P.S. to the NEWS

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by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415

CANAL TREATY LOBBYING

The State Department has launched a fullscale lobbying and propaganda campaign to sell Congress and the American people on the idea of giving away the 1
U.S. Canal to the Panama dictator Torrijos. This includes what is euphemistically called "consultations with Congress," plus speakers sent to every kind of group from high schools to businessmen.

A clever scheme was even employed to persuade a majority of U.S. Catholic Bishops to pass a resolution favoring the Canal giveaway. When the Bishops met in Washington to consider this question, they were given a biased report urging surrender, but were not permitted to hear from true experts such as Catholic Con gresswoman Leonor Sullivan who was then Chairman of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee which has jurisdiction over the Canal.

The lead advocate in the orchestrated effort to secure approval of a giveaway treaty is Sol Linowitz whom President Carter appointed as chief U.S. negotiator with Panama. The Linowitz line starts by arguing that, since we can't defend the Canal anyway, it would be better to give it away peacefully.

The principal duty of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines is to defend our lives and property against attack. If they are not willing or able to defend American lives and property against the pro-Communist dictator Torrijos and his little mob, then something is very wrong with our military establishment.

The fact is that we can defend the U.S. Canal. When our Zone commander, Lt. Gen. Dennis McAuliffe, was asked by a reporter about the Canal's defensibility, he replied that his 7,000 troops can defend the Zone and Canal from any attacks, and are better trained and equipped than at the time of the 1964 riots.

Secondly, Linowitz argues that we are obliged to acquiesce in Panama's demands because all Latin American and Third World nations are solidly against us on this issue and aligned with Panama.

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Latin American experts and travelers say that, on the contrary, most Latin Americans oppose our handing over the Canal to Torrijos, and that he really is supported only by Mexico, Costa Rica, Columbia, and Venezuela. The last three of those have a special interest and hope to get favorable concessions if Torrijos gets control of the Canal.

Third, Linowitz argues that the Joint Chiefs have said that it is in our interests to sign a new treaty. If the Joint Chiefs ever said that, it was only after they were so ordered by the Commander-in-Chief. The Joint Chiefs know that, if they oppose the Carter-endorsed giveaway treaty, they wi11 get the "General Singlaub treatment" and jeopardize their careers.

Fourth, Linowitz argues that the Canal is not of strategic value to the United States because only one percent of our Gross National Product and only eight percent of our foreign trade go through it.

The present Chairman of the House Merchant Marine Committee, Congressman John M. Murphy, refuted this in a recent statement. He said that closure of the Canal would result in a 71% increase in the average annual consumption of fuel by ocean carriers operating in U.S. foreign trade, a 31-day increase in average shipping time, a $932 million increase in the yearly total delivered price of all exports from the United States, and a $583 million increase in the yearly delivered price of all imports to the United States.

There are few issues on which the American people are so united as on the question of retaining U.S. ownership and control of our Canal. A recent nationwide survey made by Decision Making Information of California shows that Americans by a ratio of five to one favor continued U.S. control and ownership of the Canal.

In order for a giveaway treaty to take effect, it would have to be ratified by the Senate. Parts of it, at least, would also have to be approved by the House because it involved the transfer of U.S. property. Constituents should forward their views on this issue to their Senators and Congressmen.

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