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from time to time calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification or understanding of issues affecting world peace. The accompanying reprints constitute Reprint Mailing No. IV.

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The following is an excerpt from "The Bishops' Letter Praise & Reservations", Commonweal, May 31, 1985, p.333. (These remarks are taken from Governor Mario M. Cuomo's speech on the bishops' economic pastoral at St. Peter's College, Jersey City, N.J., April 16, 1985):

"...To be honest, I have my own reservations about parts of the draft pastoral....I believe government has a role in putting people to work. But the bishops focus almost exclusively on public-sector jobs. I think we have to concentrate on investments that train people to work in the private sector. We simply can't build a growing economy on the public-sector payroll.... But none of the considerable disagreement about what the bishops call their 'policy applications' should draw attention away from the enormous contribution the document makes by advancing a single proposition that I believe is unarguably right and should remain the basis for any amendments.

"The proposition is this: There is more poverty—more economic suffering—in this country than there has to be. We shouldn't resign ourselves, the bishops are telling us, to so-called 'iron laws' of economics that would confirm a few in their riches and condemn millions of others to ghettos and unemployment offices and welfare lines....

"At bottom, that's the important contribution this document can make. It tells us that it's not possible to call yourself Catholic and ignore the poor...."

ON THE ROLE OF THE PASTORAL LETTERS

Rev. J. Bryan Hehir

Members of the Reagan administration, Congress, and the public policy community were shocked when the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops first pronounced an emphatic "no" to nuclear war-fighting and to relying indefinitely on nuclear deterrence as an instrument of national security. Even before that controversy subsided, a second prophetic letter, released this month, called for major changes in the U.S. economy in order to increase economic justice at home and abroad. A third major pronouncement—this one on the status of women—may follow. These statements, combined with vigorous efforts to halt U.S. sponsorship of violence in Central America and the encouragement of public officials to implement some church teachings in secular law, has embroiled the Bishops in deep political controversy.

Where will it lead? Why the new activism? What has been the impact of the Pastoral Letter on War and Peace? What will the Bishops do next if U.S. and Soviet policies continue to move in what the Bishops warn is the wrong direction? How do the recommendations on the U.S. economy differ from the policies advanced by the White House and congressional leadership?

Editor-in-chief Robert C. Johansen discussed these and other questions with the Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, a key participant in the preparation of the Bishops' letters on war and peace and the U.S. economy. Ordained as a priest in 1966, Father Hehir earned his doctorate from Harvard Divinity School, where he specialized in ethics and international politics. He has been Associate Secretary of the Office of International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Catholic Conference since 1973. Unflappable, articulate, lucid, and equally comfortable handling the intricacies of deterrence "theology" or examining the complexities of church politics, Father Hehir discusses the political impact of Catholic moral leadership in the United States today.

Johansen: The notion that aspects of U.S. nuclear weapons policy are immoral has been around for a couple of decades. Why is it that we've only recently heard from the American Catholic Bishops on this issue?

Hehir: I think that two things happened after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) that have had long-term effects on the role of the Catholic Church in society. One is an intellectual shift, embodied in the Vatican II document entitled "The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the World." For centuries there has been a body of Catholic social teaching that has tried to examine Catholic moral thought as it applies not just to personal issues but to social issues as well. After the Second Vatican Council, this social agenda moved into the center of the Church's ministry rather than remaining at the edges. This was a significant change. The Church's role of defending the dignity and human rights of the person and addressing major issues like war and peace has come to be seen as crucially important to the very fidelity of the Church to the Gospel.

The second change was organizational: the Council decreed the establishment of national conferences of bishops. These conferences enhance the sense that the bishops within a given country have of their corporate identity, their corporate sense of presence in the society. This results in an increased feeling of responsibility to a particular place and thus to a particular social arena. I think that this combination of the intellectual shift toward social questions and the sense that the Bishops Conference has specific responsibilities has had a significant impact.

Johansen: Many of the attributes that historically have been associated with militarism seem to be present in the United States today: an unreflective arms buildup; a strong faith in the utility of military power at a time when its applicability may be declining; and a willingness to devote precious resources to the military, often to the neglect of human welfare. Is there a feeling among the U.S. Catholic Bishops not simply that some U.S. policies may be morally questionable but that there is a deeper trend of militarism, a lost sense of proportion, and that the Bishops should help counterbalance this trend? Has the fear that the political scales are tipping against humanitarian concerns been a motive for greater activism?

