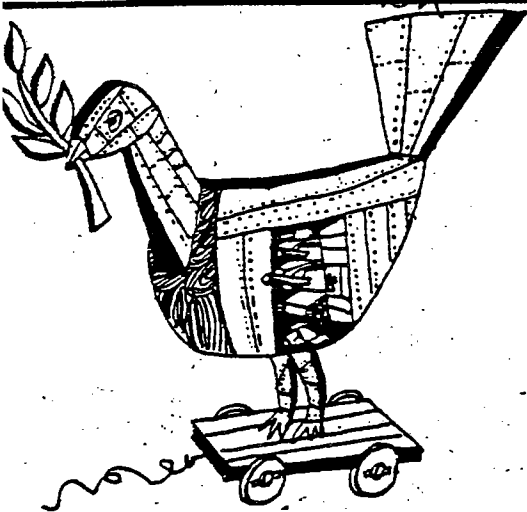


NOTE:

From time to time THE LAUCKS FOUNDATION reprints and disseminates published material which we think contributes to clarification or understanding of critical issues affecting world peace. The exchange of views on SALT II (reprinted below) from COMMONWEAL (March 2 and April 27, 1979) is, in our opinion, illuminating and worthy of study. *SM* Eulah C. Laucks, President, THE LAUCKS FOUNDATION, P.O. Box 5012, Santa

Barbara, CA.
93108

IS SALT WORTH SUPPORTING? NO!



Chaplains blessing the bombers

THOMAS J. GUMBLETON

WHEN I WAS invited to a briefing session for religious leaders at the State Department on October 18, 1978, I went readily, because I had implicitly assumed I would support the signing of the SALT II Treaty. I was pleased to have an opportunity to learn more about the proposed treaty and to join with other religious leaders in the effort to build a base of support for SALT II in the churches and religious communities throughout the United States.

At the end of the morning session, after the facts had been carefully laid out about the incredibly large arsenals that the Soviets and the U.S. would have under SALT II, one of the participants asked a question. "Do you mean that you expect us as religious leaders to support the kind of arsenal you are describing? That we should offer religious legitimacy for weapons outlined in your presentation?"

The government representative who had just been speaking, indicated his awareness that support for such weapons might be troubling to a religious leader. But his response was that the Arms Control Agency and the State Department could not make moral evaluations. Their responsibility was to guarantee the "security" of the United States by making sure that even with a SALT II agreement, our arsenal would not be inferior to any nation's.

The impact of that response for me was immediate and challenging. The more I thought about it, the clearer the situation became. The government expert indicated that he and his colleagues would not deal with the kind of concern raised by the questioner. In fact, he was saying that that was a moral problem, a religious question—not a political one—and religious leaders had to be concerned with such questions. He understood that.

But who really was asking that kind of question? We had been brought together to be briefed and we were already devising a strategy to form a Religious Committee of Support

for SALT II. We were going to help "sell" SALT II. The very religious leaders who should have been raising the challenging questions about the rightness of our arms policy were simply being "drafted" into an army of support for the treaty. Those in government were not going to ask such questions. And it seemed that those in positions of religious and moral leadership were not going to ask them either.

But such questions must be raised. In my own reflection on the role of a religious leader and my responsibility to help people to face the moral implications of our government's decisions, I began to think again about that most fateful day in the history of the world: August 6, 1945. Hiroshima. One bomb exploded over that city and incinerated 80,000 to 100,000 people in 9 seconds—men, women, children.

I remembered Pope Paul VI in his Peace Day Statement of 1976, describing that bombing of Hiroshima as "a butchery of untold magnitude."

I began to ponder the fact that SALT II would legitimate the destructive power of 615,000 Hiroshima bombs, the present American arsenal.

I began to wonder how I as a religious leader could offer support for an agreement that would sanction that kind of destructive power in the hands of any government. I was especially troubled when I recalled that President Carter, within the last year in speaking before the United Nations, ruled out the use of nuclear weapons by the United States only against nations that do not themselves have such weapons. That statement left no doubt that we *do* intend to use them. And what is more, we intend to use them first.

On June 30, 1975, Defense Secretary James Schlesinger publicly stated: "Under no circumstances could we disavow the first use of nuclear weapons. . . . If one accepts the no first use doctrine, one is accepting a self-denying ordinance that weakens deterrence." That statement put the United States clearly on public record as being ready and willing to be the first nation to use nuclear weapons in a confrontation with another nation. This policy has not been modified.

I remembered the pastoral letter of the American Bishops "To Live in Christ Jesus." This letter clearly states the moral

BISHOP THOMAS J. GUMBLETON, auxiliary bishop of Detroit, is President of Pax Christi, U.S.A.

position that Catholics are to be guided by regarding not only the use of weapons of indiscriminate destruction, but also concerning even the possession of such weapons:

167. The right of legitimate defense is not a moral justification for unleashing every form of destruction. For example, acts of war deliberately directed against innocent non-combatants are gravely wrong, and no one may participate in such an act. . . .

At the same time, no nation, our own included, may demand blind obedience. No member of the armed forces, above all no Christians who bear arms as 'agents of security and freedom' can rightfully carry out orders or policies requiring direct force against non-combatants. . . .

With respect to nuclear weapons, at least those with massive destructive capability, the first imperative is to prevent their use. As possessors of a vast nuclear arsenal, we must also be aware that not only is it wrong to attack civilian populations but it is also wrong to threaten to attack them as part of a strategy of deterrence. . . .

I WAS AMONG the bishops who overwhelmingly voted approval of that statement. Am I now ready to repudiate that stance? Am I now ready instead to seek throughout the religious community support of a policy of our government that so recently has been clearly judged immoral?

