

the nation

U.S., Cuba confer on Cuba

United Press International
NEW YORK — Secretary of State Cyrus Vance said Thursday the United States' "total relationship with the Soviet Union" could be affected by the outcome of the confrontation over the deployment of Soviet troops in Cuba.

"We will assure that our interests are fully protected," Vance said in remarks prepared for a speech to the Foreign Policy Association just before a scheduled meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

"We are seeking to resolve, by

diplomatic negotiations with the Soviet Union, questions raised by the presence of these forces. We have significant interest at stake in our total relationship with the Soviet Union."

The second meeting between Vance and Gromyko followed a one-hour and 20-minute session on Monday in which Gromyko, according to American officials, was unyielding on the issue of the troops.

Following that meeting, Gromyko told the United Nations General Assembly that the U.S. charges of combat troops in Cuba are falsehoods and propaganda and that "the matter should be closed."

U.S. officials expressed the hope, in advance of the second meeting, that Gromyko's headline rhetoric was just part of the negotiating process, and that he would prove to be more flexible in the private negotiations with Vance.

"The nations of Latin America are firmly committed to the proposition that outside interference in their internal affairs must be resisted," Vance said. "We fully respect and will support that determination on their part."

U.S. officials said no meeting between Gromyko and President Carter is scheduled, but one could take place this weekend, if Gromyko shows any signs of answering the U.S. demands for a dismantling of the brigade, and dispersal of some of its combat equipment.

The Carter administration has made it increasingly clear, in private and public statements, that it is prepared to take unspecified "counter-actions" if the Soviets do not respond to the American demands.

National briefs

CAB to reject airline merger bid

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Civil Aeronautics Board Thursday indicated it would reject an application by Eastern Airlines to take over National Airlines.

The board said National's acquisition by Eastern could substantially lessen competition in the lucrative New York-Washington-Florida markets.

The board's action came in the form of instructions to its staff to prepare an order rejecting the Eastern bid.

The action apparently leaves the way clear for Pan American World Airways to take over National. Texas International, which also had been interested in acquiring National, apparently has dropped out of the running in the past few weeks and has been selling its National Airlines stock to Pan Am.

Imported subcompacts have high accident rate

WASHINGTON — The Honda Civic, Toyota Corolla, Datsun B210, Ford Mustang II and Toyota Celica are the five worst 1978 model cars in terms of injury claims resulting from accidents, the insurance industry said Thursday.

All are subcompacts and four of them are imports, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety said in releasing the figures from its Highway Loss Data Institute.

By contrast, the five best cars in terms of injury claims are large American models: the Oldsmobile Delta 88, Chevrolet Caprice, Buick LeSabre, Chevrolet Impala and Chevrolet Nova.

Chicago eyes prospect of city worker layoffs

CHICAGO — Mayor Jane M. Byrne says hundreds of city workers will be laid off Oct. 1 and more probably will follow as the city tries to trim its budget by \$1 million before the end of the year.

The mayor did not specify which departments could expect the cuts, but said Wednesday that they could be expected "throughout the city structure in all departments."

Earlier, she had said the police and fire departments would not be expected to reduce their forces. She also had discussed limiting manpower by consolidating some functions such as streets and sanitation and public works.

La. alien probe yields charges

United Press International

FARMERVILLE, La. — Authorities who filed slavery charges against a Union Parish government official said Thursday more indictments could follow their investigation into illegal alien activity in north Louisiana.

Two counts of slavery peonage — forced labor for payment of a debt — were filed against Connie Ray Alford, 40, of Truxno, La., a farmer and the finance chairman of the Union Parish Police Jury. He was arrested Wednesday and released that night on \$50,000 bond.

The slavery peonage law has been used only rarely since the Civil War.

Alford was indicted on charges of holding two illegal Mexican aliens "by the use of chains, shackles, locks and by the use of other threats and intimidations" on his poultry and cattle farm.

He also was accused of concealment of illegal aliens by allegedly hiding those two and seven other Mexicans from Immigration and Naturalization Service officers who visited the farm.