Hehir: Certainly there was a sense that the nuclear arms race was moving in a dangerous direction, one less stable than in the past, one that had lost its rational moral purpose. The question of how U.S. foreign policy affects the interests of other nations has probably struck the Bishops most in relation to developing regions like Central America. And, for some time now, the Bishops Conference has been concerned about human rights questions. In these areas, the Bishops wanted to bring the teaching of the Church to bear on the public policy debate: to seek to define some questions differently, to open up some choices that they felt were not being adequately pursued as well as to criticize existing policy. In this sense, I think

they wanted the Church to have a stronger voice in the debate over the direction of U.S. foreign policy.

Johansen: What political impact has the Pastoral Letter on War and Peace had? Some critics claim that the letter has almost been forgotten. That's probably an overstatement. But why hasn't it had a greater impact?

Hehir: You have to consider its impact on three different levels. First is the long-term effect on the Church's educational system, on the thinking of American Catholics on issues of war and peace and nuclear weapons. At that level there is a lot of activity. For example, dioceses across the country have been sponsoring training programs for church professionals; 160 Catholic colleges and universities have initiated some form of program on these issues. I don't know what the outcome of this activity will be but something is happening. At the opposite end is the level of day-to-day decision-making in the Reagan administration and in Congress. And I'm not sure that a document like the Pastoral Letter can have a direct effect at this level. Earlier this year we testified before Congress on the MX question and on space-based defense. We'll continue to do that kind of thing, to look at specific weapons systems in relation to the Letter's conditional acceptance of deterrence. But if asked what impact it has had on the character or size or structure of the defense budget this year, I don't think I could point to much success.

In between those two levels, though, there's a third level where the intellectual and policy agenda on nuclear weapons gets set and debated and refashioned and reset for the next round of debates. That's a very important level. Very few political figures master the nuclear issue. They decide the questions but they don't set the agenda; that is done by others. So in addition to communicating the letter throughout the Church community and dealing with Congress and the administration on specific issues, we have entered this middle-range terrain where the issue is debated—universities, think tanks, professional organizations. I think that there the letter has affected the way in which people think about these questions.

Johansen: How has the letter been received at the local level, the level of the priest and the parishioner? For example, have some individuals expressed the concern that in time of war they might feel called by conscience not to obey an order if it meant targeting a weapon on a city?

Hehir: There was certainly more follow-up on this letter than on any document I can think of. By follow-up I mean meeting and briefing the Church professionals—those who work at the parish level or in schools. I help out in a parish that has military personnel, and I know that questions have been raised about an individual's responsibility. People have asked about command responsibilities; some said they had requested transfers from certain duties. But because the nature of the discussion is personal and private, it is very difficult to assess their number or effect.

Johansen: Is there any indication that government officials are concerned about this issue—that they are less confident that a Roman Catholic could be counted on to perform as expected?

Hehir: There are certainly indications that the question is raised. Whether it's raised systematically, in the bureaucracy, I really don't know. But a navy captain in my parish did say: "One of the impacts of this letter is that at my level of the service, when it comes time to choose the captain or the admiral there are usually five or six or seven of us with identical qualifications—you don't get this far along without being pretty good—so they're just looking for criteria that narrow the list. If they get an idea that the Catholics are having second thoughts about nuclear weapons as a whole, that would have an influence over the long run." During the course of the writing of the letter, other people raised command-and-control questions. It was pointed out, for example, that personnel in submarines don't know what their ultimate targets are: how do they deal with the question of whether a strike is aimed at a civilian target? The clearer we can be about the content of the policy the closer we'll be to clarifying the nature of the targeting doctrine; that at least helps the person who is trying to think through the question of individual responsibility.

Johansen: What may happen if the U.S. government doesn't meet some of the conditions that are suggested by the Bishops' strictly conditioned moral acceptance of deterrence? For example, it is unlikely that the United States will move away from a first-use policy in the immediate future. It also seems unlikely that this administration will stop building war-fighting weapons or hard-target-kill systems.

Hehir: It may be useful to review the larger framework of the Letter's conditionality provision. The Letter tries to walk a careful path between consecrating the deterrent on the one hand and condemning it outright on the other. It doesn't do either of these two things; people have argued on behalf of both.