The argument has been raised that at least SALT II puts a "cap" on the permissible number of such weapons. Yet as I thought about that, it seemed that supporting such an agreement would be like supporting a "cap" on the number of torture chambers permitted to governments. I can't accept that anyone who firmly believes that torture is immoral would be ready to support such a position. Torture is wrong, and we could never give our blessing to the maintenance of even one such facility.

"But can't you support SALT II as the first step in the right direction? Here we are, deeply implicated in an immoral situation. We cannot extricate ourselves with one decisive action. It will take time, and we must do it one step at a time.. SALT II is the first step in a journey of a thousand miles."

If only it were a first step. It is not.

Consider this report in the *New York Times* as recently as December 13, 1978:

George M. Seignious II, the Carter Administration's new director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, told reporters today that even if Washington and Moscow succeeded in working out a new strategic arms accord soon, the United States would still have to press ahead with modernizing its nuclear arsenal.

While noting that he "wholeheartedly" supported the proposed arms agreement, he said that Moscow would be able under the accord to make improvements to its nuclear forces that would "doubtlessly propel" the Carter Administration into some form of military response.

Business as usual under SALT II. The arms race goes on. This is really the failure of SALT II. It is not the beginning of

the reversal of the arms race. It is not the first step. The simple reason is that the arms race is no longer a matter of numbers. When our arsenal can already destroy every major Soviet city 36 times over, it is at least irrelevant, if not ridiculous and perhaps even deceptive to talk about a "cap" on numbers as though this begins the process of reversing the arms race.

At this point in the arms race it is a race in technology and sophistication. It is a race to increase the destructive capacity of the weapons we already possess. It is a race to increase the accuracy of these weapons. As noted in the *New York Times* (December 24, 1978), "In the view of many analysts, new arms agreements do not really limit arms competition, they only push it down different avenues."

SALT II will be no different in this regard from any past agreement. The Soviets, even with SALT II, will continue to plan five new land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, a new strategic submarine and long-range bomber. And the same day that Secretary Vance went to Geneva to conclude the SALT II talks Zbigniew Brzezinski told reporters that the United States would soon have to embark on a multibillion dollar program for deploying mobile intercontinental missiles.

Clearly SALT II is not a first step out of an evil situation.

A NOTHER CLEAR reason why SALT II is not the first step in reversing the arms race is the kind of "selling job" that is being done for it. Instead of emphasizing that the arms race has brought us to the most dangerous point of insecurity for all nations that the world has ever known, our political leaders are still trying to convince us that we can have security and peace through nuclear arms. The arguments made for the treaty strongly emphasize that we are not lessening in any way our



dependency on nuclear weapons. Einstein put it accurately when he said, "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything but our modes of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe." A genuine first step in reversing the arms race would require some change in our thinking. Without that, a mere "cap" on numbers and even some slight limit on technology will be meaningless. We are still hostages with the nuclear gun pointed at our head.

It is very late in the history of the arms race. Very serious people indicate that nuclear war before the year 2000 is not just a possibility, it is a probability. Religious leaders, I think, have a major share of the responsibility for this situation. Before 1976 what pope or bishop referred to the bombing of Hiroshima as "a butchery of untold magnitude?" Until 1976—while the arms race had been going on for almost 30

years—where did we find clear moral guidance from Catholic bishops in the United States, or very many other religious leaders, similar to the statement in "To Live in Christ Jesus" quoted above? It has been pointed out in a National Council of Churches pamphlet that Karl Barth, who was a leader in the German churches' resistance to Hitler, once declared the most vital issue facing Christianity has been the inability of the churches to take a definite stand against nuclear weapons. He compared it to the churches' inability to take a stand against Hitler. By our failure in moral leadership we have acquiesced in that "drift toward unparalleled catastrophe" deplored by Einstein.

The call for us to support SALT II is "a moment of grace" when we must begin to give strong leadership and clear moral guidance. We must indicate to the President and to our people that we cannot in good conscience support SALT II.

There are some who will ask how can you align yourself with the opponents of SALT II who do not want any limitation on strategic arms whatsoever? The answer is simply that we are not in any way aligned with these opponents of SALT II. We do not agree with their understanding as to what will bring genuine security to our nation. Furthermore, I do not see any reason to engage in a debate with them over SALT II. We could win such a debate, but we would not have made any real progress toward reversing the arms race. I am convinced that a much better answer is simply to end formal negotiations and rely on unilateral demonstrations of arms restraint. Not only would this be in accord with our present moral teaching, but it would also be the most expedient thing to do—in the opinion of many specialists in and out of government.

IF RELIGIOUS leaders and religious communities can be persuaded not to support SALT II, what can they offer instead in the effort to bring about genuine disarmament? I would suggest the following as an outline of a carefully conceived effort to reverse the arms race.

First, the religious community should pledge itself to undertake a massive effort of education and conscience formation. We have a responsibility to begin to develop in ourselves and the whole community "a whole new attitude toward war," as Vatican Council II has called for. And we must really share the conviction of that same Council that "the arms race is an utterly treacherous trap . . . it is much to be feared that if this race persists, it will eventually spawn all the lethal ruin whose path it is now making ready." We must also share with others the moral judgment of the Vatican statement to the U.S. that "the arms race in itself is an act of aggression against the poor."

