

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 22A

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
29 November 1983

U.S. is considering widening its efforts against Cuban aggression

By Alfonso Chardy
Inquirer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A senior administration official said yesterday that the United States was preparing a more active policy to contain Cuba, including possible resumption of covert aid to rebels resisting Cuban forces abroad.

Constantine Menges, a special assistant to President Reagan and senior director for Latin American affairs at the National Security Council, said the policy also may include increased efforts to isolate the regime of Premier Fidel Castro and support for anti-Castro Cuban exiles.

Menges, who until recently served in the Latin American division of the CIA, outlined the policy at a meeting here organized by the Cuban-American National Foundation. The foundation, controlled by Cuban exiles, calls itself an independent, nonprofit institution, promoting "an objective view of Cuba."

Commenting on Cuban offers to negotiate a rapprochement with Washington, Menges said the administration was "always open" to normalizing relations with Havana but only when Cuba "stops its export of subversion, its indirect aggression around the world and its expanding military collaboration with the Soviet Union."

Menges said the government was considering these steps for dealing with Cuba:

- An expanded effort to "tell the truth" about Cuba, its actions and its victims in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. He said this would include publicizing acts of re-

pression in Cuba and the economic and social failures of the revolution and focusing attention on Cuba's alleged role in drug traffic.

- An attempt to deepen the economic and political isolation of Cuba from the West as long as Havana "continues its collaboration with the Soviet bloc and other anti-Western radical forces in this indirect aggression around the world."

- A more "active program to contain Cuba abroad" by "facilitating help to those resisting the Cubans and those supported by the Cubans."

- A program of "political and symbolic support" to "democratic" Cubans who wish to see democracy restored in Cuba.

Asked whether this meant that the United States would give covert assistance to Cuban exiles to fight Castro, such as was done in the Bay of Pigs operation, Menges declined to be specific.

But he said that such support could be indirect through other "democratic governments and transnational institutions." He said the administration was not promising immediate military aid to the exiles.

"I emphasize the word 'consider' ... and I emphasize political and symbolic support in talking about that element of the comprehensive approach," he said.

Menge suggested that this support would not necessarily involve Cuban exiles in the United States. "If one looks around the world," he said, "there are a number of democratic Cuban exiles in many countries, not only in the United States.

"One of the important elements of a comprehensive policy toward Cuba can be an effort by transnational organizations, private institutions and others to maintain the integrity of the democratic ideal," he said.

Menges did not say whether the administration would abrogate understandings with the Soviet Union

dating to the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. The understandings reportedly prevent the United States from sponsoring attacks on Cuba as long as the Soviets do not reintroduce nuclear weapons there.

Menges also would not comment on whether the administration would seek the repeal of congressional restrictions prohibiting CIA assistance to such rebel forces as those fighting the Cuban-backed regime in Angola.

Elaborating on plans to deepen Castro's isolation, Menges said the administration will increase efforts to persuade Western European allies to cool their relations with Cuba by making them aware of Havana's "internal repression and brutality and its external aggression."

Menges also indicated that pressure would be put on international banks and financial institutions to deny or tighten credit to Havana. "The effort [is] to assure that the Cuban regime does not receive from Western democratic countries means with which it then conducts indirect aggression," he said.