The reason the Bishops didn't condemn deterrence comes down to something like this: if one cannot disprove the argument that the theory and practice of deterrence has been a factor in preventing the use of nuclear weapons, then there is some risk in delegitimizing deterrence in toto. For →

if in fact it *has* been a factor in preventing use and one delegitimizes it morally (and presumably has some effect of delegitimizing it politically), one could get exactly the result one doesn't want. We argued that the primary imperative of these weapons is that they never be used. That was one of the reasons the argument for condemning deterrence never carried: there was a counterargument that cited evidence that deterrence has been one factor in preventing the use of these weapons.

Thus in drafting the letter we had to consider arguments on both sides. One side held that condemnation of deterrence might produce a situation that is less likely to prevent the use of nuclear weapons than some conditional acceptance of it would. The other side didn't want to say that simply because deterrence has worked it will continue to work, or that because it has worked it's stable, sound, and secure in moral and political terms. This is why the Bishops added the conditional acceptance clause. The conditions are twofold. One is temporal—not in the sense of setting a fixed timetable, but in the sense of stating that deterrence is inadequate as a long-term approach to security. We wanted to focus the policy discussion on how we might therefore move beyond where we are, indicating as the Letter did that deterrence should be used as a transition toward arms control and disarmament. The second condition concerns the character of deterrence. If the political and moral justification for the deterrent rests on the idea that it has helped to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, then, as the Letter states, every proposed addition to the deterrence system should be considered in light of whether it fulfills that function or moves the United States to a position where use of nuclear weapons seems more likely. In June, when Cardinal Bernardin and Archbishop O'Connor testified before Congress, we focused on the issue of the MX and space-based defense precisely to raise the question of whether these systems would fulfill what we saw as this justifiable function for the deterrent.

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Johansen: Sooner or later the administration and Congress may have made a number of policy decisions at variance with the conditions you've laid down for deterrence. At that point, would your strategy have to change?

Hehir: Well, I think there are two approaches. One is to do what we're doing now: take up issues one by one, make a stand on them in the public debate, and try to effect change. The other approach involves longer range thinking. There may come a point of cumulative assessment, at which it seems that on balance most of the conditions are not being met, and therefore deterrence cannot be accepted even conditionally. There again, I think one would have to look at both sides of the question—the argument that deterrence has helped to prevent use of nuclear weapons and the argument that deterrence is being moved in a direction that makes it less likely to prevent use in the future—and make a judgment about what to say. I think that people sometimes interpret the temporality argument too strictly. I think it would place us in a straitjacket to say that we're going to wait three years and if our conditions are not met by then we're going to alter our stance. I've always tried to create a more dynamic framework.

Johansen: I understand that. Yet it seems that you're conceding too much to the exponents of nuclear weapons when you say that you're going to accept deterrence until someone can disprove that the deterrent has prevented the use of nuclear weapons. Wouldn't that claim always be impossible to disprove?

Hehir: In one way I think it is. On the other hand, the burden of proof could be placed on the other side: unless it can be proved that the presence of nuclear weapons has actually made their use less likely, then they should not be condoned, because they are clearly so innately evil—at least the use of them would be. I think one can state the proposition either way.

Johansen: Critics might say that taking this stance was a convenient political way out. There's no evidence, for example, that the presence of nuclear arms has led to arms reduction. And if I read the letter correctly, it implies that if nuclear arms reductions don't proceed in the near future, then it would be necessary to reconsider deterrence.

Hehir: I think that's fair to say. I wouldn't want to argue that deterrence leads to arms control. Instead I would argue that deterrence is a structure of relationships within which arms control needs to be pursued. By itself the dynamic of deterrence will not lead to arms control. That's why it is important not to "consecrate" deterrence but to see it as a means to an end quite different from simply continuing the deterrence relationship as we have known it.

Johansen: Do you think there might be another letter in a few years, commenting on this point?

Hehir: That's a possibility. The Bishops have not established any time frame for themselves, but I think that they remain very committed to the issue. So I wouldn't be surprised if they were to issue a follow-up letter.

Johansen: What else do you think the Church can or should do to steer the two superpowers in a different direction?

Hehir: I think the political context of superpower relations is as important as the technological and military context. The Letter argued that despite numerous divisions, the Soviet Union and the United States still share a

strong common interest in the nuclear question. Thus the logic of the Letter, it seems to me, argues against linkage, against tying the nuclear issue to other issues such as Soviet behavior in the Third World. Establishing this delinkage argument in the American political system, in the minds of the citizenry, would have enormous political significance for how we handle arms control and the nuclear question. I do think the Church can help to contribute at this level.

