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AMERICAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP

NEW YORK: In recent weeks forces in the U.S. administration, led by President Carter and National Security Adviser Brzezinski, have engaged in an attack on detente and friendship between the U.S. and Soviet people which threatens a return to the cold war. Alleging a Soviet drive for worldwide military dominance, these forces are pressing for greater and greater U.S. and NATO arms expenditures and seriously endangering chances for successful completion of the vital strategic arms limitation agreement. This policy contradicts the expressed desire of the great majority of Americans for strengthening detente and friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

Vice President Mondale offered no real disarmament proposals at the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament. At almost the same time, in Washington, President Carter urged further increase and modernization of NATO forces. The U.S. military budget has reached the astronomical level of \$130 billion, sinking the American people and most of all Black and other minority Americans further into economic crisis.

An integral part of this policy is a rising assault on independent countries and liberation movements of Africa, including their relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, especially Cuba. By far the most serious manifestation to date is the U.S. military air support to the French and Belgian invasion of Zaire, without which this incursion could never have taken place. The pretext was the unsupported charge of Soviet and Cuban involvement. Such a nation threatens the people of Africa and the United States with a new Vietnam.

The reaction of many American states was exemplified by Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere when he observed, "The West still considers Africa to be within its sphere of influence and acts accordingly. Current developments show that the greater immediate danger to Africa's freedom comes from nations in the Western bloc."

The administration's aid to the corrupt and repressive Mobutu regime in Zaire is part of a pattern of U.S. support for repressive regimes throughout Africa, which benefits the multinational corporations that profit enormously from their investments on that continent.

It is widely recognized that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have given their support to those who struggle for freedom in Africa and who seek to preserve and

develop the independence of their countries. Their role has been described by Angola's Dr. Agostinho Neto as "moral, political, military and technical help disinterestedly given us for winning our complete independence, for defending our territorial integrity and reconstructing our country."

The practical meaning of a U.S. policy toward Africa based on opposition to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries is support to the white minority governments of Vorster and Smith. This could cost the lives of millions of African people, and greatly endangers world peace.

Far more constructive options are open to the U.S. government. One is a positive response to the many recent Soviet peace proposals, such as banning the neutron bomb which particularly threatens African liberation struggles, stopping production of all types of nuclear weapons, prohibiting all other means of mass destruction, banning the testing and deployment of all new Soviet and American intercontinental missiles through 1985, and reducing military forces in Central Europe on the basis of equal ceilings. Another option is a positive form of competition in Africa - assistance to newly independent countries in developing and utilizing their own resources and training their own skilled personnel, and aid to national liberation movements seeking to overcome repression and white minority rule.

The national Council of American-Soviet Friendship urges President Carter, the U.S. administration and Congress to direct the policy of our country toward furthering peace and friendly relations among all peoples of the world.

*National Council of American-Soviet Friendship
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