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World Focus on Disarmament

By RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

An unprecedented special session on disarmament will be held by the United Nations in New York May 23-June 28. In preparation for this gathering, which represents the latest hope for an end to the global arms race, religious groups are making a massive effort to educate their constituencies on the issue and to move them to put pressure on governments to disarm.

Dr. Alan Geyer, executive director of the Washington-based Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy, says that the year 1978 is "perhaps the most momentous year for disarmament concerns since 1945."

Writing in Christianity and Crisis, he comments that "the stepped up pace of bilateral talks with the Soviet Union, Pentagon pressures for new weapons systems, a very full Congressional calendar, rapid growth of international nuclear trade, the forthcoming United Nations special session on disarmament and a sudden surge of disarmament activities by citizen organizations all combine to make 1978 - especially the first six months - an almost unbearably crowded season for those who really care about such matters."

Carlos Ortiz de Rozas of Argentina, chairman of the preparatory committee for the special session, told a gathering of religious leaders last November that mobilizing world opinion in favor of disarmament would be a major accomplishment itself.

Addressing an interreligious assemblage at the Church Center for the United Nations, Ambassador Ortiz declared that "public opinion is perhaps 90 per cent of the role. It is more important in some countries than in others. But public opinion from other countries still is a pressure on those more closed countries. It is tremendously important."

From the beginning of his administration, President Carter has been on record as supporting world disarmament moves in the area of nuclear weaponry. In an interview the week he was inaugurated last year, he said he was "in favor of eliminating the testing of all nuclear devices, instantly and completely," and added that he also wanted to proceed quickly and aggressively with a comprehensive test ban treaty.



But while the Carter Administration has committed itself to moves toward disarmament, the United States remains one of the major arms suppliers. This policy has drawn criticism particularly because many of the arms shipments have gone to dictatorships - a policy which seems in contradiction with the Administration's emphasis on human rights.

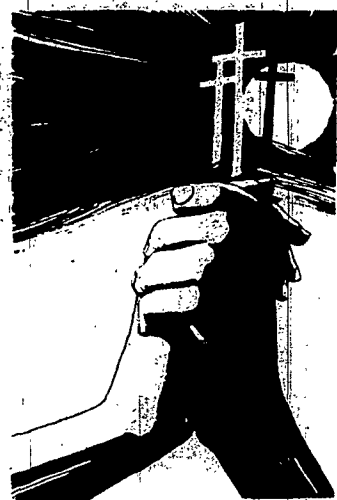
In December, Michael T. Klare, director of the Project on Militarism and Disarmament of the private Institute for Policy Studies, declared in a report that "rather than standing in detached judgment over the spread of repression abroad, as Carter's human-rights rhetoric suggests, the United States stands at the supply end of the pipeline of repression technology that extends to many of the world's authoritarian governments."

But most supporters of disarmament policies have decided to work with the Administration, rather than against it. Last November, the National Council of Churches Governing Board passed a resolution on nuclear weapons in which it commended President Carter for signing a Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America.

The NCC resolution also urged the U. S. government to "renounce military doctrines and strategies which lead to use of nuclear weapons," and to "Support the establishment under UN auspices of a world authority to supervise and administer agreements for arms reduction."

An interreligious coalition known as Mobilization
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Lenten Thoughts



Father Alfred McBride, nationally recognized theologian, writes about God humbling Himself to help humankind reach greatness as the Courier-Journal continues its special series of Lenten contemplations.

Joining Father McBride this week are Father Walter Wainwright, coordinator of the Livingston-Steuben Region and pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas in Leicester, and Sister Barbara Moore, president of the Diocesan Sisters Council, and pastoral assistant at St. Monica's in Rochester. Please turn to Page 2.



FR. WAINWRIGHT



SISTER BARBARA

J-P Unit Issues Panama Stand

By MICHAEL GRODEN

The International Justice and Peace Commission for the Rochester Diocese has published a "background paper" and "position statement" which strongly supports passage of the Panama Canal Treaties now being debated by the United States Senate.

The paper states, "In a fundamental way, it (passage of the treaties) involves nothing less than the right of a people to self-determination and the ability of a country to exercise the right of sovereignty over their own land."

"Sovereignty, self-determination, the freedom of a country to chart its own course, are values deeply embedded within the history of the United States. Through the treaties, the United States is challenged to affirm, enrich and make manifest these values. As Christians, we support the

DSC Okays Proposal For Religious Vicar

By JOHN DASH

After two seasons of probing the question, the Diocesan Sisters Council last Saturday finally approved the notion that the diocesan Office of the Vicar for Religious "be reorganized and redesigned and that a design committee be organized to that end."

The council has frequently placed the question on its agenda for the past two years.

During this time the chief spokesperson to the issue has been Sister Patrice who headed a research group looking into the state of the office as it exists in other dioceses.

Saturday's vote followed a polling of councillors on reactions from constituent blocs. While a number of sisters expressed some reservations about the function of the office, the vast majority of them felt that the redesign should be pursued.

Canonically, Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

holds the title of Vicar for Religious.

In the council discussion, however, a number of sisters expressed their hope that the redesign group would consider either a woman or a team to fill the position.

For canonical reasons, a number of sisters also noted that the title "vicar" should be dropped in the redesign process.

In Church law, only a cleric may be a vicar, and only a male may be a cleric.

The sisters also gave their endorsement to a proposal from Joseph Kelly, director of the new Center for Continuing Education, that professional ministerial staff members take a course in continuing education once a year, that parishes afford staff members the time to pursue continuing education and that the personnel placement boards take continuing education into account when assignments are made.

In other council action it was decided that the

proposals on the assignments of health care chaplains, which surfaced at the January meeting, be discussed at the March session.

It was expected that those proposals would come to a vote at Saturday's session, but questions from sisters working in health care were deemed serious enough to merit further study.

Council members also answered questions from Sister Ann Miller on the workings of regionalism. Sister Ann is conducting a study on regionalism in her work toward a Masters degree.

The sisters also heard a presentation on the new pastoral office structure from Bishop Joseph A. Hogan. Sister Ann Habershaw reviewed the work of the Ministerial Review Committee of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The council also questioned the status of an approved proposal to establish regional liturgy coordinators.

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