

AIRLIFT CHALLENGED

Rep. Bill Clay, D-Mo., will write President Nixon next week urging him to terminate the Cuban airlift, which brings about 1,000 refugees into this country each week.

Clay's opposition to the refugee airlift is based upon a private staff memo which charges that it "constitutes an outright subsidization of the Cuban government welfare program.

"This policy of accepting and bearing the expense of those who are either unwanted, unneeded, or uncomfortable within the confines of their country has no basis," declares the memo. "We are trying to solve the social problems of an enemy nation."

The airlift was begun by President Johnson in 1965 to offer safe, quick passage for a stream of refugees who had been trying to get out of Cuba since Fidel Castro seized control in 1959.

Borne by Taxpayers

Most of the expense is borne by the taxpayers who spent \$87 million last year on the entire refugee program. The budget request for the next fiscal year is \$112 million.

All refugees now coming in signed up to leave Cuba before May 1, 1966. About 73,000 persons are believed to remain on the list. They are subject to reprisal and would be left at Castro's mercy if they aren't permitted to come to this country, say the officials.