

The
American
Legion

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N. W. ★ WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 ★



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

July 5, 1977

President Jimmy Carter
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The American Legion shares the concerns expressed in the attached letters by four former Chiefs of Naval Operations: Admirals Carney, Burke, Anderson and Moorer, and by U. S. Senators: McClellan, Byrd, Thurmond and Helms regarding the value of the U.S. Canal Zone and the Canal to the United States.

Having served during World War II as a naval pilot in the Pacific under the leadership of Admirals Carney and Burke, I developed a profound respect for these men. Admiral "Mick" Carney, as Chief of Staff to Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey, and Admiral Burke as Chief of Staff to Admiral Marc Mitscher, emerged as two of Navy's top thinkers and strategists of World War II. As students of using our power at sea, they, like yourself, developed an intuitive understanding of actions which enhance or detract from our country's total strength.

Admirals Anderson and Moorer followed on as brilliant sea strategists, both commanding fleets during critical periods before they became Chiefs of Naval Operations. Admiral Moorer is the only American who has commanded both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets as well as serving for a number of years as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The combined experience and wisdom of these men is one of America's priceless assets. We are most fortunate they are still able and willing to share their views on such a critical subject as the Panama Canal.

The Senators who forwarded the combined CNO letter, Senators McClellan, Harry Byrd, Thurmond and Helms, like the Admirals whose judgment they endorse, represent a wealth of experienced knowledge which we in The American Legion regard as one of our nation's most valuable resources.

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We strongly endorse the letter of the four Chiefs of Naval Operations and the forwarding letter of the four U.S. Senators. The American Legion urges you to instruct the U.S. negotiating team that the interests of both the American people and the Panamanian people can best be served by the United States retaining its undiluted sovereignty of the U.S. Canal Zone and by initiating a modernization program for the canal which all agree is sorely needed.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM J. ROGERS
National Commander