

The Press Attacks Carter On:

THE NEUTRON BOMB...

Washington Post, Evans and Novak column, April 10:

President Carter's decision to put the neutron bomb in cold storage has created a dangerous leadership crisis not only in the Western alliance he is supposed to lead but at the bewildered highest levels of his own administration as well.... An attempt to trace what happened finds disconcerting answers. Although the decision-making process is chaotic, blame attaches directly to the President, not to his aides.

Sun, Baltimore, editorial April 10:

The end result was essentially a non-decision — a continued deferral of production while awaiting concessions the Kremlin promptly announced it would not make. This sorry record strongly suggests the President was not in control of a key issue that could endanger prospects for a second American-Soviet strategic arms pact (SALT II).

Christian Science Monitor, Joseph Horsch, April 13:

The main damage is probably to relations inside the alliance. The Western allies had been led to expect the decision to build ERW (the neutron bomb). They were dismayed by the sudden change. There was also damage in Washington. The appearance of Presidential vacillation on a military issue was fresh and welcome ammunition for the opponents of the Panama Canal treaties and of a SALT II agreement.

THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES...

Washington Post, editorial, April 13

There is a limit to what even as hard pressed a President as Jimmy Carter ought to accept in bargaining with the likes of Dennis DeConcini. He blundered sorely in failing to anticipate the explosive Panamanian reaction to his acceptance of the DeConcini reservation the first time around....

VANCE'S MISSION TO AFRICA AND THE SOVIET UNION...

New York Times, Bernard Gwertzmann, April 13:

The dual mission of dealing with the Rhodesian crisis in Africa and making progress in the arms talks in Moscow faces major substantive obstacles. But in addition, the Vance mission has been burdened by other problems — what some see as a weakening of President Carter's stature abroad and disagreements within the Administration.

New York Times, James Reston, April 12:

There is a tendency now to mock Jimmy Carter, to suggest that he is not big enough for the job, that he is confused and "indecisive," just at the point when his beginning to negotiate a strategic arms limitation agreement with the Soviets and revive the negotiations for a compromise in the Middle east... Accordingly Mr. Carter is not only getting a bad press these days but getting into serious political trouble at home and abroad. Even his most enthusiastic supporters complain that he does the right thing many times but does it in the worst possible way.

Panama:

Canal Treaty— Round Two In Danger

Carter Juggling Act on Panama

The second Panama Canal Treaty, due to be voted on April 18, will be the first test the Administration will have to face in Congress since the escalated attacks began. The latest flap to endanger an affirmative vote on the treaty concerns a memorandum now circulating on Capitol Hill, which is based on notes of the meeting held between Frank Moore, the Administration's chief congressional liaison, and the Panamanian Ambassador.

In it Moore is described as agreeing to circulate an Administration-drafted counter resolution to the "DeConcini reservation," already tacked on to the first treaty. The DeConcini reservation would allow U.S. intervention into the Canal zone after the year 2000 in the event of an emergency. The Panamanians have now stated quite openly that they doubt the Treaty, if sub-

jected to a new plebiscite, will be accepted in Panama. The DeConcini reservation "threatens Panamanian sovereignty," they argue, and they are worried about the establishment of limited sovereignty and are being urged by other Latin American governments, including Mexico and Colombia, to reject it. Now Senator DeConcini (D-Ariz.) is threatening to attach another reservation to the second Treaty giving the U.S. an immediate right to send troops into Panama to keep the canal open — a right which was renounced by the United States itself in 1936!

Senator Edward Brooke (R-Mass.) now complains that "the Carter Administration had misled the Senate by not conveying Panama's objections to Mr. DeConcini's first reservation."

According to Washington sources, Senator Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), who has been leading the treaty opposition in

the Senate, was delighted over the whole course of events. Laxalt expected a resolution to delay the transition of the canal to Panama to be introduced next week along with another reservation which would reinstate the 1903 Treaty if the Panamanians reject the Senate's ultimate version.