This is only the briefest sampling of the clear statements giving moral guidance on the arms race. Besides sharing these teachings we must pledge ourselves to seek out in prayer and faith what God has revealed to us, especially in Jesus, about the use of violence. Pope Paul in 1976, even appealed to us to consider as an example for our own time "what can be done by a weak man, Gandhi—armed only with the principle of non-violence." In 1978 Pope Paul urged us "to say 'no' to vio-

"A much better answer is simply to end formal negotiations and rely on unilateral demonstrations of arms restraint."

lence, and 'yes' to peace." We could prepare the way for the reversal of the arms race if we took very seriously our responsibility to teach and form consciences in the light of this ever more urgent teaching about non-violence.

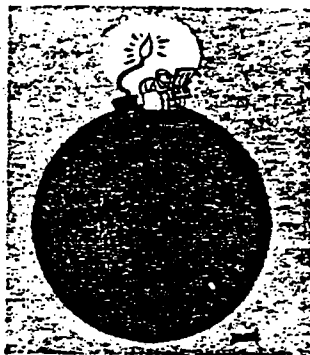
The second step the religious community can take is to promote a national effort to build a climate for conversion from an arms industry to exclusively peace production. The churches could join in a community effort to prepare for such conversion of our industrial capacity by educating our people to understand the interrelationship between the arms race and unemployment, and many other social problems in the United States. And very concretely we could actively support the "Defense Economic Adjustment Act," a Senate bill (S2279 in the 95th Congress) intended to move us from an arms-based economy to one based on peacetime civilian-oriented priorities.

Thirdly, the religious community must take the lead in positively building peace. Vatican II stated: "Peace is not merely the absence of war. Nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. . . . Instead it is rightly and appropriately called 'an enterprise of justice' (Is. 32:7). Peace results from the harmony built into human society by its divine Founder, and actualized by men (and women) as they thirst after ever greater justice." (*Gaudium et Spes*, #78)

There is not the space here to go into detail on the program of justice we could develop, starting with changes in our own lifestyle and our use of this world's goods, but there surely is no lack of steps we could take in the struggle to assure that every person on earth begins to have enough to eat, decent shelter, adequate education and health care, and all the things necessary to meet basic human needs. Instead of forming a religious coalition of support for SALT II, we could form such a coalition to pass the world Peace Tax Fund Bill. This bill would provide an entirely new resource for peace programs. It could be the first step in assuring that our resources are used in the "enterprise of justice" rather than the continued escalation of the arms race.

In 1963 Pope John XXIII, a few weeks before his death, published his widely acclaimed letter, *Pacem in Terris*. In it he reminded us that "there is an immense task incumbent on all men (and women) of good will, namely, the task of restoring the relations of the human family in truth, in justice, in love and in freedom." (#163)

We must stop the arms race now and undertake this task with the greatest sense of urgency because the finish line in the arms race is not peace but holocaust.



IS SALT WORTH SUPPORTING? YES!

Limited but substantial achievements

J. BRYAN HEHIR

PAX CHRISTI-USA and The Committee on the Present Danger are both opposing the ratification of SALT II. Pax Christi asserts that the treaty achieves too little; The Committee believes that the treaty is giving away too much. These two charges illustrate the vulnerability of the treaty. Two groups, with antithetical objectives, have formed a tactically identical position: defeat of SALT II.

Between these two positions it is possible to build a case of support for SALT II as a limited but necessary measure of arms control, deserving the support of all those, including Christians, who are committed to abolishing the nuclear threat to human life. The case has two dimensions: a general political-moral argument for SALT II; and a specific ecclesial discussion of the church and SALT II.

The *limits* of SALT II as an arms control measure are clear and should be clearly acknowledged. The procedural limits are rooted in the way these bilateral superpower negotiations are insulated from other actors in the international system. This isolation of the SALT process from other arms control or disarmament forums enhances the feeling among other states that the nuclear condominium, which could drastically impact them, is totally beyond their influence.

The substantive limits of SALT II are more significant. The actual reductions required by the treaty are marginal and the dynamic of development in key areas of weapons technology is not stringently constrained. Examples of substantive limits include the continuing development of weapons accuracy allowed by the treaty and the provision that each side will be allowed to produce and deploy one new missile during the life of the treaty. In terms of the numerical limits on missiles and warheads, the proposed ceilings are most often higher than present levels of development for either superpower. Critics of the treaty who charge that it achieves too little can legitimately indicate that it sanctions increased deployment of nuclear weapons for both sides. This litany of the limits of SALT II concentrates on the arguments of those who find it, in Bishop Gumbleton's words during a talk to Pax Christi's annual meeting in December, "a cruel hoax" rather than a step toward real

disarmament. The full complexity of the SALT II debate can be understood, however, only when it is recognized that an entirely different range of criticisms against SALT II is based on the tendency, in Paul Nitze's words, "to subordinate security policies to hopes for advancing arms control rather than shaping arms control policies to our security needs."

IT IS CLEAR that SALT II is limited; it is even more clear that it is *necessary*. It is necessary as an integral part of a process which is presently the only politically viable method of reversing the arms race. The key question is: what will defeat of SALT II do to ameliorate its limits? Is there any evidence that its defeat will produce more substantial forms of disarmament? Those opposing SALT II should reasonably be expected to answer this question. Those supporting SALT II must demonstrate its merits; the case rests on a convergence of arguments.

First, quantitative controls: the controls proposed by SALT II in terms of numbers of nuclear weapons are limited but not inconsequential. To evaluate them fairly requires that SALT be viewed as a process, with a history and a future. Arms control agreements are not an end in themselves; they must be interpreted in terms of their impact on a wider political context. SALT II does set new lower limits on Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicles (SNDVs)—bombers and missiles—and it does require destruction of some SNDVs by the Soviet Union. The new limit of 2250 SNDVs, down from 2400, is higher than the present U.S. development, but deeper cuts proposed early in the Carter administration were rejected by the Soviets—understandably, given the nature of the proposal. The numbers are not great, but in political terms it must be stressed that this would amount to the first reduction of offensive weapons in the history of the nuclear arms race. The political-psychological significance of such a reduction should not be lightly discarded either as a deception or a give-away. From deterrence theory to debate about SALT II, psychology is woven through the fabric of the debate. The impact of negotiating the first reduction in three decades breaks the mind-set that the technological dynamic is beyond political control.

