

Conservative pressure brings U.S. review of '62 accords on Cuba

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WASHINGTON — Responding to pressure from conservative Republican senators, the Reagan Administration has agreed to conduct a limited review of the U.S.-Soviet understandings that grew out of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

The accord between President Kennedy and Premier Nikita Khrushchev, defusing a crisis that had put the superpowers on the brink of war, reportedly stipulated that Moscow would not re-introduce nuclear weapons into Cuba, in return for U.S. agreement not to invade the island.

An administration official, asking not to be quoted by name, said a review was ordered by Secretary of State George Shultz in preparation for an appearance before a Senate subcommittee on the issue.

Administration and congressional sources acknowledged that the review was inspired more by domestic politics than by any indication that the Soviets might be violating the understandings.

The sources said that one of the goals of the conservatives is to force Shultz to toughen his attitude — in the belief that the secretary and the State Department are soft on Fidel Castro, and unwilling to confront the Soviet Union over alleged violations of the accords.

"There is no full-scale review," said one State Department official, adding that the examination is to

determine what type of military hardware Havana has received from Moscow, and whether it is covered by the understandings.

"Every time the Soviets send some new military supplies into Cuba, you can assume that we check to see if the accords are being honored," the official said. "So, in a sense, we are constantly conducting a review of the accords."

According to information available now, the Soviets in 1962 were in the process of deploying 42 intermediate-range SS4 and SS5 ballistic missiles in Cuba, along with 42 light bombers, for a total of 84 nuclear delivery systems. Only 28 of them were operational in Cuba at the time of the crisis in October 1962.

The conservatives are trying to force the administration to declare publicly that the Soviets are breaking the 1962 understandings through the introduction to Cuba of systems capable of delivering or carrying nuclear warheads — although not necessarily the warheads themselves.

Senators Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Steven Symms and James McClure of Idaho, among others, also suggest that the Soviets may be considering re-introduction of nuclear missiles to Cuba. U.S. officials say they have no information to confirm this.

After a review of the understandings, Shultz is expected to present the findings at a special Senate

hearing convened later in the summer by Helms as chairman of the Western Hemisphere Affairs subcommittee, said Christopher Manion, a Helms aide.

Manion said that Shultz initially was reluctant to address Helms' concerns.

Manion said Shultz finally agreed to testify because of pressure by Helms, his colleagues and conservative elements in the White House and the Pentagon.

Conservative senators believe that at some point the administration should make a declaration disavowing the accords. A logical extension of such an action, said an aide to one of the senators, is that the United States then would be free of any obligation to guarantee the security of the Cuban government.

In other words, the aide said, the United States then could launch an invasion of Cuba or — as some Cuban exile leaders have proposed — resume covert operations against Castro.