

BOMBS: Churches Call for Freeze As Nations Stoke the Fire

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The Reagan administration's plans for a major U.S. military buildup has renewed attention on the dilemma of how the nation might achieve an adequate defense system without triggering a worldwide atomic holocaust.

While religious conservatives are among those who support Reagan's defensive moves, there is a widely shared sense of alarm in much of the religious community that the Soviet-American arms race is fast getting out of control.

A "nuclear freeze" movement is gaining momentum among religious groups. It includes those who believe that because nuclear arms are inherently immoral, the United States should disarm unilaterally, and those who insist that the moratorium must involve the prior agreement of both the United States and Russia.

There is a sense of urgency behind the movement because both the super powers are on the verge of committing themselves to building new generations of weapons delivery systems.

"Given the pressure to respond to further deployment of new weapons on both sides, and equally opportune time for a freeze may not recur until the late 1990s," warns the Quakers' American Friends Service Committee, a prime mover of the moratorium effort.

Most all of the churches have condemned the arms race, but not all agree on how disarmament can be achieved.

The National Council of Churches, made up of 32 Protestant and Eastern Orthodox member denominations, is among the religious advocates for reciprocal nuclear disarmament. The ecumenical body has urged both the United States and the USSR to declare a "mutual freeze on all further testing, production and deployment of weapons and aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons."

Some would go further. Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen of Seattle gained a lot of attention earlier this summer when he argued that the prospect of nuclear war is so horrendous that the United States should act unilaterally and that citizens would be morally justified in taking action into their own hands. He defended civil disobedience and a tax revolt against "the nuclear idol" as legitimate.

In his historic visit to Hiroshima last February, Pope John Paul II posed what he said was the "basic moral consideration" that everyone must face.

"In the past it was possible to destroy a village, a town, a region, even a country," the pope said. "Now it is the whole planet that has come under threat. This fact should finally compel everyone to face a basic moral consideration: from now on, it is only through a conscious choice and through a deliberate policy that humanity can survive."

He added, "Let us promise our fellow human beings that we will work untiringly for disarmament and the banishing of all nuclear weapons; let us replace violence and hate with confidence and caring."

Religious conservatives have tended to be cool to the nuclear freeze concept, suspecting it to be a ploy to disarm the United States and lead to a Soviet conquest. However, the entry of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) into the debate is not entirely a liberal-conservative one.

Archbishop Hunthausen's opposition to nuclear armament began in 1976 when he joined those opposed to the construction of the Trident nuclear submarine base in his "backyard" on the Puget Sound. He acknowledged that many jobs rested on the project.

Nevertheless, the archbishop declared in a speech to the Pacific Lutheran Convention of the Lutheran Church of America, "all nuclear war is immoral." Civil disobedience may sometimes "be an obligation of conscience" and taxpayers who withheld half their taxes to protest the arms race are justified, he said.

His call, later reiterated at length in his

diocesan newspaper, received widespread attention and support from many churches, and editorial comments from religious publications.

The Long Island Catholic, for example, said the archbishop's controversial statement "has the welcome effect of jolting us as citizens and as a sovereign nation to a new consideration of the issue (the arms buildup). Creative thinking and creative action are needed."

"How is it possible to move toward nuclear disarmament and effective international control of nuclear energy?"

Nuclear freeze advocates suggest that united Christian effort may be a start in the right direction.

A number of "nuclear freeze" events were planned to coincide this August with the 36th anniversary of the American atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Among them was a nationwide "Freeze the Nuclear Arms Race Fast" called by the Quakers and others "to illustrate the connection between the \$500 billion spent on weapons in the world this year and the one billion persons who will suffer from malnutrition and hunger."

Also planned was a walk from "Washington to Moscow" (two towns 35 miles apart in central Vermont) to symbolize the hope that citizen action can move the American and Soviet government to halt the nuclear arms race.