Second, the terms of SALT II are not only about quantitative controls. Unlike SALT I, which left the crucially important problem of multiple-independently targeted-reentry-vehicles (MIRVs) unresolved, SALT II devotes considerable attention to qualitative controls. The principal method of control is the

FATHER J. BRYAN HEHIR is Associate Secretary of the Office of International Justice and Peace, United States Catholic Conference in Washington.

establishment of a series of subceilings under the 2250 SNDVs which restrict development of various types of weapons systems. The limits on MIRVed weapons remain at 1320; but within this category the accurate and powerful land-based MIRVed missiles are limited to 820. The numerical limits are still high, but the central fact is the *principle* of qualitative control which can in turn yield further reductions within the SALT process.

Third, there stands the ominous threat of what can be expected if SALT II controls are not imposed. The arms race is generated by a quasi-independent technological dynamic. The primary significance of the SALT process, as part of a wider disarmament picture, is the chance to impose political control on the most powerful and dangerous dimension of the technological revolution in this century.

It is necessary to ask those who would withhold support of SALT II because it is too limited what alternative forms of control they propose. The arms race is principally in the hands of states; we are left, for the foreseeable future, with limits to which states will agree. SALT II falls in that category, and should be evaluated in light of the projections now made about the future devoid of SALT II controls.

If SALT II fails there will be no existing framework for superpower arms limitation. The SALT I Interim Agreement on offensive weapons has expired. The ceiling of 2400 SNDVs will no longer hold, and careful estimates predict 3000 SNDVs by the mid-1980s. Since no qualitative controls will exist, MIRV production will be unconstrained both in terms of the number of MIRVed missiles and the number of warheads per missile. Politically, the failure of SALT II will inevitably be seen in the short term as a signal that the impetus for superpower arms control is dormant or dead. No attempt will be made here to predict what will happen on the Soviet side after the centerpiece of its foreign policy has collapsed. On the U.S. side, past experience illustrates that all candidates for new weapons systems will become actual contenders: the B-1, Trident II, along with MX will be on the legislative assembly line. Each system has its supporters within Defense and/or Congress; SALT II holds out the possibility of systemic control of the development and procurement process. Without SALT II, each weapons system becomes the subject of a "great debate" similar to the B-1 decision.

Fourthly, one must ask whether there is any evidence that the defeat of SALT II will contribute anything to the wider process of disarmament. There is a broader agenda than SALT II, but it is highly doubtful that much will occur in other forums without a SALT agreement. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Mutual Balanced Force Reductions both involve the U.S. and USSR as central actors; it is difficult to believe they will survive the recriminations of a SALT II failure. The Nonproliferation Treaty and its subsequent regime of constraints on nonnuclear states has been predicated from its inception on paragraph VI which pledges the superpowers to a meaningful process of arms control. The restraints in horizontal proliferation are already fragile; they will be eroded by another superpower failure on vertical proliferation.

"There must be a way to continue the examination of the inadequacies of SALT II without being part of the coalition which seriously threatens to defeat it . . . in pursuit of escalation."

THE POLITICAL-MORAL case for SALT II is cast in terms of these arguments: the key moral value is control; the political method is negotiated limitation among states. One can argue both dimensions in reasonable fashion, but like all political and moral arguments it is an appeal to reason, not an infallible case. A new dimension enters the debate about the treaty when we examine whether Christians should support SALT II. Christians bring perspectives to the debate which do not fit nicely into conventional political discourse. It is possible, therefore, that a reasonable political-moral argument is at best interesting to them but not compelling. Some comments, therefore, are in order about Christians, the church and SALT II.

First, the controlling text in the discussion should be from *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*: "it happens rather frequently, and legitimately so; that with equal sincerity some of the faithful will disagree with others on a given matter." The text should forestall quick conclusions that a given position is the Catholic position on SALT. In the SALT debate, the technical data are sufficiently complex and moral analysis sufficiently controverted that there is room for more than one Christian insight.

Second, the debate within the Catholic community, given impetus by Pax Christi, is surely to be welcomed. At the same time it is necessary to keep the Catholic debate in focus. It is important for the participants; but it would be a delusion to think the public debate about SALT will be cast in terms of this exchange. Christians have an opportunity to participate in public policy debate, but they seldom can define the terms of the debate. That debate will be argued in terms of whether SALT II "gives away too much," not by whether "it achieves too little."

Third, even if we do not define the terms of the debate, we can determine our own position by criteria which are specific to our religious vision. The question, then, is whether the limited but substantial achievements of SALT II are compelling for the Christian conscience. Sorting out the answer requires further distinctions. In the first instance, it is clear that any SALT II agreement would rest upon the foundation of the strategic "balance of terror." But no arms control agreement is conceivable today which does not rest upon the deterrence relationship. In the second place, for guidance one can examine recent statements of the teaching church from *Peace on Earth* (1963) to Paul VI's *Address to the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament* (1978). These documents condemn the arms race unreservedly, yet woven through these state-

ments is a theme which recognizes the complexity of moving from condemnations to constructive political change. This theme speaks of reversing the arms race in terms of "progressive disarmament," with stockpiles being reduced "equally and simultaneously," in a controlled process which yields security at least equal to the present situation. The purpose of these citations is simply to say that there is an existent rationale for Catholic support of measures that seek a limited form of control of weapons systems.

