

## Eaton, at 95, Backs China Trade

Industrialist Cyrus S. Eaton became 95 years old yesterday and observed his birthday with family and friends at his home in Northfield, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. His wife, Anne, said he would grant no interviews, but she reported that he had expressed considerable enthusiasm over President Carter's decision to establish formal relations with China, a move he has been urging almost since the two nations broke off relations soon after World War II.

One of the few Americans, whether diplomats, public officials or businessmen, to gain the confidence of Soviet officials, he has long supported commercial contacts with all segments of the Communist world. Only recently, he retired as a director of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, a post he had maintained after his ouster as chairman of the multibillion dollar Chessie System in 1973. He is still a major stockholder in the Chessie System which he served for 35 years, 19 of them as chairman.

In his office in Cleveland's Terminal Tower Building, he displayed oil paintings he had received from the leaders of Communist countries. There were paintings on his walls from Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania and Hungary. "I'm saving a space for China," he once told a visitor.

As the United States strengthens commercial ties with the Communist world, the only rapprochement he has advocated but not yet seen come to fruition is between this country and Cuba. Mr. Eaton has long been friendly with Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders and has criticized the United States's policy of nonrecognition. He himself has dealt with the Cubans, shipping them cattle and other products from businesses he owns in Canada.

Even so, he often maintained that in years of urging capitalists and communists to get together, he had never profited from any transaction with the Communists until 1972 when his railroad hauled American grain to sea-ports as part of the famous Soviet wheat deal.



Associated Press

Cyrus S. Eaton

On his 90th birthday, when he was still riding horseback and walking at least a mile a day, Mr. Eaton said of his initial visits to the Soviet Union during the Cold War: "I believed then, and I believe now, that a nation's social and economic system is its own affair. I wouldn't want Communism here, but if the Russians want it, that's up to them."