Harvard Divinity School theologian Harvey Cox says "the idea of a nuclear moratorium is not a new idea. But maybe it is an idea whose hour — because of the pressure of reality — has now come."

"Today the USA and the USSR together possess 50,000 nuclear weapons. In the space of only 30 minutes, all large and middle-sized cities in the northern hemisphere plus numerous other targets could be completely annihilated... Yet, over the next decade the two superpowers plan to build 10,000 more nuclear weapons and long range rockets to carry them."

Dr. Cox says perhaps now is the time "to put internal differences behind us and to unite all Christian voices in a single word. To the existence of 50,000 nuclear weapons we simply say 'enough.'... It suggests simply that both the USA and the USSR accept such a moratorium and then take steps to negotiate it into a treaty."

Mernie King of the Sojourners Peace Ministry in Washington, D.C., says his evangelical community supports U.S. unilateral disarmament and believes "it's worth a gamble." He said the broad-based national freeze movement involves a lot of different people, not all of whom support unilateral disarmament. He said freeze leaders want to "take it out of the liberal-conservative argument."

Conservatives agree that stopping the nuclear arms race is important, but not by unilateral American action. Cal Thomas, Moral Majority's vice president for communications, says, "We are as much for peace as anyone else. Anybody that's for war is by definition crazy. We do support mutual balanced reduction, but not unilateral disarmament. The Soviets have a dismal record for keeping promises."

Thomas says a "get tough" U.S. military posture at this time won't increase the threat of nuclear war, but it will correct the "perception" of American weakness. He says the Soviets have extended their global sphere of influence because "they perceived we did not have the national will to oppose them."

Anti-war exhibits reflected the conviction of many West Germans that the United States and not the Soviet Union was responsible for the East-West arms race.

Many religious leaders see the increasing need to separate legitimate defense needs from what they claim are irrational increases in nuclear armaments and a tendency to respond to world developments militaristically. Jack Collins, director of the National Council of Churches' ministry to service personnel in East Asia, has noted that the United States legitimately requires

"military preparedness for security purposes." But, he says, Asians and others feel threatened by U.S. "militarism" — the tendency to try to solve "political, cultural, and economic problems through the military, rather than through the normal political, cultural, and economic negotiations."

Whatever the arguments, the U.S.-USSR arms race continues with a new vengeance. The U.S. Congress is moving toward passage of a \$136 billion military authorization bill

for fiscal 1982, the costliest in U.S. history. The Soviets, meanwhile, say they have already started a buildup of strategic nuclear forces to counter U.S. attempts to gain military superiority.

Meanwhile, a clock devised by some pacifistic physicists to keep track of the odds on nuclear disaster ticks away. The "Doomsday Clock," monitored by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, now reads "four minutes to midnight." Last year it was seven minutes to midnight.



The Kings were judged "best marching band" at this year's St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City.

St. Paddy's Day in Dublin All Invited to Join Marching Kings Trip

The Bishop Kearney Marching Kings band is planning to march once again next St. Patrick's Day in Dublin, Ireland.

The world-famous band was the first to represent the United States in a European competition. And in Ireland in 1979, it won first place in all competitions — jazz band, concert band and marching band. Next year's trip, March 11 to 18, will be its sixth in Ireland.

The Kings also have performed in Rome for the pope and in Monaco for Princess Grace. On St. Patrick's Day this year in New York City, they competed with 247 other bands and won the best marching band award.

They will perform many times during next year's trip to Ireland, with the highlight the parade and competition on Dublin's famed O'Connell Street.

All are invited to join the

Kings for the trip. The total cost is \$995 and a deposit of \$200 is necessary to hold the reservation. The price includes round-trip air fare, all hotel accommodations, two meals a day and a number of excursions. Extras include baggage handling and all U.S. and Ireland departure taxes.

Reservations with \$200 deposit may be sent to Vincent S. Parks Jr., 29 Stockton St., Rochester, N.Y. 14625. They must be made by Nov. 9.

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