



Want to Speak On Nuke Letter?

Anyone wishing to speak at the public hearing on the U.S. bishops' pastoral on war and peace must reserve time in advance by sending name, address and telephone number to the International Justice and Peace Commission, 750 W. Main St., Rochester, 14611.

The hearing will be at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 20, at St. Anne's Church, 1600 Mount Hope Ave., Rochester. Those speaking will be limited to three minutes to react to the proposed pastoral. Bishop Matthew H. Clark scheduled the meeting to collect wide opinions from "members of the community, various faiths and Catholic groups." He will take recommendations for consideration at the meeting of the American bishops May 2-3 in Chicago.

Potential speakers have been asked to submit their written comments to the commission. Those who do not wish to speak may submit statements of not more than one typed page.

Critics Praise New Draft

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prepared to be in defense" of the third draft when the nation's bishops gather in Chicago May 2-3 to debate and vote on it. "Although it isn't perfect, it's close," he said.

Novak described the third draft as having "strengthened the argument on pacifism in a way I don't like." There were "good philosophical, moral and religious reasons" for the rejection of pacifism for centuries by "the best minds of the Church," he said.

But Novak downplayed his remaining criticisms of the pastoral. He instead stressed that the third draft had gone a long way, even though not all the way, toward resolving major reservations he had had on the second draft.

He particularly praised it for moving from "halt" to "curb" in its language about the production, deployment and testing of new nuclear systems and for being more explicit about the moral standing of the Soviet Union in its discussion of the principles of a just war.

"The just cause issue" is still "the number one issue" in any discussion of deterrence, he said. "The only reason for the deterrent force is the nature and practice of the Soviet Union."

On that point, the third draft takes a more flexible position than the second, which had categorically rejected a nuclear response to a non-nuclear attack. While still judging nuclear first-use "an unjustifiable moral risk," the third draft acknowledges that U.S.-NATO strategy involving the first-use threat cannot be dismantled until an adequate alternative form of deterrence is in place.

Novak, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think-tank in Washington, also criticized the second draft's position on a no-first-use pledge but he expressed complete agreement with the third draft's position on the issue. Novak had written a 20,000-word analysis of the issues of war and peace which criticized positions taken in the second draft.

The new draft, he said, "recognizes that 'no-first-use' is an ideal, contingent on adequate conventional defense." He said he is in complete agreement that U.S.-NATO strategy should seek to end its reliance on nuclear deterrence against a conventional attack "and the sooner the better."

"I learned my own position (about the current necessity of the nuclear deterrent in NATO strategy) from the German bishops," Novak said. "The bishops learned theirs from the German bishops, too."

Comparing the Drafts

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political policy or moral casuistry which tried to justify using a weapon which "indirectly" or "unintentionally" killed a million innocent people because they happened to live near a "militarily significant target."

Even the "indirect effects" of initiating nuclear war are sufficient to make us dubious of justifying it in any form. It is not sufficient, for example, to contend that "our" side has plans for "limited" or "discriminate" use. Modern warfare is not readily contained by good intentions or technological designs. The psychological climate of the world is such that mention of the term "nuclear" generates uneasiness. Many contend that the use of one tactical nuclear weapon could produce panic, with completely unpredictable consequences. It is precisely this mix of political, psychological, and technological uncertainty which has moved us in this letter to reinforce with moral prohibitions and prescriptions the prevailing political barrier against resort to nuclear weapons. Our support for enhanced command and control facilities, for major reductions in strategic and tactical nuclear forces, and for a "No First Use" policy (as set forth in this letter) is meant to be seen as a complement to our desire to draw a moral

line against nuclear war. Any claim, by any government, that it is pursuing a morally acceptable policy of deterrence must be scrutinized with the greatest care. We are prepared and eager to participate in our country in the ongoing public debate on moral grounds.

The need to rethink the deterrence policy of our nation, to make the revisions necessary to reduce the possibility of nuclear war, and to move toward a more stable system of national and international security will demand a substantial intellectual, political, and moral effort. It also will require, we believe, the willingness to open ourselves to the providential care, power and Word of God, which call us to recognize our common humanity and the bonds of mutual responsibility which exist in the international community in spite of political differences and nuclear arsenals.

Indeed, we do acknowledge that there are many strong voices within our own episcopal ranks and within the wider Catholic community in the U.S. which challenge the strategy of deterrence as an adequate response to the arms race today. They highlight the historical evidence that deterrence has not, in fact, set in motion

substantial processes of disarmament.

Moreover, these voices rightly raise the concern that even the conditional acceptance of deterrence as laid out in a letter such as this might be inappropriately used by some to reinforce the policy of arms buildup. In its stead, they call us to raise a prophetic challenge to the community of faith — a challenge which goes beyond deterrence, toward more resolute steps to actual bilateral disarmament and peacemaking. We recognize the intellectual ground on which the argument is built and the religious sensibility which gives it its strong force.

The dangers of the nuclear age and the enormous difficulties we face in moving toward a more adequate system of global security, stability, and justice requires steps beyond our present conceptions of security and defense policy. In the following section we propose a series of steps aimed at a more adequate policy for preserving peace in a nuclear world.

III. The Promotion of Peace: Proposals and Policies

In a world which is not yet the Kingdom

of God, a world where both personal actions and social forces manifest the continuing influence of sin and disorder among us, consistent attention must be paid to preventing and limiting the violence of war. But this task, addressed extensively in the previous section of this letter, does not exhaust Catholic teaching on war and peace. A complementary theme, reflected in the Scriptures and the theology of the Church and significantly developed by papal teaching in this century, is the building of peace as way to prevent war. This traditional theme was vividly reasserted by Pope John Paul in his homily at Coventry Cathedral:

Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements. Like a cathedral, peace must be constructed patiently and with unshakable faith.

This positive conception of peacemaking profoundly influences many people in our time. At the beginning of this letter we affirmed the need for a more fully developed theology of peace. The basis of such a theology is found in the papal teaching of this century.

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