

the problems requiring common efforts across the ideological divide: keeping the peace and empowering the poor." (106)

We believe this passage reflects the teaching of "Peace on Earth," the continuing call for dialogue of Pope Paul VI and the 1979 address of Pope John Paul II at the United Nations. We continue to stress this theme even while we recognize the difficulty of realizing its objectives.

The difficulties are particularly severe on the issue of the arms race. For most Americans, the danger of war is commonly defined primarily in terms of the threat of Soviet military expansionism and the consequent need to deter or defend against a Soviet military threat. Many assume that the existence of this threat is permanent and that nothing can be done about it except to build and maintain overwhelming or at least countervailing military power. (107)

The fact of a Soviet threat, as well as the existence of a Soviet imperial drive for hegemony, at least in regions of major strategic interest, cannot be denied. The history of the Cold War has produced varying interpretations of which side caused which conflict, but whatever the details of history illustrate, the plain fact is that the memories of Soviet policies in Eastern Europe and recent events in Afghanistan and Poland have left their mark in the American political debate. Many peoples are forcibly kept under communist domination despite their manifest wishes to be free. Soviet power is very great. Whether the Soviet Union's pursuit of military might is motivated primarily by defensive or aggressive arms might be debated, but the effect is nevertheless to leave profoundly insecure those who must live in the shadow of that might.

Americans need have no illusions about the Soviet system of repression and the lack of respect in that system for human rights or about Soviet covert operations and pro-revolutionary activities. To be sure, our own system is not without flaws. Our government has sometimes supported repressive governments in the name of preserving freedom, has carried out repugnant covert operations of its own and remains imperfect in its domestic record of ensuring equal rights for all. At the same time, there is a difference. NATO is an alliance of democratic countries which have freely chosen their association; the Warsaw Pact is not.

To pretend that as a nation we have lived up to all our own ideals would be patently dishonest. To pretend that all evils in the world have been or are now being perpetuated by dictatorial regimes would be both dishonest and absurd. But having said this, and admitting our own faults, it is imperative that we confront reality. The facts simply do not support the invidious comparisons made at times even in our own society between our way of life, in which most basic human rights are at least recognized even if they are not always adequately supported, and those totalitarian and tyrannical regimes in which such rights are either denied or systematically suppressed. Insofar as this is true, however, it makes the promotion of human rights in our foreign policy, as well as our domestic policy, all the more important. It is the acid test of our commitment to our democratic values. In this light, any attempts to justify, for reasons of state, support for regimes that continue to violate human rights is all the more morally reprehensible in its hypocrisy.

A glory of the United States is the range of political freedoms its system permits us. We, as bishops, as Catholics, as citizens, exercise those freedoms in writing this letter, with its share of criticisms of our government. We have true freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and access to a free press. We could not exercise the same freedoms in contemporary Eastern Europe or in the Soviet Union. Free people must always pay a proportionate price and run some risks — responsibility — to preserve their freedom.

It is one thing to recognize that the people of the world do not want war. It is quite another thing to attribute the same good motives to regimes or political systems that have consistently demonstrated precisely the opposite in their behavior. There are political philosophies with understandings of morality so radically different from ours that even negotiations proceed from different premises, although identical terminology may be used by both sides. This is no reason for not negotiating. It is a very good reason for not negotiating blindly or naively.

In this regard, Pope John Paul II offers some sober reminders concerning dialogue and peace:

"One must mention the tactical and deliberate lie, which misuses language, which has recourse to the most sophisticated techniques of propaganda, which deceives and distorts dialogue and incites to aggression..."

While certain parties are fostered by ideologies which, in spite of their declarations, are opposed to the dignity of the human person... ideologies which see in struggle the motive force of history, that see in force the source of rights, that see in the discernment of the enemy the ABC of politics, dialogue is fixed and sterile. Or, if it still exists, it is a superficial and falsified reality. It becomes very difficult, not to say impossible, therefore. There follows almost a complete lack of communication between countries and blocs. Even the international institu-

tions are paralyzed. And the setback to dialogue then runs the risk of serving the arms race.

"However, even in what can be considered as an impasse to the extent that individuals support such ideologies, the attempt to have a lucid dialogue seems still necessary in order to unblock the situation and to work for the possible establishment of peace on particular points. This is to be done by counting upon common sense, on the possibilities of danger for everyone and on the just aspirations to which the peoples themselves largely adhere." (108)

The cold realism of this text, combined with the conviction that political dialogue and negotiations must be pursued, in spite of obstacles, provides solid guidance for U.S.-Soviet relations. Acknowledging all the differences between the two philosophies and political systems, the irreducible truth is that objective mutual interests do exist between the superpowers. Proof of this concrete if limited convergence of interest can be found in some vitally important agreements on nuclear weapons which have already been negotiated in the areas of nuclear testing and nuclear explosions in space as well as the SALT I agreements.