Johansen: What should be done with a weapons system like the cruise missile that can be either conventional or nuclear? It can have hard-target-kill capability; if given a faster engine and better fuel and deployed close to enemy territory, it could be a first-strike weapon. And because it is so small and mobile, it will greatly complicate arms control in the future. On the other hand, it might fall into that gray area of weapons that the Bishops' Letter deems acceptable. How would you resolve this ambiguity, in light of the Bishops' Letter?

Hehir: We didn't look at the cruise missile as closely as we looked at the MX and space-based systems. But I think that it is clear that those two systems generally fit into the category of weapons that are moving deterrence in a much more dangerous direction. My long-term objective, of course, is to displace nuclear weapons altogether. But in the short term, I think it is necessary to restrict the role nuclear weapons have in world politics today and to contain the arms race on a series of different fronts. For it seems to me that these different systems ratchet up the technology in a way that makes the arms race harder and harder to stop. This happened with MIRVs and may now happen with space-based defense. Every time milestones like these are passed, containing weapons development becomes more difficult. On the cruise itself, I would want to look more carefully at the new features that are being added before making a definitive judgment that it is a first-strike weapon.

Johansen: Is it safe to say that most of the new nuclear weapons systems the United States has on the drawing board are not consistent with the direction of the Bishops' Letter? One exception may be the single warhead ICBM, but most other weapons are designed to enhance first-strike capability, are tactical and intended for limited war-fighting, or are hard to classify, like the cruise missile, and thus complicate future arms control negotiations.

Hehir: Yes, I think you're right: most probably do not fit the criteria of the Letter. I have no problem coming out against the MX, for example. But I have a harder time arguing against the Trident II D-5—not because I like the D-5's characteristics, such as its hard-target-kill capability, but because I think that it may be helpful in moving away from land-based systems if we maintain a deterrence posture for any period of time. Personally, I'd like to see us move away from land-based systems. I would really like to see individuals and groups force a serious debate about the continuing utility of the triad.

Johansen: Wouldn't it be possible to have a primarily sea-based deterrent without going to the D-5?

Hehir: Well, I think it would in principle. Whether you could sell it politically is another matter.

Johansen: Of course, but the continued use of the Poseidon plus the Trident-I is more than adequate for a minimum deterrent capability.

Hehir: Yes. One could update the present sea-based force without moving to the D-5. My point is that I can't make exactly the same case against the D-5 that I can against the MX, because the MX's vulnerability makes it so clearly dangerous.

Johansen: Some pundits are saying that the era of arms control may be over, because ICBMs may become obsolete and systems like cruise missiles make classification and verification so problematic. If arms control as we've known it becomes less and less feasible, what happens to the part of the Letter that says that deterrence is acceptable only as an interim posture that must lead to arms reductions?

Hehir: For now, I would not be prepared to argue that the nature of the U.S.-Soviet relationship is such that arms control is impossible. It depends upon the priority one gives it. Merely relying on self-restraint, as some have argued, is not enough. Nor should we move down the road of ballistic missile defense—the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty needs to be sustained. In the Letter, we tried to distinguish among *negotiated arms control, independent initiatives*, and *unilateral restraint*, all of which need to be pursued. Independent initiatives, as we define them, are generally undertaken to encourage the other side to take some reciprocal action. Unilateral restraint might be shown in the case of a particular weapons system that can be built but that in the long run would not be helpful. These three measures all need to be pursued together—we need more discussion of how they could be coordinated.

Johansen: In what areas do you think self-restraint and independent initiatives would be helpful?

Hehir: I think we should have seen that the decision to deploy MIRVs was inherently contradictory to our purposes. Deciding not to deploy MIRVs →

would have been a useful instance of unilateral restraint that could have been followed by an agreement with the Soviets banning MIRVs. Currently, I think it would be much more constructive to take a serious look at the whole question of land-based systems rather than simply building the MX to shore it up or even going to the single warhead missile. The argument for the single warhead missile, in my opinion, completely skips the question of the validity of the triad. Focusing on the validity of the triad would open up a much more creative debate than we now have. For instance, if we moved away from the triad, what could we expect in return from the Soviets? They couldn't take exactly symmetrical steps, because their force depends more heavily on land-based missiles than ours does. Discussion of these matters might be quite productive.

