l!S. to **the NEWS**

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REFERENDUM ON PANAMA TREATIES

Can the surrender of the U.S. Canal at Panama still be stopped? Even though the U.S.-Panama Treaties were ratified last April? Some Congressmen think so, and they are giving their new play the good old college try.

Their plan of action is firmly grounded in the U.S. Constitution. Article IV, Section 3 provides: "The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States." The Congress, of course, consists of two Houses.

The U.S.-Panama Treaties involve much, much more than giving away a big ditch. They give away billions of dollars of U.S. property. While the President has power to make treaties with the consent of the Senate alone, the President and the Senate have no power to give away U.S. property or taxpayers' funds without the consent of the House.

October 1, 1979, is ,the date on which the Panama treaties are scheduled to go into effect. But this cannot happen without the passage of the so-called "implementing legislation." And therein lies the rub.

Most of the press coverage of the Panama treaties issue has centered on the Senate, but it is very much a live issue in the House. A majority of House members, 241 to be exact, co-sponsored H.Con.Res. 347 which demanded that the House vote on ratification of the Panama treaties. The Democratic leadership kept this resolution bottled up in coITTllittee, refusing to allow it to come to a vote before the Senate ratified the treaties.

Four amendments sponsored by Representative George Hansen (R-Idaho), however, have come to a vote in the House, and three of them passed by large margins. H.Con. Res. 559 eliminated a $40 million borrowing authority for the Panama Canal Company, as well as its independent budget authority, thus making the Company subject to an

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annual Congressional budget review. It passed the House on May 9 by 231 to 170 and was accepted by the Senate.

H.R. 10929 eliminated the authority of the armed services to reduce the troop strength or realign military bases within the Canal Zone to implement the Panama treaties. It passed the House by a voice vote on May 24, was accepted by the Senate, but was vetoed by President Carter.

H.R. 12598 prohibited the use of any funds in the Foreign Relations Authorizations Act from being used [11]directly or indirectly to effect implementation.[11] It passed May 31 by 203 to 163 and was accepted by the Conference Committee.

The one Hansen amendment that failed, H.R. 12931, would have prohibited funds in the Foreign Relations Assistance Appropriations Act from being obligated or expended to provide "assistance, credits,guarantees or insurance for Panama." It was rejected on August 15 by 172 to 202.

The roll calls on these four Hansen amendments show that the voting of funds for the implementation of the Panama treaties is one of the most important of all Congressional issues. The implementing legislation is estimated to cost eventually at least $4.3 billion. The Carter Administration is planning the vote for early 1979, conveniently after the 1978 elections.

When President Carter signed the Panama treaties, we knew he was signing with the pro-Communist, pro-Castro Torrijos, whose brother was then under indict ment for smuggling dope into the United States. This month, Torrijos installed his handpicked successor as head of state, Aristides Royo. Many informed observers believe Royo is an outright Communist. In anticipation of his accession, many Panamanian businessmen have been sending their assets out of the country.

Congressman Hanse:n believes that the giveaway of the U.S. Canal to Panama can still be stopped by the exercise of the constitutional rights of the House. If all Congressional candidates were queried by their constituency on this issue, the 1978 elections could be a referendum on the surrender of our Canal.

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