

'Solidarity'

ap/80

reaffirmed

by Mexico

From Lionel Martin
in Havana

PS
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President Jose Lopez Portillo of Mexico and Fidel Castro of Cuba issued a joint communique yesterday in which Mexico backed Cuban demands that the United States withdraw from its

Guantanamo naval base in eastern Cuba, end its trade embargo against the island and stop violating Cuban airspace.

Mr Lopez Portillo concluded a 24-hour visit here yesterday during which he held a series of talks with Dr Castro on Central America and the Caribbean areas where "America is tense, on the point of exploding," according to the two presidents.

"Any nation that has been assaulted as Cuba has been deserves our solidarity," the Mexican President told a news conference shortly before leaving.

When asked if Mexico's policy might bring a negative response from the United States he answered: "I don't know, I don't think so, I hope not," and added, "It would be lamentable if these expressions of solidarity could cause such an infantile reaction."

At one point, the President admitted that his policy might be running "against the current" but said he didn't mind because it was based on moral principles. "We can't allow any nation to be treated violently and arbitrarily," he said. "We don't want for others what we don't want for ourselves."

Nowhere did the Mexican President make statements that could be interpreted as an endorsement of Cuba's Communist system. What his policy statements implied was that Cuba was not a threat and that close ties between Havana and Mexico City were beneficial.

Mr Lopez Portillo was praised by Fidel Castro for having announced his visit to Cuba last April, in a moment when Cubans had taken refuge in the Peruvian embassy here and when there was, according to Castro, "a ferocious campaign against Cuba."