P.S. to the NEWS
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THE END OF DETENTE

The stampede to buy gold is not just a sudden desire of people to possess the beautiful gold metal. It is not merely a depressing flight from the U.S. dollar, although that certainly is part of the phenomenon.

Most of all, the meteoric rise in the price of gold past $600 per ounce is an economic result of a military cause. The gold dealers themselves admitted the connection. It's caused, they said, because people don't believe that the United States can cope with the crisis in Afghanistan.

The pitiful sight of the American President attempting to jawbone away this latest Soviet aggression is humiliating for a once powerful nation. The day the Soviets moved into Afghanistan, Carter called it "a grave threat to the peace" and a blatant violation of international rules of behavior.

The following day, Carter, in what the Washington press described as "the toughest diplomatic exchange of his Presidency," warned the Soviets Union in a special message to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan or face "serious consequences." He didn't say what the consequences would be. The Soviets responded by quadrupling the number of invading troops.

The next day, Carter accused Brezhnev of giving him an "obviously false" account of Soviet actions in the invasion of Afghanistan. Carter added, "This action on the part of the Soviet Union has made a more dramatic change in my own opinion of what the Soviets' ultimate goals are than anything they've done in the previous time that I've been in office."

What kind of a cloistered world has Carter been living in that it took the surprise invasion of Afghanistan to wake him up to "what the Soviets' ultimate goals are"? The Soviet move into that country is just a carbon copy of the same scenario that has been repeated again and again and again.

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Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia are only the more dramatic of the previous victims of Soviet sneak attacks. It is obvious that the Soviets weighed the risks of offending the United States against the profit of plucking an overripe plum in the Middle East, and they made their choice.

The core of the crisis we face today is not that Carter speaks too softly, but that he has no big stick with which to make the bad guys of the world respect us. The Soviets know they can get by with swallowing another country; the petty tyrants in Iran know they can get by with blackmail; and the money dealers of the world are voting with their pocketbooks by unloading dollars and buying gold.

In his latest book "The Eleventh Hour," Marine hero General Lewis Walt, USMC (Ret.) points out that, from ancient Egypt to modern times, "no great nation has ever existed any longer than the supremacy of its military power." The Golden Age of Greece came to an abrupt halt after the military power of Athens declined. The civilization of Carthage was wiped out when it could not match the armed might of Rome, and Rome itself fell when it could not defend itself militarily.

The philosophy and ideas of self-government in England, General Walt continues, were nourished behind the shield of the British Navy. Even tiny Switzerland, the classic neutral, has been able to maintain its neutrality only because the Swiss know that to live in peace you must be always ready and armed to fight a war.

The entire fabric of what we affectionately call "the American way of life" is totally dependent on the restoration of U.S. military superiority. A war-winning capability for U.S. armed forces is the sine qua non of a free society in which preachers can preach, teachers can teach, businessmen can profit, artists and inventors can create, and each of us, rich or poor, can keep the fruits of our own labor and can dream of a brighter tomorrow.

The ultimate solution for the crisis in Afghanistan, in Iran, in gold, and in oil is once again to make the United States stronger than the Soviet Union. We should never forget that time is only on the side of those who use it.

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