

Carter, Cuba and the IMF

The caustic comments of Mexican President Lopez Portillo in a recent press conference, that the United States is being run by a "presidential precandidate, and not a President," aptly reflect world perception of the vacuum of leadership in Washington. President Carter's Oct. 1 television address to the nation, in which he attempted to extricate himself from the absurd "Cuba crisis" fanned over the past weeks by Sen. Frank Church, only took us deeper into the mess.

At stake, Carter admitted, was the future of NATO.

"The leaders of our European allies support SALT II unanimously," said Carter. "I must tell you tonight that if the Senate fails to approve the SALT treaty, these leaders and their countries would be confused and deeply alarmed. If our allies should lose confidence in our ability to negotiate successfully for the control of nuclear weapons, then our effort to build a stronger and more united NATO could fail."

Verifying this perception was a communiqué issued Oct. 2 by West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and French President Giscard d'Estaing following their Bonn meeting. "The French and German heads of state do not view the presence of Soviet troops in Cuba as having any relevance to the world balance of forces," read their blunt statement.

But the point goes far beyond SALT II. The policies that Carter announced in his speech remain a direct political-military threat to Western Europe's commitment to foster Third World economic development in cooperation with the Soviet Union.

The crux of the matter is the International Monetary Fund-World

Bank. And Carter emphasized that the issue was not Cuba at all, but Soviet and Cuban activities "in the Third World."

It cannot be lost on Europe that the entire flareup over the "Soviet troops"—troops acknowledged to have been on the island since the 1962 settlement of the Cuban Missile Crisis—coincided with the Non-aligned Movement's summit in Havana in early September. There, under Cuban leadership, IMF genocide policies were attacked by name and the developed sector was urged to invest in the economic development of the Third World. That strategic question has come to a head with the Belgrade annual IMF meeting.

The measures put forward in Carter's speech indicate U.S. readiness to intervene militarily and make sure IMF conditionalities are enforced in the developing sector. Carter said that the defense secretary has been instructed to "further enhance" the rapid deployment strike force, which is considered aimed particularly against the oil producing na-

tions. He announced expanded maneuvers in the Caribbean, and the readiness of the United States to "assist" any Western Hemisphere nation militarily, including steps to set up a Western Hemisphere military force.

Then he said that U.S. naval presence in the Indian Ocean was reinforced. The news came as other administration sources confirmed the upcoming visit of Defense Secretary Harold Brown to China, the first such trip by an American defense secretary. These are clear signals that the United States will back Chinese expansion policies throughout Asia, just as Peking is negotiating its formal entry into the IMF-World Bank.

At the very least, this means a new and devastating plunge in U.S. influence in the developing sector and in Western Europe, at a moment when the rest of the world is mapping a way out of the global crisis through economic development. The real isolationists are the people pulling the strings on "precandidate" Carter.

—Nora Hamerman

The Week in Brief

The Persian Gulf may soon see the formation of a "new CENTO" military pact in the region, according to reports received this week.

A military strategist for an Arab nation in the Gulf region summed up the situation this way: "We oil producers are being surrounded by a triangle. ... First, there is Iran, with a regime with expansionist ambitions far worse than the Shah ever had. Second, there is Oman, which wants to invite NATO police forces

into the region. Third, there is Israel, which has designs on Syria via Lebanon. Cumulatively, this is very worrisome."

In a speech to pilgrims to Mecca this week, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini invited his flocks to overthrow "the kinglets and sheiks who have departed from Islamic tradition," and announced that Iran must rebuild its military into an "all-Islamic army." These threats came only days after two of his closest collaborators