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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

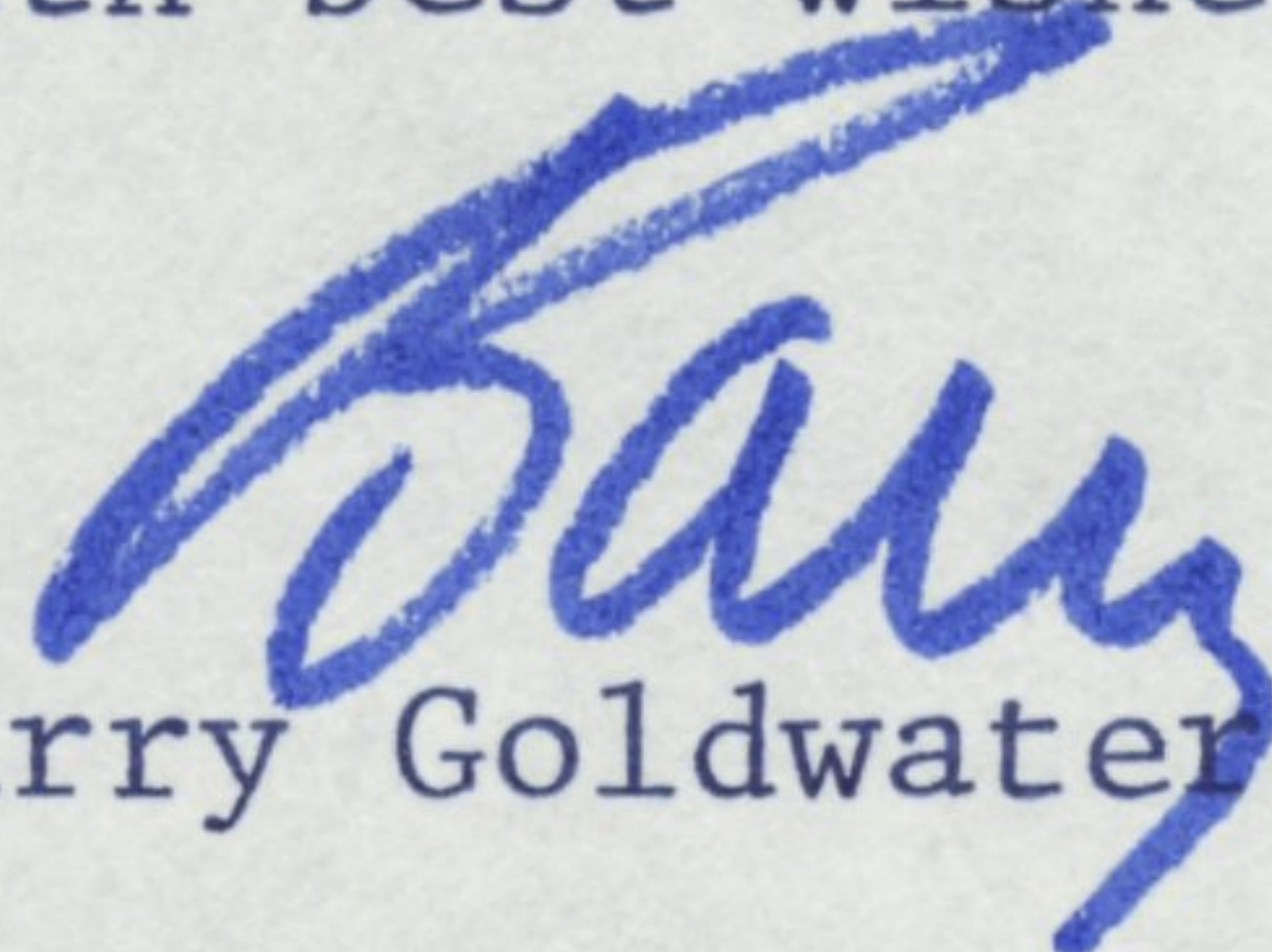
August 15, 1977

The Honorable Robert Morgan
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Bob:

It has come to my attention that some news reports may have misinterpreted my views on the proposed Panama Canal Treaty, as presented in the enclosed copy of my press release of August 12th. I wanted you to be aware of my feelings on the matter.

With best wishes,


Barry Goldwater

STATEMENT BY SENATOR BARRY GOLDWATER
(R. - Arizona)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 12, 1977

The proposed new treaty with Panama will be one of the most difficult and important issues ever to come before Congress. Until I have had an opportunity to study the proposal in detail I cannot and will not attempt to arrive at any conclusion.

The proposal deserves the most careful consideration by everyone. If the Administration attempts to stampede the American people and the Congress on this vital issue, it will be making a grave mistake. Americans feel very strongly about the Panama Canal. I for one will resist any hasty decision.

After all, it took thirteen years of secret negotiations to produce this new treaty. The time has now come, in accordance with our Constitutional procedures, to get the whole thing out in the open and to go over it with a fine-tooth comb. Only then can we decide what is right for our country. If it takes a year, even two years, to do this properly, so be it.

My main concern with regard to a new treaty with Panama has always been, and will continue to be, our national security. There can be no doubt that Panama and the Panama Canal have a high priority in Moscow's plans to infiltrate and dominate the Western Hemisphere. In attempting to resolve our differences with Panama and to cooperate with her in the achievement of her legitimate aspirations, we cannot afford to create a power vacuum. That would be a fatal error.

In addition to national security, there are other important aspects of the proposed new treaty to be given careful consideration. These involve complex problems of foreign trade and foreign relations. Each must be examined in minute detail.

I believe a new treaty with Panama is needed. Whether this proposal is the right one, remains to be seen. If we become sure that it is, well and good. If not, then it will be the duty of the Congress to send the negotiators back to the drawing board. In any event, statemanship of the highest order is called for.