Alford could be jailed for up to 55 years and fined as much as \$18,000 if convicted on all counts.

All nine aliens were in custody at the Shreveport, La., City Jail as material witnesses in the case, said Assistant U.S. Attorney A. M. Stroud.

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"We plan at this time to provide additional information to the jury concerning the illegal activity in north Louisiana," Stroud said. The next grand jury session, scheduled for mid-October, Stroud said he doubted more indictments would be returned soon.

Despite the indictment, Alford's colleagues on the governing body — the equivalent of a county commission — said they probably would win re-election in an upcoming election.

"He'd be hard to beat even though they brought charges," said police jury president James Bennett. "He's a good man."

Alford denied the charges, saying the allegations might be politically motivated. He said he has "nothing more to do with Mexicans."

A cage was brought from a farm to the Monroe, La., post office but Alford denied using it to house any of the workers. "I never plotted or used that cage," he said.

"It doesn't even have a door," Stroud said.

Stroud said the hiring of aliens was not an offense in Louisiana. "The problem comes when you either shield them from them from the immigration authorities or hold them against will," he said.

Carter and Kennedy watch words closely

United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Carter and Sen. Edward Kennedy appear to be taking steps to keep their political skirmishing from getting personal.

Carter wrote Kennedy Wednesday to assure him he had not made any veiled references to Chappaquiddick in New York Tuesday and that any news stories implying he did were "not correct."

White House press secretary Jody Powell told UPI Carter wrote the note personally Wednesday morning after reading news accounts of the remarks, and it was hand-delivered to the senator.

At a "town meeting" in Queens Tuesday night, Carter said he never panicked in a crisis. It was the second time in a week he has made such a statement and reporters speculated he was indirectly criticizing Kennedy's actions following the drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne at Chappaquiddick 10 years ago.

Powell said the president's letter also told his potential rival "I won't make a habit of this," apparently meaning that he would not make remarks that could be misconstrued.

At the same time, it appeared the Kennedy camp also was trying to shy away from direct attacks on Carter. Tom Southwick, Kennedy's press aide, said he knew of no charge by Kennedy questioning Carter's leadership.

Southwick acknowledged "he has said people are looking for leadership," but added that, to his knowledge, Kennedy has not made a direct charge against Carter.

Kennedy, in a brief appearance Wednesday night at a reception before a Democratic fund-raising dinner, said he appreciated the let-

ter, but "I don't think it needs

sponse."

"I appreciate his sending it and were I to be a candidate I'm talking about the issues that the American people as I'm sure will be," Kennedy said.

Powell said Carter had made his own ability to stay calm in a challenge to his leadership. "His remarks should be interpreted as an attack on his body else."

Powell said the issue "wasn't against this president. If someone wants to run on leadership, we'll talk about leadership."

Houstonian changes story about Jordan

United Press International

WASHINGTON — A woman who said she saw Hamilton sniffing cocaine at a 1977 California dinner party now concedes she did not actually see the top House aide using the powder.

Attorney Irving Osher interviewed his client, Leta Rawls, for two hours Wednesday and was forced to pull back an earlier declaration that she had witnessed Jordan violate marijuana laws.

Osher said two weeks ago her client's first surfaced about Jordan's activities at two Beverly Hills parties, he asked his client, Jean Rawls of Houston, "did you see Hamilton Jordan use cocaine?"

"The answer was, 'Yes,'" Osher told UPI in a telephone interview.

But he said Rawls flew to Los Angeles and he interviewed her Wednesday, he realized she "deduced" that cocaine was used at the party — mainly because she provided the drug.

Osher said Rawls bought about a quarter of an ounce of cocaine from John Golden, a friend of Jordan's, when Golden asked her to deliver the drug at a party at Sergio's, a defunct Beverly Hills nightclub.

Osher quoted his client as saying, "I saw the cocaine as it went to Golden. I saw these people go to their back. Their various means, between 11 o'clock and 1 a.m.; the way they acted I knew they were using cocaine."

"That's the difference between direct and circumstantial evidence," Osher said.

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