

Doubts Voiced About Carter's Goals

Soviets: Cuban Issue Clouds U.S. Ties

By Kevin Klose
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MOSCOW, Sept. 28—A senior Soviet official said today that the diplomatic standoff involving Cuba has raised "many doubts" about the Carter White House. He hinted that Moscow may be approaching a point at which it feels it can no longer work constructively with the Carter administration on major international issues.

In an exclusive interview with The Washington Post, Georgi Arbatov, alternate member of the Soviet Central Committee and adviser to President Leonid Brezhnev, made it clear that the Soviet Union has no inclina-

tion to make any move of its own that would resolve the "fabricated issue" of Soviet combat troops in Cuba.

Arbatov said he would not exclude the possibility that Soviet-American relations will worsen over the issue, adding, "This is a painful fact which we have to face."

The issue, he said, has now raised here "many doubts about the goals of American policy, what the Americans are up to, what do they want, how you can understand this vacillation in their policy and whether they really are partners with whom you can do this tremendously important job of lessening (world) tensions."

He said it was up to the Carter administration to show "enough wisdom and statesmanship" and revive Soviet-American relations "without serious damage to the serious issues which face us."

Underlying Arbatov's remarks, apart from restatement of uneven bilateral relations during the 2½-year Carter presidency, was a feeling that the two countries are reaching a crossroads on the Cuban issue that will affect their relations through 1980.

Arbatov gave the interview on grounds that he be quoted solely as head of Moscow's Institute on the

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U.S.A. and Canada, the main American affairs think tank, and not as a government official. However, it is unthinkable that Arbatov can speak independently, given the nature of the Soviet system.

With Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko flying home tonight after apparently unsuccessful talks with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance at the United Nations, there was an air of expectancy here about the next U.S. move to be disclosed by President Carter Monday night.

The president reaffirmed Tuesday in Cuba included a combat brigade despite Soviet denials and said he would take action "to change the status quo" if the Vance-Gromyko talks fail.

President Carter has met with his senior foreign policy aides three times since Thursday night on the Soviet brigade in Cuba. The White House announced that Carter will address the nation on the subject Monday night. Meetings of former high officials ad-

vising Carter are continuing. See story A20.]

There is no detectable crisis atmosphere in Moscow tonight because neither side is comparing the situation to the Kennedy-Khrushchev nuclear missile showdown of October 1962. There is no indication that strategists in either capital are contemplating anything remotely resembling use of force. On the contrary, what makes this particular crisis unique is that both sides have not spoken in terms of any military action.

But as Soviet advisers here analyze the crisis from Moscow's viewpoint, they say they fear the Carter administration will not be able to extricate itself from a dilemma they blame Washington for starting—with the attendant danger of progressive and serious deterioration of overall Soviet-American relations.

As one specialist among a circle of



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GEORGI ARBATOV

... warns of "serious damage"

senior advisers put it, he fears that Carter, "in the politically supercharged domestic atmosphere, has trapped himself in a position exposed to political attack for any facesaving formula he can devise. This automatically pressures him to act tougher towards us to develop his credibility as a firm, strong leader."

Other officials here see in the Cuban issue and other American moves since the SALT II summit in Vienna in June a mosaic that when pieced together spells a return by the United States to the Cold War concept that

Washington must deal with the Soviets 'from a position of strength.' Though Americans may reject that construction, this is the kind of talk to be heard from Soviet analysts here.

Arbatov voiced both these notions of present Soviet thought on the current situation and the future of *razriadka*, or relaxation is termed in Russia.

"What can we do from our side in this situation? We haven't aggravated it, we have been very restrained during this period. We don't change our policy simply because somebody created this issue."

He flatly rejected the American view that the United States has a special interest in the Caribbean area stemming from the Monroe Doctrine. The Soviets are in Cuba at the invitation of Fidel Castro's "sovereign state," he asserted. "I understand many people don't like our military personnel being in Cuba, they don't like Cuba, they don't like us. But issues of international politics can't be resolved on the basis of such emotions . . . It is impossible to adjust foreign policy to political life in another country. We never demanded it from the U.S. and it is not just to demand it from us."

The Soviets have said Vice President Mondale made anti-Soviet remarks during his recent visit to Moscow's archrival China, and that American moves to expand its arsenals are part of the pattern that emerges as a much tougher American stance.

"Some wanted to create a serious situation in Soviet-American relations," Arbatov said. "After the summit, quite a number of anti-Soviet issues were raised and (there is) an attempt at a campaign to destroy the achievement that took so much time and labor."

"We had a very important result at the summit. And only a few months has elapsed since then and we see al-

ready a lot of difficulties, one campaign after another."

Arbatov took the position that since the issue of the troops is artificial, the Soviets are powerless to do anything to resolve the situation, even though it threatens wider troubles in the relationship. "From our point of view, we simply have a blown-up case created without any reason. It can be very harmful."

While accepting Carter's formula that the two nations are engaged in mutual competition and cooperation and conceding that the Kremlin has had severe differences with other U.S. administrations, Arbatov nevertheless termed the Kremlin-Carter experience "very uneven, very uneven," rising and falling in abrupt four-to-five month cycles over the past two-and-a-half years.

Although he refused to be drawn into a specific comparison of the Carter White House with other administrations, Arbatov commented that "to prevent the (nuclear) arms race, you must have some stability, you must be sure about your partner. Our wish was to create very stable relations on an equal basis. We won't beg for it. To create good relations you have to have efforts from both sides."

Since the Soviets don't accept any responsibility for the present Cuban issue, it is consistent with this view that they think Carter has lacked skill and statesmanship in handling it. Arbatov refused to comment on this.

But he summed up his views at the end of the interview in his spacious second floor office this way: "We don't elect your presidents. We are ready to work with any president you elect. I would hope there would be enough wisdom and statesmanship produced in Washington that we can really set out of this situation without serious damage to the serious issues which face us."