

Cuba Report

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Washington

Enormous problems stand in the way of normalizing U.S.-Cuban relations, but the time has come to take the first step, two senators said yesterday.

Reporting on their weekend trip to the island, Senators Jacob K. Javits (Rep.-N.Y.) and Claiborne Pell (Dem.-R.I.) said Premier Fidel Castro indicated he is interested in opening the door.

"The moment is propitious to begin that process," Javits told a news conference.

"I believe there is a desire on the part of Premier Castro and his regime in Havana to come to a better accommodation."

But, any effort to begin serious, formal negotiations at this time "would fall flat on its face," Javits added.

Instead, he and Pell, both members of the Foreign Relations Committee, urged that a series of small steps be taken to show U.S. desire to improve relations with the Communist nation.

For example, they said,

the United States could allow Cuban diplomats at the United Nations a greater freedom of movement and could lift some visa restrictions.

They cautioned against conditioning a detente on the expulsion of Soviet influence from Cuba. Such a condition would doom the effort from the start, Javits said, just as would any Castro demand that the economic embargo against the island be lifted before talks could start.

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