The fact that the Soviet Union now possesses a huge arsenal of strategic weapons as threatening to us as ours may appear to them does not exclude the possibility of success in such negotiations. The conviction of many European observers that a *modus vivendi* (often summarized as "detente") is a practical possibility in political, economic and scientific areas should not be lightly dismissed in our country.

Sensible and successful diplomacy, however, will demand that we avoid the trap of a form of anti-Sovietism which fails to grasp the central danger of a superpower rivalry in which both the United States and the Soviet Union are the players, and fails to recognize the common interest both states have in never using nuclear weapons. Some of those dangers and common interests would exist in any world where two great powers, even relatively benign ones, competed for power, influence and security. The diplomatic requirement for addressing the U.S.-Soviet relationship is not romantic idealism about Soviet intentions and capabilities, but solid realism which recognizes that everyone will lose in a nuclear exchange.

As bishops we are concerned with issues which go beyond diplomatic requirements. It is of some value to keep raising in the realm of the political debate truths which ground our involvement in the affairs of nations and peoples. Diplomatic dialogue usually sees the other as a potential or real adversary. Soviet behavior in some cases merits the adjective reprehensible, but the Soviet people and their leaders are human beings created in the image and likeness of God. To believe we are condemned in the future only to what has been the past of U.S.-Soviet relations is to underestimate both our human potential for creative diplomacy and God's action in our midst which can open the way to changes we could barely imagine. We do not intend to foster illusory ideas that the road ahead in superpower relations will be devoid of tension or that peace will be easily achieved. But we do warn against that "hardness of heart" which can close us or others to the changes needed to make the future different from the past.

### 3. Interdependence: From Fact to Policy

While the nuclear arms race focuses attention on the U.S.-Soviet relationship, it is neither politically wise nor morally justifiable to ignore the broader international context in which that relationship exists. Public attention, riveted on the big powers, often misses the plight of scores of countries and millions of people simply trying to survive. The interdependence of the world means a set of interrelated human questions. Important as keeping the peace in the nuclear age is, it does not solve or dissolve the other major problems of the day. Among these problems the pre-eminent issue is the continuing chasm in living standards between the industrialized world (East and West) and the developing world. To quote Pope John Paul II:

"So widespread is the phenomenon that it brings into question the financial, monetary, production and commercial mechanisms that, resting on various political pressures, support the world economy. These are proving incapable either of remedying the unjust social situations inherited from the past or of dealing with the urgent challenges and ethical demands of the present." (109)

The East-West competition, central as it is to world order and important as it is in the foreign policy debate, does not address this moral question which rivals the nuclear issue in its human significance. While the problem of the developing nations would itself require a pastoral letter, Catholic teaching has maintained an analysis of the problem which should be identified here. The analysis acknowledges internal causes of poverty, but also concentrates on the way the larger interna-

By SR. AMATA MILLER, IHM

In this section of the pastoral letter, the bishops draw attention to the broad international context in which the arms race exists. They point out the continuing and widening gap between the rich nations and poor nations, and call our attention to the plight of the millions of people who are struggling for the barest survival. The bishops call this gap in living standards a moral question which rivals the nuclear issue in its human significance.

While the bishops recognize that there are internal causes of poverty in the nations of the world, they also recognize that much of the hunger and poverty in the world is the result of larger international economic structures and policies. Catholic teaching has supported such an analysis.

Interdependence is a fact. International responsibility for world hunger and poverty is a fact. Yet the bishops find that neither of the superpowers have placed much emphasis on "initiatives to address 'the absolute poverty' in which millions live today."

The bishops believe, however, that there is a great potential for a response to this issue in the minds and hearts of Americans. They have witnessed the generosity of the American people when they themselves have appealed for funds.

The challenge, then, is to find ways to translate the personal generosity and compassion of Americans into policy initiatives of our government.

The linkage between the arms race and global poverty is briefly sketched in the letter. The pastoral points out that the absorption of scarce natural, human, and capital resources by the arms race hinders the development of the means to support and enhance human life.

In 1976 the Vatican Statement on Disarmament put it starkly when it described the arms race as "an act of aggression which amounts to a crime because by their cost alone armaments kill the poor by causing them to starve." For Christians this places the moral challenge of the arms race at the heart of the teaching of Jesus.

The bishops call us to action in regard to this moral imperative. We must build upon our charity and supplement it with justice. We are urged to understand and evaluate our nation's trade and aid policies in light of global poverty and common security.

Not the unavailability of resources but rather the misdirection of resources and a failure of political will prevent a proper response to pressing human needs throughout the world. The bishops urge us to support structural reforms in the relationships between the industrialized and developing countries.

The bishops call us to become responsible citizens of the world and recommend strong support for the United Nations by the U.S. government and its people. They redirect our attention to the common security of humankind, to the fact that in an interdependent world there is no such thing as security without a more just world order.