P:S0 to the NEWS

RELEASE: March 7

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NEW PANAMA TREATY

The old saying, Lord, I can take care of my enemies, but please protect me from my friends, is a good aphorism to apply to the matter of the Panama Canal. We are in danger of losing our ownership and control over this lifeline of our military and economic security - but not from any aggressors, terrorists, or saboteurs. The danger comes from our own U.S. negotiators. In a "Dear Colleague" letter recently circulated, Congresswoman Leonor K. Sullivan and Congressman Daniel J. Flood clearly stated the problem:

"We doubt that over all these years there has ever been a threat as imminent and as real to the continued authority and jurisdiction of the United States over the Canal and Canal Zone as the current U.S. -Panamanian negotiations on a new treaty."

Last year, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger signed a declara tion of "Eight Principles" with the Panamanian dictatorship. That paper and subsequent treaty negotiations indicate that a draft treaty now being worked out in secret will probably contain a plan for t_he ultimate outright turnover of the Canal to Panama; an immediate weakeningp if not an outright transfer, of our juris._;liction over the U.S. Canal Zone; a big increase in the annual U.S. payment to Panama; and the setting of a fixed date for the total transfer of all authority over the U.S. Canal Zone and the Canal itself to Panama.

Recent news leaks indicate that this fixed date has been short ened from an originally planned 15 years in the future to just five

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years. And what do we get in return for all these expensive con cessions which will result in higher taxes for tribute to Panama and higher prices on imported goods? Practically nothing.

Last year, Senators Strom Thurmond and John McClellan circulated a resolution calling for the "continued undiluted U.S. sovereignty and'jurisdiction" over the U.S. Canal Zone, and they secured 35 co sponsors in a matter of hours. These same Senators have just intro duced an updated resolution labeling the Kissinger negotiations with Panama "a clear and present danger to the hemispheric security and the successful operation of the Canal by the United States."

The new resolution is a good summary of the American title to and ownership of the U.S. Canal Zone through solemnly ratified treaties by the United States with Great Britain, Panama, and Columbia, by the purchase of all privately owned property in the U.S. Canal Zone, and by sovereign control for 60 years during which time we have honored all our obligations and efficiently operated the Canal at reasonable toll rates to the ships of all nations without discrimination. The new resolution also states that our financial investment in the Canal Zone is $6.8 billion, and that the Canal is vitally important to the security of the United States as well as our economy.

The Senatorial and Congressional co-sponsors of this resolution should be encouraged in their efforts to retain U.S. control over the U.S. Canal Zone. Passage of the resolution should go a long way toward making sure that Secretary Kissinger's new giveaway treaty with Panama can never muster the necessary two-thirds majority in the U.S. Senate.

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