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(SOVIET TROOPS)

(BY NICHOLAS DANILOFF)

WASHINGTON (UPI) - SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE TODAY CONFIRMED THAT MOSCOW HAS BOLSTERED ITS MILITARY PRESENCE IN CUBA BUT DENIED THIS VIOLATES U.S.-SOVIET UNDERSTANDINGS THAT DATE FROM THE 1962 CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS.

VANCE DISCLOSED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER RAISED ISSUE OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN CUBA WITH SOVIET PRESIDENT LEONID BREZHNEV AT THE VIENNA SUMMIT, WHERE THEY SIGNED THE SALT II ACCORD JUNE 18.

IN A LETTER TO SEN. RICHARD STONE, D-FLA., DATED FRIDAY, VANCE ACKNOWLEDGED SOVIET FORCES IN CUBA HAVE INCREASED, BUT NOT SUBSTANTIALLY:

"THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE OF THE SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN CUBA OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEAR OR OF THE PRESENCE OF A SOVIET MILITARY BASE," HE SAID.

"...AT THE SAME TIME, THE PRESIDENT DIRECTED THAT WE GIVE INCREASED ATTENTION TO THE SITUATION AND MONITOR IT CLOSELY. THE PRESIDENT RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN CUBA WITH PRESIDENT BREZHNEV IN VIENNA AND MADE CLEAR TO HIM THAT A SOVIET BUILDUP WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT OUR RELATIONSHIP."

VANCE SAID, HOWEVER, THE SOVIET ACTIVITY TO DATE DOES NOT VIOLATE UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED IN 1962 AND 1970 CONCERNING RUSSIAN PRESENCE IN CUBA.

STONE - WHO CALLED THAT ANALYSIS "A WHITENASH" - HAD WRITTEN TO CARTER AFTER LEARNING THAT U.S. INTELLIGENCE HAS DETECTED A SOVIET MILITARY COMMAND GROUP IN CUBA CAPABLE OF DIRECTING BRIGADE-SIZED FORCES.

PRESS REPORTS IN RECENT DAYS HAVE SUGGESTED THERE ARE UP TO 6,000 SOVIET COMBAT TROOPS IN CUBA, BUT STONE DECLINED TO COMMENT ON TROOP NUMBERS BECAUSE THE DATA IS CLASSIFIED.

(over)

THE FLORIDA DEMOCRAT, WHO FACES RE-ELECTION IN 1990, HAD HARSH WORDS ABOUT VANCE'S LETTER.

"IF THE RESPONSE AS TO A LIKELY VIOLATION IS TO EXCUSE THEM, TO ALIBI THEM, TO SWEEP IT UNDER THE RUG, THEN I SAY IT IS A WHITEWASH!" HE SAID.

"IF WE ACCEPT A SMALL BASE, THEN WE HAVE NO STANDING TO OBJECT WHEN IT BECOMES A BIG BASE," HE SAID AT A NEWS CONFERENCE.

"THIS IS NOT CALCULATED TO INCREASE MY CONFIDENCE ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S DETERMINATION TO CALL THE SOVIETS ON A VIOLATION AND COMPEL COMPLIANCE."

UNDER THE 1962 UNDERSTANDING THAT ENDED THAT YEAR'S CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, THE SOVIETS DISMANTLED THE INTERMEDIATE RANGE MISSILES THAT THREATENED THE UNITED STATES AND AGREED NOT TO INTRODUCE OFFENSIVE WEAPONS INTO CUBA. THE UNITED STATES IN TURN PROMISED NOT TO ATTACK CUBA.

IN 1970, THE SOVIETS AGREED NOT TO BUILD A MILITARY BASE IN CUBA AFTER THE UNITED STATES PROTESTED WHAT APPEARED TO BE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FACILITY TO SERVICE NUCLEAR MISSILE SUBMARINES. (4)

STONE SAID THAT, IN THE ONGOING SALT HEARINGS, HE WOULD CONTINUE TO TEST THE ADMINISTRATION'S DETERMINATION TO CALL THE RUSSIANS ON POTENTIAL FUTURE VIOLATIONS OF THE SALT TREATY.

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