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Rules Eases For Cuban Diplomats

Washington

At the urging of congressional leaders, the U.S. government has liberalized its strict travel restrictions placed on Cuban diplomats at the United Nations, the State Department confirmed yesterday.

Congressional sources generally interpreted the move as a conciliatory gesture toward Cuba. On trips to Havana, members of Congress have often been told by the Cubans that the travel restrictions were a constant irritant.

The relaxed rules allow the official Cubans to travel 250 miles out of New York. They were formerly restricted to a 25-mile radius. Among other things, the new rules will allow the Cubans to visit Washington.

A State Department spokesman said the relaxation, decided on Friday, represents "no change" in U.S. policy toward Cuba and the Communist government of Premier Fidel Castro. But a congressional source said the State Department's denial of a change in policy lacked candor. "It's another step toward change," he said.

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