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ON PAGE 1A

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# Castro says aid to rebels in El Salvador will continue

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Fidel Castro's top intelligence operations officer recently made clear Cuba would continue its aid to the Salvadoran Marxist rebels and other insurgent forces in Latin America despite conciliatory gestures toward Washington, according to U.S. intelligence sources.

That on-going support of anti-Western insurgencies comes at a time when Cuba's growing economic problems forced it to soften its image toward officials in the United States, West Europe and Latin America, according to the same sources.

In a previously unpublished report made available to The Washington Times, Manuel Pineiro, Cuba's chief of subversive activities in the Western Hemisphere, is quoted as conveying this information to a visiting U.S. official two months ago.

U.S. intelligence analysts conclude that Cuba will do nothing to undercut either the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua or the Marxist rebels in El Salvador and will continue arming and training terrorists in Chile and Guatemala.

The analysts also believe that Mr. Castro's recent interest in negoti-

ations is a tactic designed to preserve a Salvadoran insurgency now on the defensive and to buy time for the Sandinista rulers in Managua.

They also believe it gives the Cuban dictator a "veneer of statesmanship" which provides him the "self-assumed right" to judge which governments in Central America are legitimate.

Meanwhile, Havana's economy, which last year showed signs of life after two slow years, stumbled again and Mr. Castro last December called for more exports, fewer imports and held out the prospect of 15 more years of austerity.

A major reason for the Cuban dictator's switch was heavy pressure from the Soviet Union. Officials from Moscow last summer attacked the Cuban economy as wasteful and unrealistic.

Soviet officials told Havana that

20 years of food rationing was an embarrassment to the socialist cause, and criticized Cuban hard-currency purchases of machinery from the West rather than from the Soviet bloc.

Analysts believe, however, that the new measures while reducing economic growth will not achieve Mr. Castro's ambitious new targets, especially greatly increased exports to Western countries.

Mr. Castro's prescription of more austerity comes at a time when a Cuban government poll shows sharp discontent with the quality and availability of housing, transportation, restaurants and other services, the analysts said.

American intelligence indicates the Soviet Union has in recent years backed its displeasure over Cuban economic performance with a leveling off of aid from \$4.7 billion in 1982, to \$3.8 billion in 1984.

Analysts point out that Cuba's new economic problems impel Mr. Castro to adopt a new diplomatic strategy designed to lessen his isolation in Latin America with improved relations with Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. All four countries

had recent elections in which the winners are to the left of their predecessors.

Mr. Castro also met recently with a stream of high-level Western visitors, convincing each in turn of his willingness to negotiate all differences between Washington and

Havana, according to the same sources.

Analysts believe the Cuban dictator has successfully been raising "unrealistic hopes of weaning him away from the U.S.S.R.," while "perpetuating the myth that Cuban-U.S. frictions are solely the result of Washington's intransigent hostility."

He is also reported to have convinced in January three foreign ministers from the so-called Contadora group — Colombia, Panama, Mexico, Venezuela — that he had upbraided the Nicaraguan comandantes for being too intransigent in settling Central America's problems.

Mr. Castro is said to have informed Guillermo Ungo, chief of the political arm of the Salvadoran rebels, to form an "alliance" with President Jose Napoleon Duarte.

Analysts also believe Mr. Castro may attempt less orthodox diplomatic measures such as trying again to settle the 5-year-old Iran-Iraq war in the hope that peace will bring construction contracts from both countries providing jobs for Cuban workers and add to his international stature.

U.S. analysts warn, however, that they see no evidence that the Castro regime would make any concessions

that would prevent the Sandinistas from assuming unchallengeable power in Nicaragua or would undercut the political and military strength of El Salvador's guerrillas.

U.S. analysts believe that while Mr. Castro pushes his diplomatic offensive, he may be more "judicious" in launching new insurgencies. Other forms of meddling, including the training of trade union officials, and backing favored politicians with cash, however, are not ruled out.

Analysts, however, are concerned that the Cuban dictator's tactic of apparent reconciliation with the United States will help him to improve rapidly relations with other Latin American countries — many of which have had non-existent or strained relations with Havana since the late 1970s.

According to the report, the Cubans will attempt to "stampede" Latin American leaders into full relations with Cuba by playing on their fear that U.S. reconciliation with the Cuban regime will leave them behind facing left-wing opinion at home.

But analysts also hold out the prospect that relations could worsen if Radio Marti incites the Cuban people to revolt.