

No Volleyball Diplomacy

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Cuba Must See U.S. Policy Change

SAN CLEMENTE — (AP) — The Nixon Administration does not rule out the long-range possibility of more normal relations with Cuba, but officials said yesterday they do not expect a round of "volleyball diplomacy."

White House aides said any improvement in relations between the two countries would have to be preceded by some expression by the Cuban government indicating a desire for relaxation of tensions.

Since 1961

The United States and Cuba, 90 miles apart, have not had diplomatic relations since Jan. 3, 1961. American

interests in Cuba are handled by the Swiss Embassy there.

An American volleyball team has been in Havana this week, competing in an Olympic playoff series, and the traveling party reportedly has been well received.

A visit to China by a U.S. table tennis team initiated what was described as "Ping-Pong Diplomacy" and was followed in July by President Nixon's announcement that he will visit Peking before next May.

The White House sources said any suggestion of a diplomatic parallel between visits to China and Cuba by American sports teams

would, at least at this point, be purely speculative.

And whereas the trip to Peking by the table tennis players marked a sharp break with the past, it is understood that no fewer than eight American volleyball teams have competed in Cuba since 1968.

Speculation

Jacques Amalric, Washington correspondent of the Paris newspaper *Le Monde*, speculated yesterday that the Nixon Administration might be receptive to the idea of "normalizing relations" with Cuba as is being attempted in the case of mainland China.

Amalric reported that Latin Americans in Paris had for several weeks been asking the question, "after Ping-Pong, volleyball?" He said, "the invitation by Havana to a score of American volleyball players only revived the speculation."

Le Monde is the French newspaper most widely read by the diplomatic community in Paris.