

# FORD LINKS A SHIFT ON CUBA TO O.A.S.

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## Says U.S. Will Act Only With the Others—He Calls on Havana for First Step

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 —

President Ford said today that the United States would act in concert with the rest of the Organization of American States in any moves to improve relations with Cuba.

In his Administration's first policy statement on Cuba, Mr. Ford responded cautiously to a news-conference question, asserting that Washington's approach "was determined by the sanctions voted by the Organization of American States, and we abide by those actions."

In 1964, at the urging of the United States, the rest of the O.A.S., with the exception of Mexico, voted to end trade and to break diplomatic relations with Fidel Castro's Communist Government.

Moves are under way in the organization to lift the embargo, and Mr. Ford seemed to leave open the possibility that if a majority altered the policy, the United States might not object. He said that it was up to Cuba to change her policy first, but he was not specific.

"Now, if Cuba changes its

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policy toward us and toward its Latin neighbors, we, of course, would exercise the option depending on what the changes were to change our policy," he said. "But before we made any change, we would certainly act in concert with the other members of the Organization of American States."

State Department officials said that in recent weeks Mr. Castro had moderated his comments about the United States, apparently aware of the possibility of a new O.A.S. policy. Recently, in a broadcast over the Panama radio, he said that the resignation of President Nixon seemed to open the way to a new United States policy toward Cuba. He has insisted that as a first step, the United States had to end the trade embargo.

"We have seen a growing trend among United States circles to civilize what they call their policy toward Cuba," Mr. Castro said. "Of course, we must keep in mind that Nixon made the Cuban problem sort of personal, because Nixon was very closely connected to all the counterrevolutionary Mafia."

Recently Pat M. Holt, staff director for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, visited Cuba and met with Mr. Castro. On his return he reported that the policy of trying to isolate Cuba had failed.

The Costa Rican Foreign greda, said yesterday, that he was seeking to call a special meeting of the O.A.S. Council, representing the 23 member countries—Cuba has been excluded from the badly—to discuss lifting the embargo. Seven countries have already violated it.

### Invitation Being Weighed

In addition, Argentina has been authorized by the organization's foreign ministers to canvass member states to see if Cuba should be invited to the ministers' meeting in Buenos Aires in March. Mr. Castro, who has refused to rejoin the O.A.S., said he would attend if invited since the session will not be an official function.

On other foreign-policy questions at the news conference, Mr. Ford stressed the importance, his Administration attached to finding a Middle East settlement and its desire to resume talks on limitation of

strategic arms. [Questions 22 and 27.]

A questioner said that in 1972 Mr. Ford had advocated that the United States move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, where the Israeli Government meets. Because Jerusalem originally was an internationalized city, Washington has refused to do so.

Mr. Ford, commenting that in the current situation "I think that particular proposal ought to stand aside," said: "We must come up with some answers between Israel and the Arab nations in order to achieve a peace that's both fair and durable."

On strategic arms, the President said he expected a deci-

sion soon on differences the Administration on the position for forthcoming negotiations with the Russians.

"I don't think there's any basic difficulties that cannot be resolved internally within our Government," he said, noting that Secretary of State Kissinger would be discussing arms matters when he made a planned trip to Moscow in October.

Asked when the talks would resume, Mr. Ford, apparently forgetting that the State Department had announced that they would reconvene in Geneva next month, said they would proceed after Mr. Kissinger went to Moscow.

"I think a properly negotiated, effective strategic arms

limitation agreement is in the best interest of ourselves, the Soviet Union and a stable international situation," the President said.

To a question about the controversial Pentagon request to enlarge American facilities on the British island of Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean, Mr. Ford said he supported the move because the Soviet Union already had "three major naval operating bases" in the ocean. [Question 17.]

In testimony last month before the Senate Armed Services Committee, William E. Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, said the Russians had only limited facilities there.