Johansen: The deterrent function that the Bishops consider to be legitimate is so limited that it probably could be performed in the near future by missiles armed with highly accurate conventional warheads. That at least would eliminate the dangers of radiation and reduce the dangers of indiscriminate collateral damage. Did the Bishops discuss this possibility?

Hehir: Not at any length. I tend to think that the deterrence relationship is as much psychological as it is physical. For one side to move to a conventional deterrent while the other retains a nuclear deterrent involves a psychological factor that I can't quite fathom.

Johansen: Yes, it definitely would make a big difference. But your comments suggest that the Bishops would retain the element of terror associated with nuclear explosives.

Hehir: I think that when one endorses deterrence one endorses a certain kind of coercive threat. I don't have any doubt about that.

Johansen: But is the terror you correctly associate with a nuclear deterrent consistent with just war doctrine? It is terror that threatens large segments of a civilian population; it cannot be limited to military targets or soldiers.

Hehir: We have argued that the policy—both declared and actual—cannot have civilians as primary targets. I know that does not solve the question of terror but it is an attempt to set limits on the threat and use of nuclear weapons without removing the weapons totally. They are "terrible" instruments.

Johansen: Perhaps the purposes of the Bishops' Letter are inconsistent with nuclear deterrence in this regard. To have an effective deterrent we must reduce inhibitions against the use of weapons, in order to make the threat credible. What the Bishops really want to do is increase inhibitions against

the use of these horrendous weapons. It seems to me that on a fundamental level there is a contradiction between assuming on the one hand that you can enhance deterrence and on the other that you can carry out a just war.

Hehir: I'm not sure your first proposition—that for a deterrent to be credible one must reduce the inhibitions against using weapons—is correct. There *are* high inhibitions in place. I think there is some truth in McGeorge Bundy's concept of existential deterrence based on inhibitions.

Johansen: High inhibitions against launching an attack may not be due only to nuclear weapons. Peace is not merely a result of nuclear deterrence. It is possible that the prudence of nations has made deterrence tolerable, not that the deterrent has made nations prudent. I wanted to ask one more question about whether government officials of the major nuclear powers can accept the absolute limits the Bishops have tried to place on the use of nuclear weapons. Officials generally assume that no country can forgo in advance the right to use a weapon that its adversary might use, if using that weapon would prevent the adversary from winning.

Hehir: The one absolute limit imposed by the Bishops is the prohibition against the direct targeting of civilians. This question has been a problem for the ethics of war throughout the 20th century. Nuclear weapons raise it exponentially to a new level of magnitude, but the basic question is the same. It tends to come down to a fundamental disagreement between those who claim that the best way to deal with the ethics of war is to try to impose limits on war and those who argue that the attempt to impose limits will simply legitimate war. I think that one can build absolute barriers before war begins but that one will have to work very, very hard once war breaks out to see that the barriers remain intact. What we tried to do in the Letter was to build barriers at two levels. One was in the policy process. We tried to make clear statements about which policies were acceptable and which were not. The second level was in the consciences of individuals, so that at least the people for whom the Church is primarily responsible would have some limits about what they would and would not do. Beyond this, I honestly don't know what options were open to us.

Johansen: What I was suggesting is that in the nuclear age the terms of the question may have changed. For example, if the findings on nuclear winter are correct, the use of one's nuclear forces alone—even if there's no retaliation—could make the northern hemisphere uninhabitable. Don't these changes suggest that just war criteria have to be applied before war begins and that we must look for ways to put more serious checks on the authority of political leaders to use nuclear weapons? By this I mean a restructuring of global society, if that could be done.

Hehir: In *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII stated that we live in an interdependent world with problems whose scope exceeds the decision-making powers of states. The Bishops' Letter used this statement as a frame of reference for evaluating the current situation of the nation-state. The moral and political significance of the nation-state is real but limited; the Letter presumes that there is a range of problems beyond the capability of any state to take adequate effective action. Making an empirical assessment, I would say both that this is objectively true and that the likelihood of transcending the present system is not high. That really highlights the policy problem.

Johansen: One of the just war criteria is that war should be defensive. But in Central America, the United States is indirectly or perhaps even directly using violence against a government that is at peace with the United States. How do you deal with this problem?

