

Because of this, during the fifth summit (of the non-aligned countries-ed) held in Colombo this past August, the struggle for a new world economic order became the

center of debates. This struggle accurately expresses the sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism.

## Panama Gov't Abruptly Shifts to Endorse Carter Administration

In an abrupt about-face last week, General Omar Torrijos Herrera, Panama's Chief of Government, reversed Panama's long-standing opposition to Jimmy Carter. The incoming Carter Administration, Torrijos said in a speech Dec. 19, "seems to have more integrity than the previous one."

Echoing the new position of the government, the pro-Torrijos daily *Critica* called Carter a "defender of political morality," while Foreign Minister Aquilino Boyd declared that Carter's appointment of Cyrus Vance as Secretary of State had "restored the vitality of the State Department."

These declarations of support for Carter contrast sharply with the almost daily attacks on Carter made by government spokesmen and the Panamanian press before the Torrijos speech. Carter was accused of obstructing peaceful canal negotiations, and the press suggested that he was behind the wave of bombings and other terrorist acts that have plagued Panama in recent months.

The Torrijos regime adopted the new stance toward Carter because of indications that the incoming U.S. president will grant Panama a new Canal Treaty along the lines of the recommendations of the Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations, headed by Rockefeller associate Sol Linowitz. Torrijos met with Theodore Sorensen, Carter's appointee as director of the CIA, immediately before he announced his new line; and the next day, Dec. 18, the U.S. negotiator Ellsworth Bunker indicated that the U.S. was willing to move ahead on the long-stalled negotiations.

Observers have speculated that the Carter move to negotiate a Canal Treaty is to end Panama's leading role in the Caribbean opposition to the U.S., clearing the way for a U.S. hard line against Cuba.

Torrijos concretized his alignment with Carter by making public Dec. 19 a series of austerity measures, including a revision of the Labor Code. His concessions on the Labor Code, long demanded by the business sector, put Torrijos in a shaky position domestically, since among his staunchest supporters are the labor unions led by the communist Partido del Pueblo. The Partido del Pueblo has stated repeatedly that it "will never allow any revisions" in the Labor Code.

Immediate approval for Torrijos, however, came from the International Monetary Fund which three days after Torrijos' speech awarded Panama with an \$18 million loan.

### *The Carter Record in Panama*

Torrijos, who has pushed development policies in the past, had been subjected to continuous destabilization attempts and both the press and government officials had linked these terror tactics — bombings and provoked riots — directly to Carter.

The official Panamanian news agency, Panapress, listed as one of these destabilization attempts, the highly publicized "staged bombing" of the car of AFL-CIO representative in the Canal Zone, William Drummond, after Drummond had sued to have the Canal negotiations halted in October. The pro-Torrijos daily *Critica* commented at the time that Drummond was suing "on behalf of his little friend Carter." *Critica* is the same paper that last week praised Carter as a defender of "political morality." Another pro-Torrijos daily, *Matutino*, wrote Oct. 30, "Mr. Carter's friends are so desperate that they are determined to use any and all resources at hand to discredit the opponents."

Carter was also implicated in other bombings. Panapress wrote after the arrest of three terrorists who had placed bombs in Panama City Dec. 6 that the terrorists: "belonged to a Miami-based group of conspirators that has friendly relations with the man who directs Carter's policies. He is trying to arrange a meeting with them and the president-elect."

The press and government comments were also sharply critical of Carter's war mongering. Foreign Minister Boyd said Nov. 10 in his annual report to the Asamblea Corregimiento, Panama's legislature, "Neither Carter nor any other U.S. politician will be allowed to turn the Canal negotiations into a propitiatory victim of U.S. policies."

The daily *Matutino* followed up two days later with an even more explicit condemnation of Carter: "Carter has stated that he will not deal with blocs of nations but only with individual countries. That is the old policy of divide and conquer....Those Latin American countries that accept the old framework of relationships between the strong and the weak are putting themselves at the mercy of the Washington government with no option but subjugation and dependency....(Latin America must unite) in the face of the divisionist policies that the U.S. will follow when Jimmy Carter assumes the presidency."