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By WDD

Cuba Ready for Early Talks on Hijacking and Other Crimes

The Cuban Government replied on November 18 to our message of the previous day concerning talks on hijacking and other serious crimes, reconfirming its desire for a bilateral agreement on this subject. The reply suggests that conversations be held in Havana between Cuban Government and Swiss Embassy officials. Cuban Foreign Minister Roa, who gave the reply note to Swiss Ambassador Masnata, said the Cuban side would be ready to begin discussions by the middle of this week and planned to present a draft agreement during the discussions.

Roa also handed Masnata a note rejecting the U.S. request for return of the Southern Airways hijackers on the ground that they committed offenses at the airport under Cuban law and would be tried accordingly. (A separate information memorandum is being sent on this note). The Roa-Masnata meeting occurred two hours before receipt by the Cuban Government of our formal extradition requests in both recent hijacking cases.

A translation of the Cuban reply on hijacking talks is attached.

Attachment:

Translation of Cuban Note.

CONFIDENTIAL-EXCISE ~~SECRET~~ 015

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Translation of Cuban Government Note
to Swiss Embassy Havana-November 19, 1972

(Complimentary introduction and close omitted)

The Government of Cuba looks with equal pleasure on the disposition of the Government of the United States to reach an agreement on hijackings of aircraft and other offenses, in response to the Cuban note of October 30.

The Cuban side is ready to take the appropriate steps in this connection. The conversations can be held in the city of Havana between officials of the Government of Cuba and the Embassy of Switzerland as representative of the interests of the United States in our country.

In the course of next week the Government of Cuba is prepared to establish the pertinent contacts for this purpose with officials of the Embassy of Switzerland in order to begin immediately to discuss said agreement.