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Hint on Return of Navy Base

by Jay Mallin
Copley News Service

Miami Beach - The United States may give up its naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as the first step in reopening relations with that Communist country.

This intriguing possibility has been raised by the remarks of the U.S. commander of the base, Rear Adm. Leo B. McCuddin. Though couched in diplomatic terms, they go farther than any former U.S. statement in accepting what has been a long-term Communist demand.

The admiral's unusual call for a rapprochement with Cuba was contained in two remarks made to a Miami reporter. The admiral said, first, that U.S. relinquishment of the base is "not beyond the realm of possibility, but for the foreseeable future we will be staying here."

This is the first time, so far as is known, that an American official has even voiced the possibility that the United States might give up its naval base at Guantanamo.

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McCuddin also reportedly called for resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba.

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... Whether McCuddin's statement had prior approval from Washington was not known, but in view of the sensitive position he holds it was not deemed likely he would say these things without at least a tacit OK.

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