

MEDIASCAN TRANSCRIPT
EXCERPTS FROM NBC SUNRISE/TODAY SHOW
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NA01 CAMPAIGN '84/
JACKSON

DANCY: Jesse Jackson has done it again, gone abroad and secured the release of prisoners. After a meeting with Jackson last night, Cuba's Fidel Castro agreed to release 22 prisoners being held by Cuba. It was reminiscent of Jackson's trip to Syria last winter to gain the release of Navy Lt. Robert Goodman. The agreement on the prisoner release came early this morning. John Severson reports from Havana.

SEVERSON: An aide to Jackson said he and Castro got along like long-lost brothers. What they did was agree to embark on what they called 'the moral offensive' in 10 areas, ranging from normalizing U.S.-Cuban relations to releasing U.S. prisoners held in Cuban jails.

FIDEL CASTRO (voice of translator): We decided to release all U.S. prisoners we have in Cuba, with the exception of those who have been arrested and sanctioned for hijacking of planes.

SEVERSON: Castro also agreed to allow a political prisoner, Vargas Gomez, who was in Cuban jail for 22 years following the Bay of Pigs invasion, to go home with Jackson, and he said he is now willing to discuss, before the U.S. elections, the return of some 1,500 Cubans who fled to the U.S. during the Carter administration. The candidate and the president also agreed to exchange ambassadors immediately, something that would require the unexpected approval of the Reagan administration. Castro said he was dealing with Jackson as a popular American personality, that he doesn't intend to interfere with the internal affairs of the U.S. As official as the Castro-Jackson accord may appear, the only thing that's almost certain is that when Jackson's plane returns home on Thursday, it'll have more passengers than it did when it left. John Severson, NBC News, Havana.

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PALMER: First, more on that announcement by Cuban President Fidel Castro that he plans to release 22 American prisoners, most of whom are being held in Cuban jails on drug charges. That announcement came early this morning, following talks between Castro and Democratic presidential candidate Jesse Jackson. Jamie Gangel reports this morning from Havana.

GANGEL: (In progress)...promise, Jackson is going home with 22 American prisoners, most serving time here for illegal drug trafficking, but Castro would only agree to release one Cuban dissident. Jackson and Castro then announced a 10-point agreement aimed at normalizing

U.S.-Cuban relations, but Castro insisted this was not a swipe at the authority of the Reagan administration. FIDEL CASTRO (voice of translator): Our purpose has not been, nor this, nor has intention has been (sic) to interfere in the internal affairs of the United States.

GANGEL: Castro promised to look into taking back unwanted Cuban refugees imprisoned from the Mariel boatlift, and into reuniting families, but Castro's language was vague, more rhetoric than substance. The Jackson-Castro accord may have looked and sounded official, but what it really does is send a message from President Castro to President Reagan that Castro wants to talk. Candidate Jackson only got a small part of what he wanted; Castro turned down Jackson's appeal to rejoin the Olympics, and only one Cuban dissident was released. Jamie Gangel, NBC News, with the Jackson campaign in Havana.

PALMER: And, there are reports from Havana, this morning, that Secret Service agents assigned to provide protection for Jackson during the presidential primary campaign are not pleased with Jackson's plan to fly the newly released prisoners back to the United States tomorrow aboard his campaign plane. The one Cuban dissident being released has been identified as 68-year-old Andres Vargas Gomez. He's described as a former CIA operative who took part in the U.S.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba during the Kennedy administration. He was released from prison a year and a half ago, after serving 22 years, but has not been allowed to leave the country. He spoke with NBC News this morning. UNIDENTIFIED NBC REPORTER (off-screen): What do you feel now, about thinking that you're going to be able to leave, that you're going to be able to see your wife, who (sic) you haven't seen in 22 years? I mean, what is going through your mind now? ANDRES VARGAS GOMEZ: Well, it is very difficult to explain that. I don't think we can find, easily, words to express those emotions. I am really a little--how I should say?--well, perhaps I am not able to realize very well my feelings now, you know, what I am, I feel, really. I am (unintelligible) happy, and I think it is going to be good for me, very good to go to the states, and I (sic) stay there with my family.