

Mia News  
12 July 1972

→ CUBAN R.F.L.

# Pepper: U.S. shouldn't block exiles' efforts to invade Cuba

JUL 12 1972

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Miami News Reporter

U.S. Congressman Claude Pepper, following a meeting with Cuban exile leaders yesterday, told The Miami News that the United States should not hinder exiles' efforts to conduct raids or to invade Cuban shores.

"If I were the policeman," the Dade Democrat said, "I'd look the other way."

He made the comment in response to claims by Cubans at a rally yesterday that the U.S. Coast Guard has hindered efforts of exiles to conduct raids on the Cuban coast.

Pepper, however, was hesi-

tant about committing the United States to overt support of the exiles in any revolutionary efforts against Cuban Communist dictator Fidel Castro.

"Supporting them raises some questions," Pepper said. "I would not want us to take the responsibility for (guaranteeing) operations like the Bay of Pigs."

Pepper made his comments following a brief meeting with some 500 Cubans who had amassed outside Miami Beach Convention center, where the Democratic Party was holding its national convention.

One of the planks in the

party's approved platform states "... the time has come to re-examine our relations with Cuba and to seek a way to resolve this cold war confrontation on mutually acceptable terms."

Pepper said he was opposed to the plank and would fight it or any other proposal that would "hold out a hand to Castro."

"He is a danger to the freedom and security of the Western Hemisphere," Pepper told the gathered Cubans.

He urged them to continue their efforts "and one day we will rid the hemisphere of that scourge."

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