CUBA PROMISES TO FREE FOUR

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cuba has promised to release four American prisoners as a goodwill gesture to Sens. Jacob K. Javits, R-N.Y., and Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., who recently visited Havana.

The two senators announced Wednesday that Cuban authorities will release David Bruce Nirenburg, Susan Lane Brown, Philip Fred Burris and Richard Peter Johnson.

The senators said Nirenburg and the Brown woman, of South Royalton, Vt., were arrested Sept. 17, 1973, while aboard a yacht off the Cuban coast and were charged with possession of drugs. Both have three years remaining on their prison sentences.

Nirenburg's hometown was listed as Upper Sagon, Pa., but such a community is not listed in the U.S. Postal Guide.

Burris, of Oakland, Calif., and Johnson, whose parents live in Walnut Creek, Calif., were arrested Nov. 14, 1970, after landing an airplane in Cuba with no Cuban visa or U.S. passport.

They were charged with taking drugs into Cuba, but Javits and Pell said the pair claimed there were no drugs on board their plane and that they landed in Cuba because their plane was running out of fuel. They have one year remaining on their jail sentences.

The two senators said word of the planned release was delivered to them Wednesday afternoon by the Czechoslovakian ambassador to the United States on behalf of the acting Cuban foreign minister.

"I hope that this gesture of good will by the Cuban government will be the forerunner of other gestures by both Cuba and the United States and will ultimately lead to better relations between the two nations," Pell said.

Javits said he also was gratified.

"I should hope, however, that any future gestures of this kind will be made as much in a spirit of good will toward the United States government as toward Senator Pell and myself, and also that the progress in such two-way relations will warrant it," Javits said.

In Oakland, Burris' wife, Florence, told newsmen:

"Oh God, I'm so thankful. I was hoping they were going to release him. He's been in a long time. They didn't sentence him until a year after he'd been in prison.

"The last letter I received from Philip was in February. He told me he had trouble with the directional controls of his airplane. He had no idea he was in Cuban airspace."

Miss Brown's mother, Mrs. Eben Brown of South Royalton, said she had heard news accounts of the impending release of her daughter, but she said she would have no comment until she got official notification.