Hehir: We've tried to deal with U.S. policy in Central America for four years now and have opposed, for example, U.S. support of the contras and U.S. covert actions against Nicaragua on the grounds that these actions don't satisfy just war criteria. We've argued that just war criteria require a country to make known its reasons for going to war so that others can judge whether they're fair and reasonable. Covert action makes that impossible; on that basis we've argued against it. Beyond that, our argument is that U.S. policy toward Nicaragua is legally wrong, morally dubious, and politically ineffective. And we've tried to argue in general against the U.S. military role in Central America.

Johansen: I want to ask about the economic letter. How do the Bishops' recommendations on the U.S. economy differ from those of the Republican and Democratic leadership in the White House and Congress? Are there some key areas where we are headed in the wrong direction?

Hehir: The letter essentially has two major parts. The first is a survey of the Biblical, patristic, and Catholic social teaching on principles applicable to the economic order. The second part covers five issue areas: the question of employment policy—jobs; welfare policy; agriculture; international economic issues; and cooperation, collaboration, and planning.

The letter's treatment of employment is a good illustration. It follows closely John Paul II's encyclical on *Human Work*, which strongly emphasizes that every society should provide job opportunities to people who are willing and able to work. Contrast that with the direction recent economic policy has taken under both Republicans and Democrats—the continued acceptance of an increasingly high level of unemployment. President Kennedy, for example, talked about 3 percent unemployment. Today people talk about 8 or 9 percent as normal. The international section emphasizes some of the same issues that the Popes have emphasized: the

more structural questions about trade and trade relations, particularly with developing countries, and also such questions as debt and development assistance. In tone and theme, it looks quite different from the posture the United States has taken over the past ten years at most of the multilateral forums, where U.S. strategy seems to have been to have the least amount happen that we can have happen and still survive the meeting. The letter examines closely our role in setting "the rules of the game" on trade, debt, and money as well as the role of multilateral institutions.

Johansen: In recent years we have witnessed in this country an erosion of the kind of human compassion that expresses itself in concern for providing equal economic opportunity. Was this development a consideration in the drafting of the economic letter?

Hehir: There's no question that over the past few years a whole series of policies has been detrimental to a segment of American society. A new affluence and a new poverty have come into being at the same time. Certain groups see the current economic recovery as a positive development. On the other hand, the data indicate the existence of 15 million new poor—people who are poor who weren't poor before. Whether or not there's less compassion—that's a subjective judgment. Certain of the administration's policies may have helped to stop inflation, but the cost inflicted on particular groups in this society has been too high.

Johansen: What should be the role of government in alleviating these new problems?

Hehir: Catholic social teaching argues that the government has an affirmative social role to play, that it is not simply restricted to preserving order. For one thing, it should establish structures that ensure that people aren't taken advantage of—structures like labor laws, minimum-wage laws, and safety laws. All of these are important. Second, it is clear that no society functions so well that it will not include disadvantaged groups who need direct positive assistance. That's another role for the government. Third, because the economy does involve an interplay of forces and competition, the state should side with those who have the least power and who benefit least from the interaction of economic forces.

Johansen: What role do you think economic planning should play in a capitalist society?

Hehir: The letter states that there ought to be a role for a certain kind of collaboration among major elements of the society—but not central planning as in a socialist economy. Indeed, I think that in the American setting

economic planning would have to fit into the overall culture. But on the basis of Catholic teaching, one could say that a rational, political organization of the economy is necessary to deal with the question of justice in society.

Johansen: You don't think we can achieve justice through the working of the private market system alone—some form of public regulation is necessary?

Hehir: You can't regard the economy as a self-contained sector of society that should be allowed to run by its own rules. The economy should be made to serve the human good. There are different ways of achieving that. Trade-offs have to be made, because certain kinds of planning wouldn't work, or would work at too high a cost.

Johansen: You mentioned earlier that we may be in the first period in world history when we can act as a world community, but that we still lack the political, economic, and legal structures to meet the needs of an increasingly interdependent world—to deal effectively with problems of equity, power, and security. How do you envisage those institutions being constructed? What role do you think the United States, as a world leader, should play in this process?

Hehir: In the world today there is a whole range of issues—nuclear weapons, arms sales, trade, distribution of power and wealth, human rights, access to resources, environment—that no single nation-state can handle on its own. There is a definite structural gap between the institutions that would be needed to deal with these problems and the institutions that exist. But I don't think a radical transformation that would bridge this gap is very likely. That places an immense burden on a nation's political wisdom and moral vision.

