P.S. to the NEWS

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THE SALT-SELLING CAMPAIGN

Among the new shows opening on the road before being staged in New York or Washington, D.C., is one that might be entitled "The Selling of SALT II." One road company opened recently on a local Los Angeles television station and another in St. Louis before a national convention and the media.

After the actors have sufficiently polished their lines and their repartee for several months in such local appearances, they can be expected to be ready for star performances on national television and under the klieg lights of the Senate ,Foreign Relations Committee when it holds hearings on SALT II next spring.

The Los Angeles road company featured Leslie H. Gelb, the State Department officer in charge of politico-military affairs. Translated, that means he is the State Department functionary in charge of selling the American public on policies that the State Department is trying to force on the Defense Department. He appeared in a two-part television news interview filmed at the State Department and shipped. to Los Angeles station KABC-TV for airing.

The St. Louis road company featured ex-SALT negotiator Paul C. Warnke, whom the Carter Administration dispatched to sell SALT II to the U.S. mayors at their annual convention, followed up by an hour's interview on radio station KMOX.

These were the opening gambits of the new SALT marketing campaign, engineered in the Situation Room of the White House. That is the room where the President would hold his emergency conference if.the Soviets ever push the nuclear button. In the interim, it is being used as the headquarters for meetings of the same sales team that put over the Panama Canal Treaties and is now orchestrating a repeat performance for the as-yet-unsigned SALT treaty.

Some might have thought that Carter dropped Warnke from the SALT negotiating team in order to aid prospects of getting the treaty ratified by the Senate, since Warnke is far too soft-line for the tastes of most Senators. Warnke, however,

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made it clear that he is not about to be kept in the closet while his handiwork is being debated. On KMOX Radio, he proudly proclaimed, "They are not going to hide the fact that I was a SALT negotiator. It will bear my marks.[11]

In the Situation Room cell meetings, plans have already been made to involve NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) in the SALT marketing campaign. Anne Wexler, White House liaison with special-interest groups, and Gerald Rafshoon, Carter's media adviser, are both part of the operation, and a meeting for women's group leaders has already been held.

Among the NGOs involved in the SALT-selling campaign will be the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, with which more than 70 organizations are cooperating. Its agenda includes cancelling the cruise missile, the M-X ICBM, the Mark 12A warhead, and the neutron bomb.

A model for action by the disarmament lobby is the successful operation last year of the National Campaign to Stop the B-1 Bomber, made up of 37 organizations from Conman Cause to the War Resisters League. It had offices in Washington, D.C., and was assisted by the tax-exempt Ameri.can Friends Service Conmittee.

The disarmament lobby uses all the standard tactics to manufacture a synthetic showing of support for its legislative objective; canned letters for supporters to sign and send to newspaper editors and to Congressmen, petitions, telephone campaigns, sample resolutions for passage at local meetings of clubs and organizations, Asample press releases for every major happening.

A special effort was made to gear the B-1 issue to special-interest groups and they, in turn, agitated their members with the appropriate trigger words. For example, the National Taxpayers Union claimed that the B-1 represented wasteful spending. The Environmental Actfon Foundation claimed that the B-1 would damage the ozone layer (even though it is designed to fly at low altitudes).

In the words of the old axiom, good wine needs no bush. If SALT II were a good deal for America, it would not need such expensive taxpayer-financed packaging and propaganda. The fact is, it is a bad deal for America that will make permanent the Soviet superiority in numbers of ICBMs, submarine-launched missiles, heavy missiles, mobile missiles, throw weight, and megatonnage •