castro may have laid a foundation for improved relations with the United States.

But, on balance, one American source said confidently, "We clearly got the best of the bargain."