

Gromyko Trip Here Stirs Talk of U.S.-Cuba Thaw

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Soviet Communist Party leader Leonid Brezhnev left Cuba yesterday after a week-long official visit during which he stressed the importance of friendly relations between East and West.

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, who accompanied Brezhnev to Cuba, flew to Washington for talks with President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

Brezhnev's comments in Cuba on peaceful coexistence and Gromyko's trip here directly from Havana fed speculation that the Soviet Union was pressing both Cuba and the United States to improve their relations.

Radio Budapest reported from Havana that Gromyko

planned to discuss ways to settle the outstanding disputes between the United States and Cuba when he meets with Kissinger.

During the past year, the Soviet media have carried favorable commentaries about U.S. legislators and others who have urged improved ties with Cuba. The magazine USA published a long article saying an improvement in relations would be in the best interests of both countries.

In the United States, a number of Republican and Democratic Congressmen, and others with an interest in Latin America have called for a thaw between the United States and Cuba. With Albania and North Korea, Cuba has been left out of the Nixon administration's drive for East-West detente.

Except for the anti-hijack-

ing treaty signed a year ago, the Nixon administration has made no move to improve relations with Cuba. The State Department has said the Castro government poses "a threat to the peace and security of the Hemisphere" because of its military ties to the Soviet Union and its encouragement of revolutionary activities in other Latin American countries.

Kissinger is scheduled to meet this month with the foreign ministers of Latin America, many of whom have urged the United States to change its policy toward Cuba.

Before the meeting in Mexico, Kissinger is scheduled to visit Panama to sign a general statement of principles on a

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new Panama Canal treaty. In the Latins' view, Panama and Cuba are the two major political problems in U.S. policy toward Latin America. If Kissinger arrived in Mexico with progress to report on both fronts, he could expect to be greeted with praise by the Latin diplomats who have been waiting for him to pull off one of his diplomatic coups in their part of the world.

Kissinger, who met Gromyko at Andrews Air Force Base, said only that the talks would deal with a number of issues, and cited the resumption of the Soviet-American strategic arms limitation talks and European security. The Middle East is also expected to be a major topic in the conversations.

Before leaving Cuba Brezh-

nev signed a joint statement with Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro. The text is to be released in Moscow and Havana on Monday or Tuesday, after Brezhnev returned home.

The Soviet leader's visit to Cuba was marked by enthusiastic receptions from large crowds of Cubans, given time off from work and school for the occasion. In this connection, it was covered on live television via a satellite system set up late last year.

Radio Havana broadcasts about the visit stressed the prospects for increased Soviet aid to the island. During the week, Brezhnev and Castro signed agreements providing for Soviet technical assistance in finding oil in Cuba and improving the country's aviation facilities and training programs.