

Carter Lashes Out at Cuba For Role in Zaire Invasion

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President Carter accused Cuba yesterday of training and equipping the Katangan rebels who invaded Zaire and said that Cuba must share responsibility for the bloody attack.

Carter's charges, the harshest and most explicit that his administration has directed against Cuba, were made at a news conference

soon after arriving in Chicago to address a Democratic fund-raising dinner.

His accusations, made in an opening statement, ran counter to assertions by the government of President Fidel Castro that Cuba played no role in training, equipping or cooperating with the Katangan invasion forces.

Informed sources said that the

President's statement was based on intelligence received by the administration within the last couple of days.

At the news conference, Carter bore down heavily on Soviet and Cuban military involvement in African conflicts and the question of whether the United States is able to play any countering role.

He rejected suggestions that Washington should link a new Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty talks with the Soviet Union to demands for Soviet restraint in Africa. But he warned that continued aggressive Soviet behavior on that continent would make it difficult to win approval for a SALT agreement from the American people and Congress.

Carter also reiterated administration complaints of recent days that Congress has tied the President's hands too tightly to permit an effective U.S. response in Africa and other parts of the Third World.

The President warned that he will oppose any new congressional efforts to put restrictions on the use of aid, loans and other peaceful means of exercising U.S. influence in developing countries.

His harshest words, though, were directed at Cuba.

He said: "We believe that Cuba had known of the Katangan plans to invade and obviously did nothing to restrain them from crossing the border. We also know that the

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Cubans have played a key role in training and equipping the Katangans who attacked."

Cuban officials have been denying such charges ever since the fighting in Shaba province began almost two weeks ago. At one point, Castro personally told the head of the U.S. interests section in Havana that there were no Cubans with the invading rebels.

Last Saturday, the Cuban foreign ministry issued a statement saying: "The Cuban government categorically reiterates that there do not exist now, nor have there ever existed, ties of military cooperation between Cuba and these forces; that Cuba has not furnished any military equipment to them; that Cuba has not trained them or had any part in their actions; and that there are no Cuban troops or technicians in Zaire."

In his statement, Carter also criticized the Marxist government

of Angola, saying that it "must bear a heavy responsibility for the attack which was launched from its territory."

He said that the U.S. role in the international operation to rescue people trapped by the fighting "has virtually come to an end" and added: "Our transport aircraft will be returning to their bases within the next few days."

When asked whether the United States should inject the Africa situation into the SALT negotiations, the President replied, "I think a SALT agreement is so important to our country and the safety of the entire world that we should not permit any impediment to come between us and the reaching of a successful agreement."

However, Carter added, he had no doubt that Soviet actions in Africa, plus those of its ally, Cuba, would affect the attitudes of the American people and Congress, which must approve any SALT agreement.

On the question of whether a post-Vietnam reaction has caused Congress to put too many restrictions on the President's use of foreign aid, Carter complained, "I can't compete at all, even peacefully, in Africa.

"We do not want to send our military forces into Africa to meet the challenge of Soviet and Cuban intrusion... I have no intention of getting involved in any conflict," Carter said.

But, he added, Congress has had "an increasing inclination" to restrict aid to certain countries where it is important for the

United States to have influence.

"For instance," Carter said, "last year the House tried to put restrictions on any aid to any country which produced sugar because our own country produces sugar. That might force countries who desperately desire our help to turn to the Soviet Union for it."

He cited three African countries — Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique — that have been singled out by Congress for cutoffs or restrictions in aid. "If we are prevented from giving them any aid, even food, then my hands are tied," Carter asserted.

None of these countries has been involved in recent African disputes or fighting, where the administration says there has been a Soviet or Cuban presence. In addition to Zaire, the administration's concern has been focused mainly on Soviet-Cuban aid to Ethiopia, which recently fought a war with Somalia, and to rebels operating against the transitional government in Rhodesia.

In talking about restrictive legislation, Carter cited the 1976 Clark amendment, named for Senator Dick Clark (Dem-Iowa). It forbids any direct or indirect U.S. aid to Angola without expressed congressional authorization.

However, Carter said, he is not seeking the repeal of the Clark amendment or any other legislative restrictions at this time. Instead, he added, the administration will wait for the results of a study being made by the State Department before consulting further with Congress.

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