Fourth, in determining what position Catholics should take in the face of SALT II, it is helpful to use the traditional categories of an ethic of intention and an ethic of consequences. The intent of opposing SALT II because it is too limited may range from a determination to offer a distinct form of Christian witness to a decision to provide a counterweight against groups opposing the treaty as a give-away. Intention is important in political ethics, but never solely decisive. The consequences must be coldly confronted: do we want to contribute to the failure of SALT II? Is it necessary to oppose SALT II in order to specify its limits? It seems there must be a way to continue the examination of the inadequacies of SALT II without being part of the coalition which seriously threatens to defeat it not in the name of disarmament, but in pursuit of escalation.

FINALLY, there is embedded in the Catholic debate a larger ecclesiological question about the church's role in society. There is a form of Christian witness against war which refuses to take the conventional categories of political and ethical

discourse as the means of determining Christian obligation. This position defined as "sectarian" (in an analytical not a pejorative sense) finds a useful form of witness in rejecting standard categories as a means of stating the war and peace issues. The contrary position, "the church model," brings its own categories to the societal debate but consciously tries to relate to and to inform the wider debate with insights of faith and reason drawn from the Christian tradition.

The dimensions and dangers of the nuclear age have moved an increasing number of Christians to a sectarian position, ethically and ecclesologically, as the only viable ground on which to stand. If one can judge by statements of the last fifteen years, the teaching church has not moved to that posture. The argument of this article is that SALT II does not provide grounds for the institutional church to become sectarian in an ecclesiological or ethical sense. It should be sufficiently pluralist to shelter sectarian options in the community without itself adopting a sectarian view.

The refusal to take a sectarian stance will leave the church "in the middle" of the SALT II debate. In the face of criticisms that the treaty is "too little" or "too much" the middle position asserts that SALT II is not enough, but it is imperative as a step in a process. As usual the middle position is neither as clear nor as dramatic as the edges of an argument can be. It sacrifices clarity to complexity and often must blend commitment with compromise. But the middle is often where one can mesh the possible and the necessary in the policy process. This position supports what is presently possible in pursuit of a larger vision of what must be made possible.

27
COMMONWEAL: April, 1979

Correspondence

SALT DEBATE: READERS REACT

In our issue of March 2 the question was posed: "Is SALT worth supporting?" No, said Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton, president of Pax Christi USA (3000 N. Mango Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60634). Yes, said Father J. Bryan Hehir of the Office of International Justice and Peace, United States Catholic Conference. What follows is a representative selection of the letters received on the subject, with the proportion of pro- and anti-SALT letters printed reflecting the number received.

THE EDITORS

Salt, not SALT

Detroit, Mich.

To the Editors: I was struck by the irony that we Christians who are called to be the salt of the earth, the leaven, must now decide about an entirely different kind of SALT. This SALT may well hasten the leveling of that earth. Bishop Gumbleton has my support in his stand because of my concern for my family and the millions of families who crave peace. I am equally as concerned that we have spent billions of dollars on arms while people crave not only peace, but food and shelter. . . .

I am coming to see, probably reluctantly, that it is time to take a stand on this issue, however unpopular or misunderstood. We need to give witness to the fact that our Christianity compels us to be about the business of making peace now, by whatever name.

EILEEN J. MURPHY

Suing for non-support

Memphis, Tenn

To the Editors: Father Brian Hehir's article misstated Pax Christi's position on SALT II.

We are *not* opposing ratification, as are the other groups he mentioned. Rather, as Bishop Gumbleton mad

clear, Pax Christi's position is simply to refuse to support the treaty.

Non-support is not the same as opposition. Pax Christi will not actively oppose ratification, because we recognize that an arms race channeled along certain lines is at least theoretically a lesser evil than a completely unchecked arms race.

But we cannot support the treaty either. SALT II is based on the mutually assured destruction posture of the Defense Department. Instead of a step toward arms limitation, it actually encourages arms escalation.

Pax Christi's Executive Council made its non-support decision based on our understanding of the church's teachings about the nuclear arms race. We hope we recognize as well as Father Hehir does the political intricacies of the treaty. But we think the country needs a voice apart from politics calling for an end to the MAD-ness fostered by SALT II.

Pax Christi believes that nuclear weapons represent a profound immorality in the contemporary world. We feel that nuclear disarmament, far from weakening the United States, will actually strengthen our country and help it become a more constructive leader among nations.

GERARD A. VANDERHAAR
Chairperson, Executive Council
Pax Christi USA

Disarm out loud

Madison Heights, Mich.

To the Editors: Is SALT II worth supporting? "No." . . . The earth was entrusted to us by the Lord. We should take only what we need and leave it in good shape for those who come after us. What we are actually doing is using up the world's resources on war weapons. We are poisoning and polluting the world, and we may incinerate the world.

What we must do is educate people to the present danger and begin to disarm right out loud, across the board, at the Pentagon, on the front page, for the whole world to see. . . .

VIVIENNE KELL

Dynamic witness

Detroit, Mich.

To the Editors: . . . Bryan Hehir states that the terms of the debate are whether SALT II "gives away too much" rather than if "it achieves too little." Why accept these terms? Why not challenge the basic question with a dynamic witness? Christians opposed to nuclear weapons and the vastness of our arsenal can make heard their opposition clearly, forcefully, and frequently enough so that the question of too-little achievement is discussed. When many persons raise the specter of insufficient control, when many persons request greater limitation, when many speak to government officials about these inadequacies of SALT II, then the term "achieves too little" will come to the fore. . . . Let us not deny what Bishop Gumbleton calls this "moment of grace."

