

NY Times *Nixxd* JUL 6 1974
**Aide of a Senate Panel, in Cuba,
Is Expected to Talk With Castro**

By DAVID BINDER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 5—Pat M. Holt, chief of staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is in Cuba and is expected to confer with Premier Fidel Castro, according to sources in Havana.

As far as is known, this would be the first meeting between an American of Mr. Holt's rank and the Cuban leadership since relations with Havana were broken by Washington in January, 1961. Private contacts between American and Cuban diplomats have taken place at the United Nations.

Mr. Castro said Tuesday night that he was prepared to receive Mr. Holt, a Latin-American affairs specialist of long standing.

The Nixon Administration maintains that its policy of opposing the Castro leadership is unchanged, although it has made efforts since last year to reduce tensions between Havana and Washington.

A Small Shift

Authorization of Mr. Holt's visa to Cuba by the State Department represents a small shift, too, since he had been denied permission to visit Havana by the Administration several times previously.

Senate sources said that Mr. Holt was representing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Its chairman, Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, has displayed a continuing interest in United States-Cuban relations. Last Tuesday, Mr. Castro said that he had been in correspondence with Senator Fulbright in connection with Mr. Holt's visit.

Mr. Holt arrived in Cuba last

week for a 10-day trip and has been traveling about the island republic since. He returned to Havana today from a tour of Oriente Province.

Speaking to newsmen at the Argentine Embassy three nights ago when he went to sign the book of condolences for Juan Domingo Perón, the late Argentine leader, Mr. Castro said he would be willing to meet not only Mr. Holt but also Secretary of State Kissinger.

"I believe that Kissinger is not a negative figure in United States foreign policy," he was quoted as saying. "He is a realistic man." But the Cuban leader added that he could not confer with Mr. Kissinger until the 12-year-old United States economic embargo against Cuba was "unconditionally lifted."

United States officials concerned with Cuba said this appeared to represent a shift in Mr. Castro's attitude, since as recently as 1973 he was saying that relations with Washington could not be normalized until United States naval forces quit their base at Guantánamo on the southern coast of Cuba.

During the last year Cuba has overcome a large part of the political and economic isolation she had been subjected to in the hemisphere. Havana now has diplomatic relations with Peru, Argentina, Canada, Venezuela, Panama and some of the Caribbean states. Her economic relations are expanding with Argentina and Mexico.

TREES, LAKES, GREEN GRASS.
THE FRESH AIR FUND.