Church sees hope fading for SALT approva

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The political pulse

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U. S. Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, said that in view of th Soviet aggression in Afghani tan, rejection of the SAT Treaty at this time "would be certainty."

In a telephone interview fro his Boise home where he spending the holidays, Churc told The Post-Register "the ac tion by President Carter t postpone SALT II considera tion by the Senate is in line with my own position.

"If the treaty were to be taken up at this time, the senators would not judge it on its own merits. Moreover, the Soviets need to know that they cannot expect to do business as usual with the United States while they are engaging in aggression that could threaten our vital interest."

Although the treaty now has been put on the back burner, Church said he still thinks it is a good one, and could protect the United States' security.

"Although I have said that since the commencement of the Iranian crisis that its consideration by the Seante should be postponed, I feel strongly that the president signed the treaty, believing it to be in the best interest of the United States.

Good treaty

"I concur with the judgment of the military chief of state that this country is better off with the treaty than it is without it.

"We didn't enter into the treaty as a favor to the USSR or because we trusted the Russians, or because the Russians approved, or because we approved of the Soviets behavior.

"The treaty rests upon our recognition that we must slow down the nuclear competition between the two nations. If the nuclear race is not checked it will ultimately lead to oblivion."

Church said the "treaty never depended in any degree on the trust of the Russians," adding "our nation has its own means of verifying the Russian compliance."

He pointed out that his support of the treaty is contingent on the withdrawal of Russian combat troops from Cuba and the assurance that they are not a threat in the Western Heimsphere.

Hostage problem

In the interview, Church said he also approves of the manner in which President Carter is seeking release of the American hostages in Iran.

He pointed out that "any rescue operations could only result in the massacre of the hostages."

Church pointed out that with the Soviet army in Afghanistan, the Iranians now are aware that the real enemy is not the United States but the USSR.

"They realize there is a need to settle their problems with us, and that can be done by release of the hostages," he said.

Church observed "it is significant that mobs are now taking to the streets in Tehran to shout against the defeat not only of the United States bu also the USSR."

He pictured the Russian invasion of Afghanistan as a serious threat to woeld peace but asserted that the "United States stands ready to protect its resources and interest in the oil rich Persian Gulf.

Church has speaking engagements in the Boise Valley, Twin Falls and Lewiston this week, and plans to leave Jan. 11 for Washington. Congress is to convene the week of Jan. 31. His wife, Bethine, is accompanying him.