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by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLV RELEASE: October 15

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LEONOR SULLIVAN ON THE PANAMA CANAL

Congresswoman Leonor K. Sullivan has just written a letter to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger warning of a possible "Communist takeover" of the Panama Canal. She called :ror a breakoff in the present State Department treaty negotiations with Panama because Panama "is moving closer and closer to the Communist government in Cuba."

Mrs. Sullivan is the chairman of the House Merchant Marine Com mittee, which handles legislation pertaining to the Panama Canal. She is one of the most respected members of Congress, with a 20-year record of distinguished service. She is not an alarmist or a sensa tionalist, but a conscientious legislator whose committee rank and particular expertise on this subject have caused her to speak out in behalf of American security and property,!

Last February 7, Henry Kissinger made a quickie flying trip to Panama and signed a preliminary agreement pledging that the United States will surrender sovereignty over the U.S. Canal Zone. The U.S. taxpayers have a mare than $5 billion investment in the U.S. Canal Zone, and Secretary Kissinger has no authority whatsoever to give it away.

In a recent speech, the distinguished Cuban scholar Mario Lazo pointed out the source of the drive to steal the Panama Canal from the United States: "For over 60 years Panama has lived off the canal. But since Nasser got away with seizing the Suez Canal in 1955, Panaman-

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ian politicos have dreamed of nothing else than taking over the Panama Canal. They have continually vilified the United States and incited their population against it.

"Some Americans, self-styled 'liberals' and assorted appeasers, have applauded these tactics, arguing that in the 'new world ordei' unilateral control of the canal is obsolete. But rights of the United States to the Panama Canal were bought and paid for. The U.S has no obligation to renounce or modify those rights in favor of politi cians anywhere, or of the appeasement-minded at home."

In her letter to Secretary Kissinger, Mrs. Sullivan expressed the "serious misgivings" of the majority of Congressmen over "the possible loss of U.S. sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Canal and the Canal Zone." "Behind this concern," she said, "is the fear that the United States presence in the Canal Zone will be substantially reduced, or eliminated altogether and replaced by a Communist presence. In short, the last thing that we want is our control over the Canal replaced by Communist control of the Canal."

Mrs. Sullivan's letter to Secretary Kissinger concluded: "I must say that the linkage of two events -- the renewal of ties between Panama and Cuba, and the continuing treaty negotiations between the United States and Panama -- certainly exacerbates Congressional fear of a Communist takeover of the Canal."

Certain State Department diplomats have been working for years to appease the Panamanian radicals by giving away the U.S. Canal Zone. There are few issues in Congress on which there is such bipartisan unanimity as the necessity of keeping the Canal Zon and Mrs. Sullivan should be commended for her efforts to protect American interests.

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