

MOSCOW SCOFFS AT SUB-BASE ISSUE

Says U.S. Stirs War Fears
by Warning on Cuba

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MOSCOW, Sept. 30 — The Soviet Union scoffed today at the White House's expression of concern about possible Soviet construction of a strategic submarine base in Cuba. It accused the United States of fanning a "war psychosis."

An authoritative commentary in Pravda, the Communist party paper, constituted Moscow's first public reaction to a warning by the White House last Friday about the implications for Soviet-American relations if such a base were built.

In Washington, United States officials, including members of the intelligence community, have expressed puzzlement over the charges, noting that these had been based on dubious and dated information.

The White House accusation have not been reported in the Soviet Union, and Pravda did not explicitly deny that anything was going on in Cuba. It only alluded to the White House's concern by saying:

"It is clear to anyone that the furor about preparations in Cuba that supposedly threaten United States security has been raised for a definite purpose."

Since the average Russian probably knew nothing about the Cuban affair, it was clear that Pravda's remarks were aimed directly at the United

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States.

Pravda also dismissed as another "concocted invention" previous United States charges of Soviet complicity in reported Egyptian violations of the Suez cease-fire accord in the Middle East.

The Pravda article, written by Georgi Ratiiani, head of the newspaper's American desk, said the United States knew "perfectly well that the Soviet Union is persistently and vigorously striving for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and if Washington wanted such a settlement just as sincerely the problem would have been solved long ago."

The Times of London was quoted as having suggested that the Cuban matter had been raised to "create a favorable atmosphere" for the Congressional elections and the current trip to Europe by President Nixon.

"And so why the fuss?" Pravda asked. "Only for the purpose of artificially aggravating the international situation, creating an atmosphere of military hysteria among ordinary Americans and exerting political pressure on the capitals of some other capitalist states."

Soviet media have shown irritation over Mr. Nixon's trip, particularly his visit to the Sixth Fleet. The media also have responded to caustic commentaries in the American press on Soviet intentions.

Chicago Briefing Recalled

A recent briefing in Chicago held by White House officials for newspapers there was pointed to as a source for the inspiration for the critical articles.

Pravda said that in a column last Sunday James Reston of The New York Times sought to scare readers by writing that "the times of the cold war may return."

"In an attempt to confuse readers, he wrote that something serious and dangerous was happening in Soviet-American relations," Pravda said.

"In the style of the psychological dramas of Dostoyevsky's heroes, Reston declared that a struggle was going on in Richard Nixon's mind between his former anti-Communist instincts as a cold war advocate, and his new Presidential duties."

Paraphrasing Mr. Reston's comments, Pravda said:

"The former instincts are be-

ing revived. They were provoked by the Soviet Union by its military movements in the Middle East and Cuba."

The lack of concern shown by Moscow so far about the questioning of Soviet intentions by American officials and newspapers has perturbed several senior Western diplomats.

Misreading Is Feared

Some say that Washington may be overreacting to Soviet moves, but others say that Moscow may be misreading the state of American public opinion and not taking seriously enough the effect of the alleged Middle East violations and the Cuban warning.

Most in danger, they say, are the talks on the limitation of Strategic Weapons, which are due to resume Nov. 2 in Helsinki.

A basic cause for the charges and countercharges in recent weeks has been the poor state of communications, some diplomats said. Ambassador Jacob D. Beam of the United States is virtually ignored by the Soviet leaders. He has not met with the party leader, Leonid I. Brezhnev and has had only ceremonial meetings with Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin.

A high-level meeting seems necessary to some diplomats to clear the air, and if Mr. Kosygin goes to the United Nations, he may meet Mr. Nixon. But Mr. Kosygin's plans are still undecided.

House Unit Holds Hearing

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30 (Reuters)—A House Foreign Affairs subcommittee chairman said today that it was hard to determine whether the Soviet Union was in fact establishing a submarine base in Cuba.

Representative Dante B. Fascell, Democrat of Florida, who heads the Inter-American Affairs Subcommittee, spoke with reporters after his panel had heard testimony behind closed doors from two Defense Department experts on Soviet affairs.

Mr. Fascell said the recent use of the port of Cienfuegos by visiting Soviet naval ships made the potential for establishing a submarine base more specific.

Asked whether any submarines had used the port, he replied that "the point is the Soviets are operating naval units in the Caribbean and once they start that they are going to keep it up."