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## Diplomats Say Havana Wants Wide U.S. Talks

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MEXICO CITY, March 25 — Cuba is ready to discuss all aspects of the situation in the Caribbean basin with the Reagan Administration, diplomatic sources said today, but it will not withdraw support for Salvadoran rebels as a condition for such negotiations.

The sources said that was the essence of the message delivered last weekend by President Fidel Castro through Mexico's Foreign Minister, Jorge Castañeda de la Rosa, to a special State Department envoy, Gen. Vernon A. Walters, who had held a secret four-hour meeting with the Cuban leader early this month in Havana.

The sources added that Mr. Castro was pleased by his meeting with General Walters, who is a former Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, and was hopeful that it would be followed by further negotiations with the Reagan Administration.

"The Cubans say that no arms have gone from Cuba to El Salvador for the past 14 months; but they can't assume an obligation to stop aiding the guerrillas if this problem is seen in isolation," a knowledgeable Western diplomat said. "They argue that the situation would be different if the United States stopped arming the Salvadoran junta or peace talks began in El Salvador."

The sources said that, while the Cuban presence in Africa and the United States economic blockade of Cuba were not discussed by Mr. Castro and General Walters, Havana clearly preferred negotiations with Washington that covered the entire relationship between the two nations.

The sources added that Mr. Castañeda, during a two-day visit to Havana last weekend, conveyed a message from Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. that Washington still gave top priority to an end to Cuban "involvement" in El Salvador and elsewhere in

Central and South America.

Mr. Castañeda has refused to discuss the details of his talks in Havana, but he said in an interview today that he was hopeful of some reconciliation between the United States and Cuba as part of a reduction of tensions in the area.

"It won't be quick, but I think it's advancing," he said, adding that Mexico did not aspire to mediate between the two Governments.

Last month President José López Portillo of Mexico suggested that his nation serve as a "communicator" to promote negotiations between the Reagan Administration and the leftist regimes in Cuba and Nicaragua and also between El Salvador's warring factions. Mr. López Portillo has said United States talks with Cuba would facilitate solutions to the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan problems.

After his weekend talks in Havana, Mr. Castañeda paid a four-hour visit to Managua and came away with Nicaragua's agreement to a United States suggestion that the two Governments hold direct negotiations. The talks are expected to be held in Mexico City early next month.

### 'Other Irons in the Fire'

"The United States has reached the intelligent conclusion that its best interests are served by reaching some understanding with Nicaragua," Mr. Castañeda said today. But he added, apparently alluding to Nicaragua's fears of United States intervention, that "the U.S. willingness to negotiate does not discount the possibility that it is keeping other options open, other irons in the fire."

The Mexican Foreign Minister said Nicaragua had expressed interest in Mexico's participation in the negotiations with Washington, "although I suspect the United States would prefer us not to be there."

"Mexico's role is limited," he added. "We want to be a communicator and not a mediator."

Mr. Castañeda noted that both the United States and Nicaragua have already made proposals for negotiations with each other. "We don't think there's enormous difference between the two positions, and we don't think they should have great difficulty in reaching an arrangement," he said.

### Optimistic on Salvadoran Talks

Questioned about the status of proposed negotiations between warring forces in El Salvador, the Foreign Minister said he was encouraged by press reports from Washington that the Reagan Administration had accepted the idea of talks between the Salvadoran opposition and the new Government that emerges from Sunday's elections there. "I hope it is true," he said. "I hope this is confirmed."

He recalled that he had agreed to meet Mr. Haig again in April to discuss El Salvador.

Diplomatic sources said that, while Mexico opened its current regional peace initiative on its own, France is reportedly interested in renewing its cooperation with the López Portillo administration on problems of Central America.

In August Mexico and France stirred controversy by jointly recognizing El Salvador's guerrilla-led opposition as a "representative political force" in the conflict. The sources said they were unsure what new ideas France was elaborating. They added that Régis Debray, a foreign affairs adviser to President François Mitterrand, was planning to visit Mexico City this weekend.