Now, how does one proceed? I guess I'm an incrementalist. I think we can proceed in stages along different lines, both to build better structures and to address problems within the structures we have. I tend to break problems down into sectors and segments, assigning different roles to different actors. The United States is unique in that it must play a key role in both major arenas of international interaction—the political-strategic arena on the one hand, and the political-economic arena on the other. That's not true for any other nation—the Soviet Union, China, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany. They are actors in one arena but not in the other.

As to the political-strategic arena, I obviously believe that how the nuclear question is handled is crucial to both our own self-interest and the interests of others—not only the interests of NATO and Warsaw countries,

but now with the threat of nuclear winter, also those of other nations in the international system. There's an absolute moral imperative that nuclear weapons never be used. The superpowers have a very specific obligation that transcends their ideological confrontation. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be much the other powers can do to force the superpowers to act on this obligation: either they'll do it on their own or they won't, in which case things look bleak. I've watched the United States and the Soviet Union in forums where there are a lot of spectators, and they tend not to do much more than play to the gallery.

As to the political-economic arena, I don't think the Bretton Woods arrangement is capable of providing a durable economic foundation over the middle to long range. I think we need to fashion new institutions to deal with trade and monetary questions. Many people who fully agree with my objective argument don't agree that it would be politically useful to try to revise Bretton Woods. But it would be worth the try.

I think it is important to distinguish different aspects of U.S. behavior in the international arena. On the one hand, the United States does *not* have the wisdom to solve these large problems on its own. On the other hand, all too often the United States adopts an obstructionist posture on all sorts of issues—arms control, law of the sea, economic questions. We make it impossible both for ourselves to think more creatively and for others to enter the debate with their views of what structural changes need to be made.

Johansen: Are there any positive trends that may make international reform more feasible in the future?

Hehir: I am impressed by what I see as the convergence of the empirical forces of the international system and the moral imperatives of our age. Take the nuclear question, for example. There has been a resurgence of arguments that nuclear weapons are usable, that we could win a nuclear war. But I think the long-term trend is in the other direction, that the argument against nuclear weapons is probably stronger in people's minds today than it was in the past. I want to reinforce that.

Then there is the issue of the growing interdependence of the world community. If one nation tries to go it alone, to hold out for its own interests, the long-term implications will be disastrous. Interdependence is a fact, not a moral condition. The fact of interdependence can move us toward a Hobbesian world in which nations decide that the way to get what they want is to fight for it. Or the fact of interdependence can move us toward a much more morally interdependent world in which each nation evaluates the characteristics of interdependence and tries to determine how best to pursue its national interest within that interdependent framework. This latter course is the one that U.S. policy should follow.

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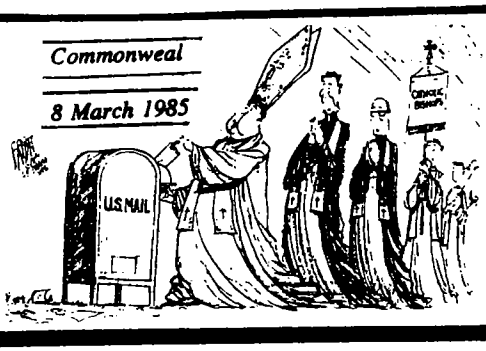

On not writing a dead letter

GORDON C. ZAHN

THE BISHOPS' 1983 pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," is one of the most significant achievements of the U.S. hierarchy — or any national hierarchy. The recent publication of the first draft of the forthcoming pastoral on the economy gives promise that it will be a suitable match for its predecessor.

This is not to say that either or both of them taken together are everything one would have hoped. There are some distressing shortcomings when, at the point of making a truly innovative and daring contribution, the familiar pattern of timorous caution asserts itself and the opportunity is missed.

Such disappointments, one may assume, are structured into the overall process. Political and other pragmatic considerations almost preclude the adoption of positions likely to be considered too radical a departure from prevailing attitudes and practices. The Weakland committee, like the Bernardin committee before it, will always be conscious of the fact that the product of its labors must ultimately win approval from two-thirds of their episcopal colleagues. These, in turn, will not support a document unlikely to receive a reasonable measure of acceptance from the faithful in their charge. That the peace pastoral was adopted with a majority which approached unanimity is remarkable. That majority may also be taken as evidence of compromises made and restraints incorporated into committee deliberations and the final writing. The failure of the final version to accept all the recommendations of those of us of a more pacifist persuasion was no surprise. We welcomed the pastoral as a starting point to a more consistent, less ambiguous official church posture in the future.

