

# Cuba Stance Eased

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President Ford yesterday signaled a significant softening in the oft-repeated public U.S. stand opposing a relaxation of economic and political sanctions against Cuba.

The President laid heavy stress on U.S. action "in concert with" members of the Organization of American States, where there has been a strong surge of support for ending the 1964 hemispheric sanctions against the Cubans.

Official analysts here concede that as many as two-thirds of the OAS permanent council — certainly a majority — are now prepared to vote for an end to the economic blockade and support restoration of diplomatic relations with Havana.

OAS Secretary-General Galo Plaza of Ecuador acclaimed Mr. Ford's statement on Cuba and observed that "it is clear that a majority of the countries [in OAS] are now willing to lift the sanctions against Cuba."

He added that it is "highly satisfying to hear that President Ford intends to act through the mechanisms of the OAS."

The President said that U.S. policy toward Cuba "is determined by the sanctions voted by the Organization of American States, and we abide by those actions that were taken by the members of that organization."

He also said that the United States would exercise the option "to change our policy" if, as he put it, "Cuba changes its policy toward us and toward its Latin neighbors." In pursuing any such action, he added, "we would certainly act in concert with the other members of the OAS."

It is widely conceded at official levels in Washington that the Cubans long ago abandoned the effort to export socialist revolution elsewhere in the hemisphere. The chief political justification for the 1964 sanctions was to repel the spread of insurrectionary socialist movements from Havana to other Latin American countries.

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger in the past has suggested to Latin American foreign ministers that they not rush the Cuban issue to confrontation.

There was also apprehensiveness within the administration about the effect of an abrupt reversal on Cuban policy before the November elections. Mr. Ford's statement yesterday was the first hint of a new flexibility on the question.

See DIPLOMACY, A19, Col. 7

# President Signals An Easing on Cuba

## DIPLOMACY, From A1

OAS Secretary-General Plaza indicated yesterday that there has been strong pressure within the OAS for a meeting of the permanent council within the next two months to deal with the Cuban question.

The foreign ministers of Costa Rica, Venezuela and Columbia have been pressing for OAS action designed to normalize Cuba's political place in the hemisphere. Venezuela was the initiator of the 1964 motion in the OAS to impose the sanctions against Havana.

Panama quietly last week sent a full diplomatic mission to Havana, ending the 10-year rupture of relations with Cuba. This action is expected to be followed by other moves to restore diplomatic relations.

While most of the questions at the press conference involved domestic affairs, President Ford dealt with several other foreign policy issues.

Mr. Ford said that an effort is under way to develop a U.S. position for the next round of Strategic Arms Limitation talks. Pentagon and State Department officials said negotiations will resume in Geneva in the second half of September.

The President said that there is now "an effort being made to bring the Department of Defense, the State Department and others together for a resolution

of . . . the United States position regarding SALT II. This decision will be made in the relatively near future. I don't think there is any basic difficulty that cannot be resolved internally within our government."

Differences were known to have existed between Secretary of State Kissinger and Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger as to the timing and tactics on a SALT agreement prior to the last Moscow summit. These were superseded by the decision to conclude a 10-year agreement. Administration officials say the current discussions within the U.S. government have not reached a point where there are fixed departmental positions that require a presidential decision.

President Ford said Kissinger would be meeting with representatives from the Soviet Union "in the near future, I think in October." This was a reference to a trip Kissinger is planning in late October to discuss with Soviet leaders prospects for a SALT agreement.