

Key units remain on alert

By Fred S. Hoffman
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon relieved most of the 1.7 million servicemen in the United States and in the Pacific from emergency alert yesterday, but left key units at the ready in this country and Europe.

"We don't yet have all the assurances, military and diplomatic, that we need to go all the way in ending the alert," a senior official told

a reporter.

By this, he indicated the United States still is not certain that the Soviet Union has removed about 50,000 paratroopers from an alert which helped precipitate a brief crisis between the United States and Russia.

U.S. officials have said this government wants to be sure there no longer is any danger that the Russians will make a military move in the Middle East before the United States ends the alert of its forces.

President Nixon said Friday that all 2.2 million U.S. troops worldwide were placed on alert before dawn Thursday "to indicate to the Soviet Union that we could not accept any unilateral act on their part" to send troops to enforce a U.N.-ordered cease-fire between Israel and the Arab nations.

Pentagon officials said that the Army's 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, N.C., remains on alert, along with the Atlantic Command in Norfolk, Va., which

controls major fleet units.

Otherwise, the Pentagon said, all Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine units, support bases, headquarters and other elements in the United States have been taken off alert.

Also remaining on an alert status are some 320,000 U.S. troops in Europe.

There were indications that all phases of the alert probably will end by tonight.

The Pentagon began trimming down the alert early Friday after the United Nations adopted a resolution providing for a peacekeeping force in the Middle East without participation by Soviet or U.S. troops.

On Friday night Nixon announced the return to normal operations of the nation's nuclear striking forces under the Strategic Air Command and all air defense elements, including National Guard fighter squadrons and Army anti-aircraft missile batteries.