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Cuba Prisoner Accord Near, Donovan Says

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NEW YORK, Nov. 20 (AP)—

Negotiator James B. Donovan said today most of the preliminaries have been agreed upon to arrange an exchange of Cuban invasion prisoners for food, medicine and drugs.

Mr. Donovan told a news conference the accord on these points was reached between Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro and the Cuban Families Committee, which is seeking the release of the anti-Castro prisoners captured early in 1961.

Mr. Donovan, an attorney who arranged the trade with the Soviet Union of Soviet spy Rudolf Abel for U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers, is general counsel of the committee.

The attorney did not elaborate on what preliminaries had been agreed to with Mr. Castro.

The exchange is understood to call for shipment of \$62 million worth of medicine, food and drugs to Cuba in return for the 1,113 prisoners.

Mr. Donovan said the ex-

change could not be completed without official approval of both the United States and Cuban governments, but that if approval were given the committee could retrieve the prisoners within 10 days.

With such approval, he said, he would go to Havana "with a very substantial percentage of the total shipments and with certain assurance with respect to completion of the transaction. And I would then leave Havana with all of the prisoners."

Mr. Donovan was accompanied at the news conference by Alvaro Sanchez, jr., chairman of the Cuban Families Committee.

Mr. Sanchez said he returned yesterday from Cuba and while there met some of the prisoners. He reported that 900 were held in prison in Havana and 213 were on the Isle of Pines.

He said those on the Isle of Pines were in poor physical condition because of a food shortage.