1986

RR-86-194

UU GMN BRI
DIP:PM-BASEBALL DIPLOMACY
U.S. BASEBALL TEAM IN CUBA GETS HARDY WELCOME:
HAVANA, MAY 8, REUTER --WITH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS A ROCK BOTTOM AND ECONOMIC TIES NON EXISTENT, BASEBALL DIPLOMACY CAME INTO PLAY AS A U.S. TEAM FROM JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE LOST 4-3 IN A 12 INNING THRILLER TO AN ALL-STAR CUBAN YOUTH TEAM.

TOP OFFICIALS OF THE U.S. DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN HAVANA WATCHED THE GAME FROM THE STANDS SURROUNDED BY AN ESTIMATED 10,000 CUBAN FANS. A STRONG CRITIC OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA AND CENTRAL AMERICA, WAYNE SMITH, WATCHED THE GAME FROM THE FIELD, NEAR THE AMERICANS' DUGOUT. SMITH, NOW A PROFESSOR AT JOHNS-HOPKINS, WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE CUBAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE BETWEEN 1977 AND 1979 AND HEAD OF THE US.S. INTEREST SECTION IN HAVANA BETWEEN 1979 AND 1982 SPANNING THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF PRESIDENTS CARTER AND REAGAN.

SMITH TOLD REUTER: +FOR TWO PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN AS ALIENATED FROM ONE ANOTHER FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIND A COMMON LANGUAGE THROUGH WHICH THEY CAN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER AGAIN AND THERE IS NOTHING THAT WE HAVE MORE IN COMMON THAN BASEBALL WHICH IS THE NATINAL GAME OF BOTH NATIONS.+

LEE HOROWITI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS AT JOHNS HOPKINS PRAISED THE SPORTSMANSHIP OF THE CUBAN FANS WHO CHEERED THE AMERICANS WHEN THEY WHIPPED ANOTHER CUBAN TEAM 12-4, IN THEIR FIRST GAME TUESDAY.

THE TEAM FROM JOHNS HOPKINS RETURNS TO THE UNITED STATES NEXT SATURDAY.
==REUTER/LEM
NNNN