MARGARET M. WEBER

Beyond SALT

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Father Bryan Hehir's support of SALT II seems tactically correct. But it may well involve a faulty pastoral strategy for the church just where there is most need to make clear the church's commitment to peace.

Just war has a claim to be an ecclesial teaching short of questions about nuclear war. At that point, those who are proponents of that tradition and would like to apply it even to nuclear war should be content, just as Hehir recommends sectarian pacifists should, to accept the shelter to be found under the umbrella of ecclesiastical pluralism. For is not it a purist, sectarian stand to hold to just war theory even under the shadow of nuclear war? To defend just war in this extreme case is to say, "fiat iustitia, ruat caelum," as surely as any pacifist.

In his *Just and Unjust Wars*, Michael Walzer argues that, though deterrence may be morally defensible by reason of necessity, every opportunity must be taken to deliver nations from the awful moral dilemma of nuclear war—to threaten to bring on nuclear catastrophe in order to avoid that very doom. What is true of citizens and political leaders should be true *a fortiori* of the church.

Arguments from extremity create the misperception that intentions are shadowy insubstantial things. Though the threat to use nuclear weapons is meant to be perceived as a real threat, the "deterrence/non-use" posture—Hehir's own stand on nuclear deterrence—makes it seem as if nuclear war were only a mere

mental possibility political leaders entertain from time to time and not a political dynamic with its own momentum. The threat and the intention to carry out the threat are (privately, not publicly) divided. The effect is to hide from ourselves the intention implicit in the threat.

The problem, of course, is that despite double think, the threat is very real. Indeed, I would argue that it is more like a disposition than a simple intention. It involves the development, procurement, and deployment of intricate and massively destructive technologies, the application of many of the country's sharpest minds, and the expenditure of an enormous portion of our public wealth.

Such a mobilization of national strength for total destruction would be justifiable, it seems to me, *only if* some comparable collective effort were made to establish countervailing motives of restraint in public institutions. In the case of individuals, certainly, the conscious development of a destructive cast of mind, training in martial arts, and acquisition of weapons, would be regarded as evidence of evil fundamental option, were there not compensating virtues as well as alleged justifying goals for the pattern of action.

Commonweal, A Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas-New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Telephone: (212) MU 3-2042. Yearly subscriptions, U.S. and Canada, \$20; foreign, \$22. Special two-year rate: \$35; foreign, \$39. Single copy, \$1.

Take the protagonist of the movie *Taxi Driver*. Saving a child prostitute justifies neither the basically destructive disposition this character creates for himself nor his wanton use of force. So, too, with nations. Even justified armament, in the absence of deliberate tendencies to restraint, leads to a destructive posture, which is immoral, because it is increasingly prone to do what it has been made ready to do.

The morally objectionable point in just war defense of deterrence and arms control is located in the split it sanctions between publicly declared intentions and private moral judgment. It is not as much the noble lie which is objectionable as it is the impact of repeated assertions of a nuclear will on public expectations and public policy.

Reiteration of nuclear determination might not bring on a nuclear war, but it does create public expectation that everything will be done to see a nation will be able to wage one. The programs and policies based on that expectation will, however, increase the potential for destruction. Thus, public assertions of nuclear will create a vicious cycle in which it becomes politically impossible to escape this extremity as morality demands.

It is because consequences and intentions ought to cohere that I think the administration ought to receive support for SALT II. President Carter declared in his inaugural his intention of working toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. His subsequent decisions on the B-1 bomber, the cruise missile and the neutron warhead, and more recently his announced intention of observing the terms of SALT II if Senate ratification fails, have shown him willing to take initiative for disarmament that most American politicians would never dream of. Indeed, it is hard to think of a postwar leader who has shown equal restraint.

Under a different administration one could possibly oppose SALT II as an arms control charade. But Carter's record shows a consistent pattern of limiting arms development, and a willingness to take limited strategic risks, and not-so-limited political risks in order to hasten an end to nuclear armament. It is most unlikely nuclear pacifists will again find a political leader so attuned to their goals.

The decisive reason for supporting SALT II, then, is that it fits into a pattern of actions on the part of the administration which give evidence of the sincerity of the President's intention of loosing the nuclear bond.

Church strategy should do far more for disarmament, however, than just back the administration on this issue. Contrary to Father Hehir, it should above all resist letting the public debate define its view of the issues. For too long American foreign policy debates have been shaped by the hawkish outlook of a vociferous faction. If it supports SALT II, the American church should do so, urging, as Pope John Paul II did recently, that "audacious" moves be made for peace.

The United States Catholic Conference ought to go further and educate American Catholics and the public at large to their obligation to eliminate the need for nuclear weapons, and the attendant responsibility for supporting the in-

27 April 1979: 251

stitutions of peace. Without such a strategy, even if the U.S.C.C. supports SALT II, the American church will fail in its own teaching function in an area where Americans bear perhaps their gravest responsibilities as citizens.

(REV.) DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.
Woodstock Theological Center

Selective quotation

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: While I agree with Father Hehir's qualified endorsement of the SALT II treaty and disagree with Bishop Gumbleton's position on this matter, I think the Bishop made his point rather effectively.

Frankly, however, I am puzzled by the selectivity of his supporting quotes from papal and other church documents and, more specifically, by his failure to quote paragraph 82 of *Gadium et Spes* which reads in part as follows: "... everyone must labor to put an end at last to the arms race, and to make a true beginning of disarmament, not indeed a unilateral disarmament, but one proceeding at an equal pace according to agreement, and backed up by alternatives and workable safeguards."

