SUBJ: DIA DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE NOTICE (DIN) (U)

DIADIN 46-2A (AS OF: 13:15 EST 15 FEB 77)

CUBA: POLITICAL PRISONERS. (U)

1. LEFT RESPONDING TO US GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN THE AREA OF WORLDWIDE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, VICE PRESIDENT OF COUNCILS OF STATES AND MINISTERS OF CUBA, CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ TOLD THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION THAT SINCE HAVANA IMPRISONED NO ONE FOR THEIR BELIEFS, THERE WERE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CUBA. THIS STATEMENT

54 MAR 1977

109-12-210-7189
APPEARS TO CONTRADICT THE CURRENT POLITICAL PRISONER SITUATION IN CUBA, WHERE RELIABLE ESTIMATES OF NUMBERS HELD RUN AS HIGH AS 5,000.

2. President Fidel Castro's last public speech on this matter was in July 1975. At that time, Castro indicated that some 5,000 prisoners were being held -- 3,000 in education camps and 2,000 in prisons. Cuban officials repeated the 2,000 figure in August 1976 to visiting US citizens. Amnesty International, a public interest group with worldwide interests in human rights, estimates that there are between 4,000 and 5,000 prisoners being held by the Castro regime, the same number the organization holds for Chile. Cuban exile groups, on the other hand, feel that in excess of 100,000 persons are being held, an unlikely possibility.

3. Perhaps the most famous of the detainees is the former comrade of Castro, Huber Matos. He has become a "cause célèbre" in recent months as his son...
ATTEMPTED TO GAIN MATOS' RELEASE IN EXCHANGE FOR THAT OF CHILEAN COMMUNIST LEADER LUIS CORVALAN. IN POOR HEALTH, MAIDS' DEFIANCE AND REFUSAL TO BECOME "RE-HABILITATED" ARE THE BASIS FOR THE WIDESPREAD INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR HIS RELEASE.

4. CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE VERY LIKELY TO BE AN ISSUE IN THE WAY OF ANY RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN HAVANA AND WASHINGTON. CUBA HAS STEADFASTLY MAINTAINED THAT IT HAS NO HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM, A STANCE THAT MAY HAVE TO BE SUBSTANTIATED IN THE EYES OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES AROUND THE WORLD.