

Soviet Troop Backdown Termed a U.S. Victory

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UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 26—The United States won a significant diplomatic victory over the past 48 hours in preventing the Soviet Union from sending "peace-keeping" troops to the Middle East, most U.N. diplomats agreed today.

But the diplomats said it could have been done at less cost. They also emphasized that the U.S. victory was no more important than the role of the nonaligned states in reasserting a United Nations role in keeping the peace.

The nonaligned nations sponsored the Security Council resolution adopted Thursday which established a new U.N. Emergency Force. It included a U.S. amendment barring the five permanent members of the council from contributing troops to the emergency force, and broke the Soviet-American monopoly on efforts to settle the crisis.

The analysis by U.N. diplomats from almost every political and geographical grouping suggests that the world-wide U.S. military alert called Thursday was an overreaction to Soviet moves. It eroded some U.S. credibility here and irritated America's NATO allies, some of whom protested that they had not been consulted before an alert that could have compelled them to action. They were informed at the last minute.

Britain dissented from this view, saying that the U.S. alert was fully justified.

The diplomats who questioned the wisdom of the military alert said the United States could have achieved the same result by relying on two diplomatic moves.

The first was a response in kind to the note sent by Soviet leader Brezhnev to President Nixon Wednesday. In his press conference tonight, the President declined to use the word "brutal" employed by Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.). But Mr.

Nixon said his "firm" reply had made plain what the United States would do if the Soviets acted unilaterally. No diplomat here revealed any knowledge of the nature of the notes.

Second was the acceptance of the nonaligned nations' initiative, modified to bar participation by permanent Security Council members in the emergency force.

The nonaligned move for an emergency force was "fantastically bold," one diplomat said, because the United Nations almost foundered on similar efforts to bring peace to Korea in the 1950s, to the Congo in the 1960s, and to the Middle East after the Sinai war of 1956.

The new UNEF is the second peace-keeping force the Security Council has established in its history. The first was in Cyprus in 1964 in a situation of much smaller explosive power.

The Congo operation was established by Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld in an effort that France, the Soviet Union and other countries claimed went far beyond the council resolution.

The Korean and 1956 Middle East UNEF efforts were established by the General Assembly at times when the Security Council could not act.

Many nations refused to pay for those peace-keeping efforts on the ground that the council had not acted.

The effort of the nonaligned nations began with a collective feeling Wednesday that the council must do something to prevent a Soviet-American "condominium" in the Middle East.

Yugoslav Ambassador Lazar Mojsov had composed a speech calling for an increase in the U.N. observer force a separate operation from UNEF, a peace-keeping force—and a possible visit to the area by a high U.M. official.

He asked Secretary General Kurt Waldheim how fast a peace-keeping operation could be assembled

from standby forces offered by many countries and Waldheim replied that it could be done in 24 hours. Mojsov then decided to suggest an emergency force in his speech.

A first draft resolution condemned Israel as the violator of the cease-fire that the council had demanded early Monday morning and for which it had renewed its call Tuesday evening.

The eight nonaligned members of the council moved to more neutral wording before consulting the permanent members. The United States indicated there would be major difficulties if they insisted on a vote Wednesday, and they agreed to wait overnight.

By Thursday morning, the United States offered the nonaligned nations the amendment to bar permanent Security Council members' participation. The nonaligned members were happy to adopt this proposal, since it met their desire to end great power monopoly.

The United States also insisted that the resolution call for the "return" rather than the "withdrawal" of all sides to the positions they held Monday evening.

The problem was then to win Soviet approval.

After consultations with Moscow, the Soviets went along, primarily for two reasons: their Egyptian clients had decided to go along because they really wanted an effective cease-fire to stave off military disaster, and they could not afford to alienate their nonaligned friends by seeming less enthusiastic than the Americans.

All groups agreed that it was a real coup for the nonaligned nations. The nonaligned members themselves took pleasure in the fact that, without lessening their support for the Arabs, they had refuted Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's remark last month about the increasing "alignment of the nonaligned."