In citing paragraph 82 of *Gaudium et Spes*, I am not trying to score points, as college debaters are frequently wont to do, by playing off one authoritative quote against another. Nor do I mean to suggest that *Gaudium et Spes* has infallibly said the last word on arms control. My only purpose in citing the Council document is to express my own wonderment as to why Bishop Gumbleton seemingly attaches great importance to his other quotes while completely ignoring this one—which, in view of his own quite legitimate support of unilateral disarmament, strikes me as being more directly pertinent to the subject under discussion than any of his other quotes.

Here's hoping that the Gumbleton-Hehir debate in *Commonweal* will have the good effect of opening this whole matter up to a free and frank discussion in the Catholic community.

(REV. MSGR.) GEORGE G. HIGGINS

Secretary for Special Concerns
United States Catholic Conference

An inadequate beginning

Alexandria, Va.

To the Editors: From their answers to the question: "IS SALT II worth supporting?" I think both Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton and Father J. Bryan Hehir would agree that the SALT II treaty will not end the nuclear arms race between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. However, Bishop Gumbleton fails to make his case against ratification of the SALT II treaty. As Father Hehir points out, defeat of SALT II would not contribute to the process of disarmament. The consequences of not ratifying the SALT II treaty would be worse than the consequences of ratifying it.

On the other hand, Father Hehir also fails to make a convincing argument that ratification of SALT II is "imperative." The more one reads about it, and the more one hears government officials talk about it, the more it seems that the importance of the SALT II treaty has been exaggerated. SALT may be a process with a history and a future as Father Hehir says. But at the current rate of limiting nuclear weapons, there is a greater probability that a nuclear holocaust will occur before the goal of disarmament is reached.

Despite SALT I, U.S. defense spending has increased significantly, and U.S. arms sales abroad continue unabated. I would presume that the same is true of the USSR. Based on these indicators, SALT has not had a salutary effect on the wider arms picture. World disarmament remains an absolute necessity. As long as huge arsenals exist, there will be a temptation to use them. Moreover, there is a growing belief that a nuclear war would not be so devastating as originally was thought; millions of people within the U.S. and USSR could survive a nuclear war between the two nations. Even if this thesis is correct, I hope and pray that it never is tested. There can be little doubt that a nuclear war would signify the failure and destruction of civilization as we know it.

SALT II may be the best treaty presently possible, but it is inadequate. Part of the blame for its inadequacy rests with national governments and international

organizations. The nuclear arms race is a multilateral problem, rather than a bilateral problem, and it must be tackled with a greater sense of urgency by the entire world community. Indeed, some of the difficulty in achieving superpower arms limitation, I believe, stems from the very fact that it is a bilateral process in which negotiations are conducted with one eye on each other and one eye on potential enemies and would-be superpowers.

Part of the blame for the weak SALT II treaty also rests with the churches. Clearly, the religious community should work for a world consensus in favor of abolishing all nuclear weapons. If, by some miracle, Right-to-Life advocates and advocates of tuition tax credits for non-public schools would make the same kind of commitment to halting the wasteful and dangerous arms race, more stringent arms control agreements might be reached. By using our resources to alleviate world hunger rather than to produce weapons of mass destruction, the world would be a much better place for all God's children—the born and the unborn alike.

ANTHONY J. DISTEFANO

Gospel truth

Memphis, Tenn.

To the Editors: If we accept the principle that Father Hehir establishes in his defense of SALT II we are guilty of comparing apples to oranges. The 'too little' and the 'too much' position which he tries to establish gives him a safe, secure basis from which to build his arguments. It ends quite philosophically in agreement, not in arms limitations, but in building towards arms equality. We are being asked to support black for white.

Is nuclear deterrence in its concept and its actualization into mighty armaments consonant with the Gospel value as outlined in Matthew, chapters 5 through 7? Does it fulfill the explicit, oh, so explicit command, 'to love'? This is the Pax Christi position, not a 'too little position.'

Pope Paul told the United Nations: "If you want to be brothers, let the weapons fall from your hands. You cannot love with weapons in your hands." And the

Commonweal: 252

significance for the 'nuclear deterrent concept' are his following words: "Long before they mete out death and destruction, those terrible arms supplied by modern science foment bad feelings and cause nightmares, distrust, and dark designs." Paragraph 23 in the United Nations address enlarges the danger and pleads for disarmament within the United Nations as the beginning of the family of nations.

Again, Father Hehir goes against his expressed desire for a pluralism in Catholic positions when he represents officially the United States Catholic Conference before the Congress as favoring SALT II.

(MOST REV.) CARROLL T. DOZIER
Bishop of Memphis

Beyond the viable

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: Paying customary tribute to the desire for nuclear disarmament, J. Bryan Hehir characterized SALT as "a necessary process which is presently the only politically viable method of reversing the arms race." Nuclear disarma-

ment, itself not a politically viable option, is not the goal of the SALT process. Even if it were, time and moral concerns demand new approaches which may not be politically viable in order that governments may more quickly redirect their concerns to the well-being of their peoples.

So long as there exist weapons, there exist the threat and possibility of their use. . . . I applaud Bishop Gumbleton's strong moral statement. . . . A moral basis for a global political culture that discourages the possession and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction must be provided to help prevent further proliferation.

PAUL MAZUR

Perpetuating illusion

Boston, Mass.

To the Editors: First let me congratulate you for publishing the exchange between Bishop Gumbleton and Father Hehir. As a member of Pax Christi's Executive Council, needless to say, I am more per-

suaded by the arguments of the former, but it is important that both positions be presented and discussed.

