

Government Heavyweights Back Bishops' Rights To Speak on Arms Race

Washington (NC) — Twenty-four present and former government officials, prominent scientists and scholars have defended the right of the U.S. Catholic bishops to speak out on the issue of nuclear arms.

"If nuclear war were to come, present silence on their part would be unforgivable," the 24 said in a letter released in Washington Nov. 18, the final day of the annual general meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Signers included Sen. Mark O. Hatfield (R-Ore.); William E. Colby, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Gerard C. Smith, chief U.S. negotiator in the first Strategic Arms Limitation Talks; Paul Warnke, chief U.S. negotiator in SALT II; Dr. Claire Randall, general secretary of the National Council of Churches; retired Adm. John

Marshall Lee; retired Brig. Gen. Robert M. Montague; Glenn T. Seaborg, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and professor of chemistry at the University of California; and former Secretary of Commerce Philip M. Klutznick.

Noting that "since President Eisenhower's day it has been well accepted that nuclear war could well spell the end of modern civilization," they said, "Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that this prospect presents a moral problem for religious leaders to be concerned about."

Pointing out that, in preparing their proposed pastoral letter on nuclear weapons, the bishops consulted "a substantial number of well-informed civilian and military leaders," the 24 signatories said, "we suspect that as a result they are better

informed technically than most of their critics."

"In any event," they continued, "while most experts now admit that nuclear war would be suicidal, the critics advise the bishops not to address the issue.

"The role of the military in a democracy in peace and war is to protect the sovereignty and the people of their country. To do this by a suicidal policy seems inherently immoral," the signatories said.

The signatories said the current draft of the pastoral letter recognizes that U.S. armed forces are essential for national security and explicitly unilateral disarmament. "The bishops prudently do not propose that their findings be binding on the individual consciences of those who look to them for



Chicago's Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, right, chairman of the bishops' ad hoc committee on war and peace, listens intently to debate on the proposed pastoral letter on war and peace. With him is Father J. Bryan Hehir, director of the U.S. Catholic Conference office of Justice and Peace.

guidance," they said.

"In pre-war Germany, the Nazis charged the Jews were a threat to the German nation. Would it have been meddling

in secular affairs had the bishops of Germany and of the world addressed themselves directly to that abomination?"

"One should reserve judgment about the substance of the bishops' advice until the final document is available next spring," they said, "but in the meantime the undersigned want to express their full support for the bishops' right, in fact their obligation, to speak out on what is unquestionably the most urgent and difficult moral problem that humankind has ever faced."

Diocese Official Enters Fray over Haitians

Miami (NC) — Msgr. Bryan O. Walsh, an archdiocesan official, has answered accusations from Gov. Bob Graham that many Haitian refugees may become a burden on Florida taxpayers. Graham has called for a complete review of the release program.

Msgr. Walsh, archdiocesan director of Catholic Charities

and executive director of Catholic Community Services, said, "It is my judgment that under extremely difficult conditions, Catholic Community Services has accomplished the basic objectives of this program with regard to the Haitians entrusted to its care.

"They (the Haitians) have been released from detention

and placed with sponsors. They are being provided with the basic necessities for survival and they are available for INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) hearings," he stated.

Graham wrote in a letter to Chesterfield Smith, chairman of a special committee formed to monitor the parole of 756 Haitians from Krome Avenue Center, that "serious problems

exist in the Haitian Interim Placement Program."

About 1,800 Haitians who entered the country illegally were ordered paroled in June by U.S. District Judge Eugene Spellman and many are staying in the Miami area. While the Haitians are waiting for hearings to determine their status, voluntary organizations, including Catholic agencies, have offered sponsorships.

In a survey released by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services and based on interviews with 86 Haitians, it was reported that of 25 refugees living in Miami only six received assistance from voluntary agencies.

The majority said they need food, clothing and other essentials. Twenty percent of the 86 in a tri-county area were not released to the care of individual sponsors who

Adoption Meeting Scheduled

"Love the Children," an agency which deals exclusively with adoptions of Korean children, has planned an informational meeting for 7 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 7, at the Henrietta Public Library, Calkins Road.

The agency seeks homes for infants and children, and Marty Cardona, local case-worker for the Quakerstown, Pa., organization, said that "the waiting period is very short — about six months from application to actual placement."

Children are placed from infancy through 14 years. Expenses are about \$4,800, including home study, post-placement services, Korean agency fees and airfare. Couples are expected to travel to Quakerstown when a child has been selected for them to review the case history.

Further information is available from Mrs. Cardona at 223-1868.



Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

Fit for a Feast

From his perch on top of the shoulder of his mother, Mrs. Christina Bols, son John saw nothing but turkeys, turkeys, and more turkeys! He was one of 35 pre-schoolers from St. Charles Borromeo who visited the Barry's Turkey Farm in Penfield, Thursday, Nov. 18.

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