l!S. to the NEWS
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CAN WE DEFEN WCST BERLIN?

Only a few months ago, the Carter Ad:".;nistration urged tl-ie Senate to give away the U.S. Canal Zone in Panama because, it was a[1] eged, the Canal cannot be defended at reasonable cost against attack by Panamanians. The spectre of another Vietnam was conjured up to arouse fear of a ground war in a distant, unfriendly land.

Yet this month, President Carter traveled to Germany, three times as far away as Panama, and stated that the United States would consider an attack on West Berlin "exactly the same as an attack on United States territory or people.[11]

Pull out a world atlas and compare the Panama Canal Zone with West Berlin. A quick check of the geography shows Carter's statement to be inconsistent with his advocacy of the Canal g veaway, and a check of the mil tary facts shows it to be foolhardy. The two areas are roughly similar in s··ze (the Canal Zone has 370 square miles of land and West Berl n has 185), but they are vastly different in defensibility.

The Canal Zone is 1,400 miles from the closest U.S. city (Maami), whereas West Berlin is 4,500 miles from the closest U.S. city (New York). But those distances are as the crow flies. Our Navy can steam rigrt up to the Canal Zone carrying loads of troops and weapons, but we can't send any ships to land-locked West Berl in.

Transit to the Canal Zone would be t rough t1e friendly waters of the Caribbean, but West Berlin is 100 miles inside the hostile territory of East Germany. That was the costly lesson we learned w th the Ser1in Air[1] ft during the Truman Ad m i nistration.

A comparison of the relative strength of the potent;a, attac<ers of the two locations makes Carter's posHion downright ridiculous. 1:ast GerlT'any or the Soviet Union could invade West Berlin with the 955,000 troops of the Warsaw Pact powers,

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backed up by the most moderri arti1 lery and even nuc'ear weapons. Panamanian attackers would consist of Omar Torrijos' 8,000 troops, who have no modern artillery, air force, or navy.

The Canal Zone was paid for by the United States, is a source of great national pride, and has been governed and populated by American citizens for three-quarters of a century. No one could make any claim that West Berlin is American in population, in financial investment, or in any other way.

Our Panama Car.al is of great strategic and economic importance to the United States. It enables us to move our Navy quic ly between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to guard our long coast1ines.

West Berlin -- a l;ttle land-is1and of freedom deep behind the Iron Curtain is a great symbol of resistance to Cof1lmun;st tyranny. But what price are Americans willing to pay for this symbol?

Fifteen years ago, President John F. Kennedy told the cheering Germans in his famous "! am a Ber1iner" speech that "we will risk our cities to save your cities." That was the orator's flamboyant phrasing of ''massive retaliation" - the strategy of warning t,he Soviets that any attack on any of our cities, bases, or allies would trigger a massive nuclear retaliation from the full force of
our ICBMs.

When President Kennedy spoke, his threat was credible. We then had an eight-to one nuclear superiority over the Soviets. Now the strategic balance bas been reversed. The Soviets have 1,618 ICBMs of vastly greater throw-weight and megatonnage than our 1,054. Any threat that we would launch them against the Soviet Union and thereby expose American cities to devastating retaliation from the superior Soviet force is just a transparent bluff that no one on either side of the Iron Curtain can believe.

President Carter's statement cannot be explained as a sop required by domestic American politics. There is no constituency in the Urhed States eager to send American boys to defend West Berlin against 955,000 Warsaw Pact troops.

It's no wonder that Europeans find President Carter an enigma. So do Americans.

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