It is unfortunate that Father Hehir's otherwise carefully reasoned argument seems to miss the crucial point of Pax Christi's decision not to actively support the SALT II proposal. It is not as rigidly a perfectionist stand as he seems to suggest. Instead, it is a refusal to undertake any share of responsibility for perpetuating the false illusion that the treaty's approval would represent a substantial advance toward the desired goal of control and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Whatever slight gains may be anticipated are greatly outweighed by the "permissiveness" it implies with respect to a policy of "mutually assured destruction." It is false and unfair to suggest, as Father Hehir and other critics of the Pax Christi position do, that we offer no alternative to what is likely to be an escalation and not to a slowing down of the race toward nuclear annihilation. It is our belief that the most appropriate policy for us and other Catholics is that set forth in a lengthening series of papal pronouncements and Vatican statements calling for

condemnation of the arms race in all its forms and proposing an honest and meaningful start on nuclear disarmament. Whether this is to be accomplished through modest unilateral initiatives or, preferably, through agreements keyed to the objective of disarmament rather than control, the church's influence ought not to be dissipated through support of so dubious a substitute as SALT II.

Father Hehir's article touches upon the two arguments usually proposed in the treaty's favor. On the one hand, there is the familiar "lesser evil" argument which stresses the dire threats of catastrophic consequences certain to result from a refusal to accept and support the treaty. Quite apart from the fact that it should not be the place of Christians to support any evil, "greater" or "lesser," this argument blurs the fact that the world is already in a catastrophic situation, caused in large part by the type of policy and planning SALT II, in effect if not in professed intent, will perpetuate and ratify.

The other argument which would prefer "half a loaf" to nothing is not much more compelling. There is, in fact, nowhere near "half a loaf" to be gained—at most the treaty offers a few moldy crumbs. To accept these is to confess that Christians lack persistence, if not sincerity, in their commitment to true disarmament and peace. Pax Christi's objections to the treaty do not reflect a pragmatic calculation to be balanced against that advanced by organizations like the Committee on the Present Danger to strike a prudent and happy medium in support of SALT. It is, on the

contrary, based on moral principles alone and deserves to be considered in that context.

GORDON ZAHN

The M.A.D. mentality

Detroit, Mich.

To the Editors: Bryan Hehir presents what I would term a secular argument that although SALT II is not the ideal treaty, it leaves an opening for further negotiations. This is a step backwards from peace instead of forward towards peace.

Thomas Gumbleton takes the only approach possible to the present world dilemma; the Christian approach, as promulgated by the word of God and exemplified through the early days of the church when martyrdom was the answer to violence instead of the sword.

To me, the very fact that nations have progressed to the point where they have arsenals of defense, which, if employed, would undoubtedly extinguish mankind from the face of the earth, is utter lunacy. I understand that behind the SALT talks is a mentality that employs a concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (M.A.D.); both countries would be wiped out regardless of who took the offense. I find the initials M.A.D. appropriate. SALT is talking and thinking in terms of madness and its many derivatives; insane, senseless, furious and illogical.

A treaty that does not entail definite aspects of disarmament now is only shifting the timing of the recurring crises to a later date.

JEROME J. ROY

The alternative of hope

Richmond, Va.

To the Editor: It is said that bishops generally support bishops in public forums. This letter is no exception! I was one of those who endorsed the statement of "Americans for SALT II" at the suggestion of Father Brian Hehir. I withdrew my support after the Pax Christi Board Meeting in December. There Bishop Thomas Gumbleton and others outlined the terms of SALT II.

In his article, Father Hehir states that the pacifist and the "mutual assured destruction" advocates are the two extreme positions. He then tidily argues that moderation, i.e., SALT II, is the middle position and the only safe stance since SALT II supposedly deters excessive escalation, brings some arms reduction, makes SALT III a greater probability, and promotes the cause of peace rather than increasing the danger of "mutually assured destruction."

I think that this is a "straw" argument with a fundamental flaw in its logic. If SALT II is the first step in a process (it's

interesting that SALT I isn't considered the first step in the process), then it is a process heading in the wrong direction. If there is a probability of nuclear war before the end of the century, then any increase in nuclear weaponry, no matter how slight, increases the probability of holocaust and, therefore, does not achieve the claimed goal of starting us down the road to disarmament. The only way of reducing the probability of war is to reduce the stockpiles of armaments immediately. To argue that we have to increase weapons in order to decrease weapons is a circular and losing argument.

Hehir's "lesser of two evils" (SALT II's controlled escalation of arms) argument does not appeal to me. Was this not the argument for Vietnam? In the light of the Gospel I cannot acquiesce to the existence of nuclear weapons. I cannot equate "first strike" or "mutual assured destruction" with Christian moral principles. Hehir states that SALT I and II are based on the "political" realities of deterrence, national security and the balance of terror. These "political" realities are based on the fundamental distrust, suspicion and fear that exists among the major powers. To argue that we must give precedence to the "political" realities is to say that our Christian values of trust and justice which call for a reality of peace, disarmament and mutual respect and cooperation are impossible to achieve. To make that argument is to deny our Christian convictions.

Pax Christi, unlike other religious groups, will not add its name to the support of SALT II. By its courageous and prophetic stance, it has chosen more than any other single organization to bring religious concerns to public scrutiny. Both the opponents and proponents of SALT II are extremes of one and the same position—the continued existence of nuclear weapons and growing inevitability of guaranteed nuclear destruction. It is Pax Christi's position which is our hope. That with the help of God an alternative to mutual assured destruction can be found.

(MOST REV.) WALTER F. SULLIVAN
Bishop of Richmond