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Reviewed by: <u>Edley</u>	
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Additional Talking Points On Sending a Baseball Team to Cuba

1. US Public Reaction. The public and the press are skeptical about our Cuba Policy because there is a steady stream of news reporting from the island portraying the regime as stable and self-confident, the life as dreary but providing better social services than most other Latin American countries, and Castro himself as prepared to normalize relations with the US. Cuba watchers among the press speculate that the lifting of the OAS sanctions will be engineered at the April General Assembly. They think it is just a matter of time before relations are normalized and assume that we are already in the stage of receiving and sending signals. Thus there are over reactions to such measures as the Litton Industries' exception and the travel restrictions on Cuban UN diplomats. A public relations move would correct some of the distortions in the public mind about our Cuban policy -- shifting the emphasis to a non-political and non-controversial area.

The Chinese ping-pong players were accepted by the US public as a good way to break the ice between countries separated by decades of hostility.

Baseball with Cuba would serve a similar purpose in bridging the gap between the Bay of Pigs and a new relationship with Castro.

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-- The President would have a sturdy platform for making an inescapable comment on Cuban policy in Miami next week.

-- Picking a game we are likely to win would go well with Americans who are depressed by the regimented victories of the Communists in Olympic games.

-- The match would be seen as a shrewd Yankee political move.

2. The Effect on Castro and Cubans

Pre-Castro Cuba was considered the most "Americanized" of any Latin American country in terms of baseball, hot-dogs, and coco-cola. Much of this, and particularly baseball, persists. It still is the most popular spectator and corner lot sport.

Castro wants our technology and spare parts, but we understand he is worried about the effect of American influences on his population in the event of normalization.

-- A baseball match would undercut the demonology in Cuban propaganda about the US.

-- It would be difficult for Cuban exiles in the US to take issue with despite their general uneasiness about any change in US-Cuban relations.

-- Under our existing travel restrictions, athletes

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have gone to Cuba for competitions. But our allowing a prominent baseball team to go there would be read as a political gesture by Castro.

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