PS1 for 12/31/87#NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS ON NATIONAL SECURITY

Since it has become the fashion for many politicians to take a public opinion poll before establishing their positions on controversial issues, here are some constructive suggestions for New Year's resolutions based on the findings of an important public opinion poll about national security. This survey shows again that the American people are far ahead of the Congress and the media on issues vital to the continued liberty and independence of our nation.

The poll was commissioned by the Committee on the Present Danger, which might be considered a suspect source since, by definition, this Committee takes it as a given that there is a present danger. However, any possible polling bias is more than overcome by the fact that the polling was done by Penn + Schoen Associates, a firm frequently used by such prominent disbelievers in the existence of any present danger to national security as former Vice President Walter Mondale, Senators Edward Kennedy and Patrick Moynihan, and Mayors Edward Koch and Marion Barry.

On the question of whether to go ahead with research and development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), 70 percent of Americans favor this, whereas only 24 percent are opposed. Whereas 82 percent of Republicans support SDI, even 65 percent of Democrats favor SDI, too.

By a 58 percent to 25 percent margin, Americans say that the United States should deploy SDI as soon as it is developed. Republicans (67 percent) are more favorable to SDI deployment, as might be expected, but even 53 percent of Democrats support SDI deployment.

On the question of whether SDI should be used to protect both civilian and military targets, 70 percent say both. Fifteen percent say only cities and 5 percent say only military targets.

What if SDI deployment runs up against a prohibition in the ABM Treaty of 1972? By a margin of 43 percent to 35 percent (with 21 percent undecided), the American people favor U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in order to deploy SDI, while only one-third would not favor withdrawal from the Treaty.

This overwhelming support of SDI is remarkable in the face of the general ignorance of the American people about the nature of our national security problem and the threat we face. The survey showed that 50 percent of Americans think that the United States has a stronger military now than the Soviet Union has, and only 32 percent think that the Soviets have a stronger military.

The fact is that the Soviets have significant superiority over the United States in practically every measure of modern military weapons, both nuclear and conventional.

Penn + Schoen Associates also surveyed American attitudes about Communism and Central America. Two-thirds of Americans (67 percent) say that a Communist government in Central America is a security threat to the United States, while only 23 percent disagree.

Fully 80 percent of Americans say it is important to eliminate Communism from Central America, with 55 percent saying it is ""very'' important. Support for eliminating Communism is strong across every demographic group, and only 7 percent say this is not important at all.

Probably, thanks to the televised hearings of the Iran-Contra Congressional Committee, the American public now knows which side we are on in Nicaragua. By a 14-to-1 margin, Americans (70 percent) know that we support the Contras in Nicaragua's civil war; only 5 percent incorrectly believe we support the Sandinistas.

On the question of whether or not we (BF)should(end BF) give military aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, a slight majority (43 percent)

says yes, while 41 percent are opposed. The subgroups in these data are predictable: 60 percent of Republicans favor military aid to the Contras, while only 33 percent of Democrats take this position.

These survey results call for forthright positions on the part of Congressmen who are having difficulty making up their minds about controversial issues. Here are some suggested resolutions.

1. Support the immediate development and deployment of a Strategic Defense Initiative, even if it means withdrawing from the old ABM Treaty of 1972.

2. In order to solidify public support for this already popular position, tell the American people the facts about Soviet superiority of nuclear and non-nuclear forces.

3. Support aid to the Contra Freedom Fighters in Nicaragua.

4. In order to solidify public support for this position, explain to the American people the fact that this is essential to eliminate the real and present Communist threat in Central America.