Panama on DeConcini Clause: Violates Sovereignty

Excerpts from a March 28 note verbale by the Permanent Representative of Panama, Jorge E. Illueca, to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General:

...According to its proponent, the "DeConcini Amendment" is intended to give to the United States of America the unilateral and perpetual right to "take military action on Panamanian soil without the consent of the Panamanian Government," pretending that said amendment must be construed to permit the United States to intervene in Panama in the event of labour unrest, strikes, a slow-down, or under any other pretext labeled as interference with Canal operations (see text of Senator Dennis DeConcini's statement before the United States Senate on 16 March 1978 inserted in the attached clipping of the United States *Congressional Record*, vol. 124, No. 38, pp. S3817-3818 (appendix II)).

Not only does the amendment make no reference to the régime of neutrality, but, as stated by Senator Edward Kennedy, who opposed the DeConcini Amendment,

"Panama has waited 75 years since its independence to end American occupation of its heartland. It must wait another 22 years before it achieves full control over its national territory." Now Panama is asked, in Kennedy's words, "to accept an amendment which has the ring of military interventionism — not just during this century, but for all time..."

Statement made by Senator Dennis DeConcini in the Senate of the United States of America on 16 March 1978:

...Although General Torrijos has brought a welcome degree of stability to Panama in recent years, it can be argued that the history of Panama is one of substantial political instability and turmoil....

The amendment contains a very specific reference to the use of military force in Panama. I believe these words are absolutely crucial because they establish the American right — which I am not convinced is adequately provided for either in the body of the treaty or the leadership amendment — to take military action if the case so warrants. It further makes it clear that the United States can take military action on Panamanian soil without the consent of the Panamanian Government.

The question of consent is also crucial. Since the main thrust of this amendment is directed toward situations in which the canal is closed because of internal difficulties in Panama — difficulties like a general strike, a political uprising, or other similar events, the consent of the Panamanians to take action would not make sense. If America is to have any rights at all under this treaty, it must have the right to act independently to protect the canal and to keep it open....

SALT II:

Will Administration See It Through?

"A SALT agreement is critical to U.S.-Soviet relations," declared a political analyst, underscoring his own concern about Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's trip which takes him first to Afirca, then to Moscow on April 19 for the arms limitation talks. Much depends on Vance's trip and the state of the SALT negotiations; if the progress on SALT is reversed then there will be a major strain in the U.S.-Soviet relations and the world will be set for a crisis.

The danger has been exacerbated by opponents of a SALT agreement, who believe the U.S. should engage the Soviets quickly in a confrontation. Through various press articles in the U.S. and Britain they have been pressuring Carter to make a clear show that he is not "giving in" to the Soviets. This pressure increased markedly after Carter determined not to go ahead with immediate production of the so-called neutron bomb, *repeatedly identified* as a provocation by the Soviets (see Special Report).

"Jimmy Carter's image as an American President able to lead the western alliance and deal effectively with the Soviet Union appears to be in serious and worsening trouble in Western Europe," declared the *Washington Post* April 10. This coordinated press campaign is aimed at convincing the President that he can only maintain his

credibility at home and abroad through a face-down with the Soviets. "If Carter perceives that the Soviets perceive he is a lightweight, he will be encouraged to seek a confrontation," warned a source close to the Administration. The United States would then face the choice of annihilation or a humiliating backdown.

Carter and Vance have so far maintained their commitment to a SALT agreement, despite much pressure. Chief SALT negotiator Paul Warnke last week in a speech in New York revealed that in fact 90 percent of the items for a SALT agreement have already been settled. But what is keeping SALT from being finalized is not actually U.S.-Soviet differences, but the political will of the Carter Administration to see it through the U.S. Senate. "Most people I talk to say that there is good reason for pessimism for passage of SALT, it depends on the Administration's campaign to get it through and the way they present it," declared a member of the U.N. Association.

A dangerous sign of Administration pandering to SALT has come in a speech Monday by Secretary Vance to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, in which he tried to assure the world that the U.S. was not giving away anything to the Soviets in the SALT treaty. While