



On Dec. 3, Montana's Catholic bishops, Elden Curtis of Helena and Thomas J. Murphy of Great Falls-Billings, in a joint statement supporting Bishop Hart, reiterated the opposition to the MX that they had previously voiced during hearings on Montana as a possible basing site.

As the appropriations bill was approaching consideration, representatives of 13 Catholic and Protestant churches or church groups wrote a letter urging Congress to delete the MX production appropriation and to scuttle the whole system on grounds that it is a "dangerous, destabilizing, first-strike nuclear weapon."

Washington (NC) — When the House of Representatives voted 245-176 Dec. 7 to eliminate nearly \$1 billion from 1983 funding of the MX missile, it marked a major victory for opponents of President Reagan's nuclear buildup policy.

The House vote was not a definitive death for the MX but it marked the first time in postwar history that either house of Congress had voted to deny a president a major weapon he wanted.

Among those who had urged congressional defeat of the MX were several Catholic bishops and a coalition of representatives of major Protestant churches of the United States.

The House action removed from the defense appropriation bill only a \$968 million appropriation for production of the MX, leaving intact some \$2.4 billion in research and development funds for the MX itself and a basing system for it. Further, if the Senate were to leave the production appropriation

intact in its version of the bill, the differences between the two chambers would then have to be resolved in joint committee. Political analysts noted, however, that the substantial margin the House vote could give the House version an edge if the Senate vote were close.

Despite the uncertainties, the House vote marked a major step backward in the progress of the controversial MX and cast a heavy pall over Reagan's announced "dense pack" deployment system.

Under the dense pack plan, 100 MX missiles, each having 15 independent targetable nuclear warheads with an explosive yield of 350 kilotons per warhead, would be closely spaced in a 1-by-14 mile strip in Wyoming.

Among those who opposed the plan were Bishop Joseph Hart of Cheyenne, whose diocese covers the whole state of Wyoming. In a pastoral letter in November he urged Catholics in his state to "call upon our congressional and state leaders, our government

and our president to halt the arms escalation now, and to begin with the MX missile."

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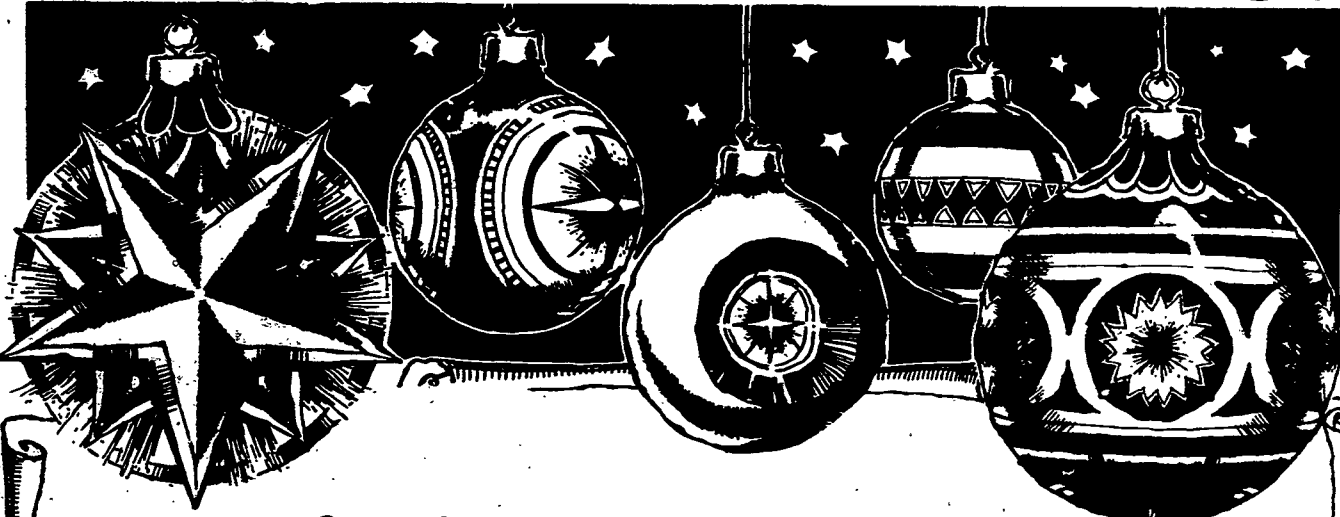
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Gallup Poll On Nuke Freeze

All Americans 77 p.c. pro, 17 con
Catholics 82 p.c. pro, 13 con

Princeton, N.J. (NC) — A Gallup poll released Nov. 21 showed U.S. Catholics slightly more likely than non-Catholics to favor a bilateral nuclear arms freeze, deep cuts in nuclear weapons or their total elimination.

The overwhelming majority of all Americans, the sampling indicated, favor a bilateral U.S. Soviet freeze, but Catholics favor it more strongly than non-Catholics.

Overall, 77 percent those polled favor a bilateral freeze, 17 percent opposed it, and 6 percent said they had no opinion. Among Catholics, 82 percent favored it and 13 percent opposed it; among non-Catholics 76 percent were in favor and 18 percent opposed. The remainder in each group had no opinion.

The poll results, from a telephone sampling of 1,500 persons in 300 communities across the country, were released by the Gallup Organization in Princeton just after a meeting of the U.S. Catholic bishops in Washington in which a draft pastoral letter on the morality of nuclear warfare and nuclear deterrence was the major topic of discussion.

Gabriel

