

Carter Vows

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President Carter, unable to eliminate a Soviet "combat brigade" from Cuba by diplomatic means, last night unveiled a series of regional and worldwide countermeasures.

The president also renewed his appeal for approval of the strategic arms accord with the Soviets, despite the disagreement over the troops in Cuba, to avert the ultimate threat of nuclear conflict, which he called "the greatest danger to American security."

Carter's actions, ranging from increased U.S. surveillance activities and economic aid programs to increased U.S. military readiness, maneuvers and headquarters, were designed to avoid posing a physical threat to Moscow or Havana and to avoid a military response on their part.

"We do not face any immediate, concrete threat that could escalate into war or a major confrontation," the president said near the beginning of his televised address.

Carter's explanations and announcements were the culmination of a month of political turmoil and diplomatic negotiations touched off by U.S. intelligence findings that a Soviet force of 2,000 to 3,000 men, organized and equipped for combat, has been established on the Caribbean island.

Despite some assurances obtained through an exchange of confidential messages with Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev and through negotiations with Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko, Carter's countermeasures were a tacit admission that diplomacy had failed to produce an acceptable settlement of the dispute.

Readiness, No

There was every indication that the Soviet force, which the Soviets and Cubans say is a "training center" established in 1962, will remain in Cuba.

Carter described his counteractions as an effort to preserve peace, assure and assist U.S. allies in the Western Hemisphere and demonstrate U.S. ability to defend its interests.

"I have concluded that the brigade issue is certainly no reason for a return to the Cold War," he declared.

His speech was addressed to Senate deliberations on the strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT II) as well as to diverse audiences of friend and foe abroad and to the American public in a pre-election period.

In recognition of this, Carter's message was a balanced combination of assurances

and actions about the Soviet brigade and appeals to the Senate for approval of SALT II.

Carter did not describe in detail the U.S. intelligence that led to the conclusion, announced by Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) Aug. 30 and confirmed by the State Department the next day, that a Soviet combat brigade was in Cuba. Nor did he present a definite finding about how long the unit had been there, saying it was there "probably since the mid-1970s and possibly even longer."

The brigade is not an assault force, has no airborne or seaborne capability, and "presents no direct threat to us," the president said.

Nonetheless, he described it as "a serious matter" to the United States, saying "it contributes to tension in the Caribbean and Central American region."

Cold War

Disclosing for the first time the results of three weeks of diplomatic negotiations, Carter listed assurances that he said were given to him "from the highest levels of the Soviet government."

Reporters were told these assurances grew out of a message to Carter from Brezhnev last Thursday, the same day as Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance's final meeting with Gromyko in New York. Brezhnev was responding to a direct message from Carter two days earlier.

One key assurance was that the Soviets, who insist that their force is a training center, "will not change its function or status." Carter added that the United States "understands" that the Soviets do not intend to enlarge the unit or give it additional capa-

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ilities, but he made no claim that the Soviets agree to this U.S. understanding.

Another key assurance cited by Carter was a Soviet statement that its personnel in Cuba "are not and will not be a threat to the U.S. or to any other nation."

Carter called the Soviet assurances "significant" but said he would not rest upon these statements alone.

The U.S. countermeasures, which were the subject of intense debate within the adminis-

tration, were limited to the Latin American region or to generalized action of a non-threatening nature.

Carter's announced list did not include a rumored U.S. prod to the Soviets in their most sensitive area, their long border with their communist archrival, the People's Republic of China. However, administration officials yesterday confirmed reports leaked over the weekend that Secretary of Defense Harold Brown soon will make an official visit

to Peking, a significant step toward a U.S.-Chinese military relationship.

Actions Carter announced involving the Latin region were:

- Increased surveillance of Cuba. No details were given, but there was speculation this could involve a resumption of the regular spy plane overflights that were canceled by Carter as a gesture of goodwill at the time of his inauguration as president.

- Diplomatic assurances to Latin nations that "the United States will act in response

to a request for assistance in meeting any . . . threat from Soviet or Cuban forces."

- Establishment of a permanent Caribbean Joint Task Force headquarters at Key West, Fla., to replace an interim task force.

- Expanded military maneuvers in the region on a regular basis. For the foreseeable future, these will involve about 3,500 U.S. military personnel, including Marines.

- An unspecified increase in U.S. aid to Caribbean nations to meet "economic and human needs" and help countries "resist so-

cial turmoil and possible communist domination."

Measures announced by Carter outside the region were:

- An increased capability of "rapid deployment forces" assigned by the Pentagon to meet contingencies anywhere in the world.

- A continuing reinforcement of the U.S. naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

- Enhanced worldwide intelligence capability to monitor Soviet and Cuban military activities.

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