

# Eaton Says U.S.-Cuba Ties Could Be Resumed Soon

By H. J. MAIDENBERG

Cyrus S. Eaton, who was a guest of Premier Fidel Castro last week, said yesterday that he believed relations between Cuba and the United States could be resumed quickly if Secretary of State Kissinger were to take up the matter with the Cuban leader.

"It would be a fine and swift deal," the wealthy 90-year-old industrialist said in a telephone interview from his offices in Cleveland.

"I carry no messages from Havana, just the clear understanding that the Cuban Government and people are most favorably inclined toward a resumption in relations with Washington."

## Hijacking Curb Is Cited

As an example of Premier Castro's attitude, Mr. Eaton said that his host repeatedly pointed to his cooperation in halting the former flow of hijacked airliners to Havana.

"Castro left no doubt that his dealings with the hijackers was a friendly gesture, and he made that point repeatedly in our talks," Mr. Eaton said.

"But every time Castro makes a friendly gesture, some lughead in the State Department thinks we have him over a barrel. That is why I believe that any negotiations must be conducted by an official of Mr. Kissinger's caliber, not any State Department functionary."

Mr. Eaton went on to say that many United States corporations were planning "big business" with Cuba in the event relations were restored.

"As it is," he observed, "many corporations trade with Cuba today through their Latin-American and European subsidiaries. It's time we were realistic."

"During my week there I met many foreigners doing business," he said. "The Cubans have money; they borrow from the Russians at 2.5 per cent interest."

He recalled that until after the Castro take-over in 1959 he had had business ventures in Cuba, and that these had spanned "50 years, until my directors were scared by the State Department into running away."

He said his businesses had included hotels, including the Sevilla-Biltmore, paint factories and other interests. "But I continued to sell them Canadian pure-bred cattle," he added, "and Cuba today has some of the best beef and dairy herds found anywhere."

Mr. Eaton asserted that one reason for the lack of Cuban-



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Cyrus S. Eaton

United States relations was a fear in Washington that a resumption would bring violent protests from "hard-up" Cuban exiles here.

"Those hard-up exiles are being sustained by the C.I.A.," Mr. Eaton said. "It's their meal ticket and friendly relations would cancel it."

On the other hand, I've been in contact with many successful Cuban exiles who tell me they want relations resumed," he said, adding:

"If these influential Cubans, many of them are United States citizens now, would have the courage to speak up, it would help influence Washington."

"Then if Kissinger, or even Nixon, would make contact and displayed a generous attitude, the matter would be resolved quickly."

Asked if officials in Washington knew of his trip to Havana, he replied with a laugh: "I told the State Department I was going and reminded them of the recent Supreme Court ruling permitting United States citizens to travel there. But I heard nothing from them."

Mr. Eaton is chairman emeritus of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway and is active in steel, coal, iron ore and agricultural ventures.

The industrialist, who was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize for helping Soviet-American economic relations, attributed his interest in Cuban affairs to "family interests."

"My ancestors in Nova Scotia were sailing merchants and traded with Cuba," he said.

"Castro gave me no messages to deliver, Mr. Eaton declared, "but he was fully aware that I intended to speak out on the subject of resuming relations when I got home."