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SUBJECT: Castro's Response to US Proposal on Hijacking

1. Dept wishes to express its appreciation to Ambassador Fischli for his presentation U.S. proposal and for providing us with his assessment of the provisional nature of Fidel Castro's cryptic reply--an assessment with which we agree.

2. We believe we should respond to GOC request for clarification in order to avoid giving GOC any pretext to reject US offer or an excuse for delaying action. Accordingly, unless Federal Political Department has objection, we request that Ambassador Fischli be instructed to pass precisely and fully the following US views orally to FonMin Roa.

(1)

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ARA - Mr. Hurwitch
ARA/CCA - Mr. Funseth
JJ - Amb. Johnson
~~XXXXX~~ S/S - Mr. Brandt ~~XXXXXX~~

~~White House~~ Per UAJ

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FOR 4-68 DS-322

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3. The USG notes PriMin Castro's assurance that the GOC is ready to negotiate with the USG. For its part, the USG is prepared, as previously stated to FonMin Roa by Ambassador Fischli, to reach a firm understanding with the GOC on this matter as soon as possible. We are hopeful that a well-publicized understanding between the GOC and the USG for the return of hijackers of ships and aircraft would have a substantial deterrent effect on hijacking. Unless such a step is taken, we believe the risk of a tragic accident with loss of life remains a dangerous possibility. We believe that the US proposal as previously outlined is clear, but perhaps the following restatement of it will be helpful. The United States is prepared, on the basis of equality and reciprocity as specified in Cuban Law 1226 of September 16, 1969, upon the request of the Government of Cuba, to return to Cuba persons who by force

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or threat of force divert ships and planes of Cuban registry from their normal routes and activities and bring them to the United States; the U.S. would also apply reciprocally the same exceptions specified in the Cuban law of September 16, 1969 for cases of political asylum and for nationals of the US.

4. The USG is prepared to provide any further clarification that the GOC may request, in order that a mutually satisfactory arrangement relative to this serious problem can be achieved as quickly as possible.

END

[ROGERS]

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