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'COERCIVE ACTIONS' ON IRAN CONSIDERED

Carter Weighing New Steps Short
of Outright Military Moves

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 12 — President Carter, acknowledging that the latest economic and political sanctions will probably not force Iran to free the hostages, says that he is considering further "coercive action" short of military force.

In an interview with out-of-town editors, conducted yesterday and made public today, Mr. Carter refused to foreclose the possible use of military power.

"We obviously have reserved for ourselves the right to use any means permitted under international law," he said, "and since we are a seriously aggrieved party with our own nationals being held and our own embassy grounds being taken, this would not foreclose the option of using military force if I decide it is necessary."

Declines to Give Details

Asked how likely such a decision was, he replied, "I would rather not comment any further."

On another matter, the President endorsed the policy, disclosed by Adm. Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence, of allowing the use of journalists for undercover work, a reversal of the policy of the Ford Administration, which barred the use of journalists.

At a convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Admiral Turner became involved in a controversy with editors opposed to the policy as jeopardizing the integrity of correspondents.

Mr. Carter said: "In a rapidly changing international situation, where on occasion our nation's own security or existence might be threatened, we do not want to publicly foreclose the option of taking certain action that might be necessary."

"I think Admiral Turner expressed the policy accurately," the President said. "We are not now using any newspeople. This would be done only under extreme circumstances and the personal approval of either Admiral Turner or myself would be required."

Mr. Carter said there was a "similar question" in using other professions such as clergymen or schoolteachers, and he

indicated that he did not want to rule out using anyone if necessary.

In the Iranian hostage crisis, the President announced on Monday that the United States was severing diplomatic relations with Iran, imposing a ban on exports, canceling outstanding visas for Iranians to enter the United States and investigating the use of \$3 billion in seized Iranian assets to pay American claims.

In the interview Mr. Carter expressed doubt that these actions on their own would compel Iran to free the Americans, 50 held at the embassy and three at the Foreign Ministry, who ended their 23d week in captivity today.

"It is hard to predict that unilateral sanctions on the part of the United States would be adequate to force them to release the hostages," he said. "I think our experience so far has indicated to the contrary. We still have additional capabilities of imposing punitive action or coercive action against Iran short of exercising our military options. We are considering what we will do next."

The United States has made an effort, so far not particularly successful, to enlist the backing of its allies. Mr. Carter, to press his case, taped an interview today that will be shown tomorrow on Western European television stations.

"If we can induce our European allies — the Japanese and others — to join with us in the imposition of sanctions and in the imposition of diplomatic restraints, then, of course, it will greatly magnify the impact of all those sanctions collectively," he told the editors.

His comments in the interview reflected the United States' dilemma in dealing with the crisis. On the one hand, Mr. Carter wants to signal the Iranians — and the allies — that he is determined to push forward on a course of steadily increasing pressure on Iran. To make such a course credible, he must include the possibility that military force — perhaps

a naval blockade or the mining of harbors — might be used ultimately.

The United States has also been aware that the use of force would endanger the lives of the hostages and cause problems in relations with Moslem countries like Pakistan, which have stated that in a military crisis they would side with Iran.

Moreover, the allies have said that a conciliatory attitude toward Iran holds a better chance of success than one of imposing harsh measures.

After the announcement of the new sanctions, the United States asked its allies to take firm measures, including the withdrawal of ambassadors and possibly the breaking of relations, but they have decided to respond differently.

Today they called on President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr of Iran to set a date for the release of the hostages. The Western ambassadors will now return home to report. This has the effect of a withdrawal of ambassadors, but the action is being taken without leaving the impression that the allies are trying to punish Iran for the hostage crisis. The Americans would prefer that the move be more punitive.

In answer to other questions from the editors on foreign policy, Mr. Carter said the United States was superior to the Soviet Union in military capability, economic capability and political influence.