So it seemed at least. When one considered the emphasis placed on incorporating the pastoral teachings into every level of Catholic education, those expectations were more than justified — provided, of course, the bishops who voted for adoption were committed to their decision. Today, however, fears have arisen that this is not the case, that the document may go the way of so many others and end up as little more than an occasional footnote in some theological treatise.

If so, the loss would be much greater than the waste of time and effort it would represent. To allow the peace pastoral to lose momentum and become a "dead letter" in a literal sense could have a disastrous effect upon the Weakland letter and any subsequent efforts on the part of the bishops to address major social issues and responsibilities. It is not too late to revive the enthusiasm with which "The Challenge of Peace" was originally received. It is not too late, but the promise is fading.

The situation is doubly depressing when one notes that the draft of the present economics pastoral contains the same essential flaws. Of these I would stress three: the reticence of the bishops to be prepared to "tell it like it is"; the refusal to include some mechanism for periodically monitoring progress; and, most unfortunate of all, the failure to follow through with their own recommendations. Unless these failings are recognized and corrected, both "The Challenge of Peace" and the economic pastoral will be dismissed as a futile exercise in pious rhetoric.

Lest this be misinterpreted, I am not asking the bishops to revert to what was sometimes derided as a kind of "creeping infallibility." One of the more admirable aspects of the peace pastoral was its careful delineation of the levels of authority claimed for its teachings, a path echoed in the draft of the economics pastoral. Established or defined doctrine is presented as morally binding; opinions, interpretations, and applications are open to informed dialogue, even dissent. This probably reflects the desire to anticipate challenges on the grounds of expertise, an anticipation since fulfilled in generous measure. Unfortunately, this thoroughly laudable intention sometimes slipped over the line to a tone of defensiveness that weakens the thrust of what the bishops were trying to say. After all, the intensive consultations with experts should have provided sufficient confidence to speak with greater authority, especially when it came to the application of the moral principles in which they, the bishops, are presumably experts.

The excessive reticence of the peace pastoral is most pronounced in its applications to specified categories of individuals. Take the men and women of the armed forces. If the Vatican Council's condemnation of area warfare is morally binding, as the pastoral insists, one might have expected Catholics to be instructed to reject assignments in which they would be prepared to perform the condemned acts upon command. Catholic lawmakers might have been exhorted to consider the moral implications of approving the expenditure of tax monies to support weapons systems like the MX. In the November election, bishops were quite vocal about reminding Catholic candidates for public office of their obligation to give weight to the moral dimensions of other public issues.

One hopes the Weakland committee will not repeat this pattern but will make it perfectly clear to all that economic policies or practices which conflict with Christian social teaching must be opposed and, should this be required, the bishops will not hold back from making explicit recommendations for specific programs designed to eliminate the structured injustices now present in this nation and the entire world. To do so would be to invite sharp criticism, but the ensuing debate would be far more beneficial in the long run than merely repeating a litany of inspirational generalizations.

THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL concession to pragmatism in the 1983 pastoral was the "strictly conditioned moral acceptance" of nuclear deterrence. Quite apart from the wisdom of this disputed decision, a crucial deficiency lay in the bishops' failure — or, more correctly, *refusal* — to establish →

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some mechanism to monitor progress in arms reduction, a basic condition for the bishops' conditioned acceptance of nuclear deterrence. At the Chicago meeting several bishops proposed to correct this omission but failed in their attempt. Now, nearly two years later, it is obvious that the conditions have been ignored, and the pastoral has had little impact on this nation's nuclear policies or the steadily escalating arms race. At its annual assembly in San Antonio last October, Pax Christi USA undertook to fill the gap by releasing its own detailed assessment of the present state of disarmament and negotiations. This likewise was largely ignored. It is safe to say that an official statement issued in the name of those who had set forth those "strict conditions" upon which that highly debatable and reluctant moral acceptance was based would have carried more weight.

In this context the failure of the bishops to follow through in their own dioceses is an additional challenge to episcopal credibility. Last Spring, our Pax Christi Center addressed letters to all the ordinaries seeking information as to what was being done in their dioceses. We offered our assistance in providing counseling and support services for Catholics subject to registration and a possible draft who might take adva tage of the pastoral's provisions on conscientious objectio Fewer than ten responses were received. It is evident fro other sources that relatively few dioceses have establishe registries of prospective CO's, or have indicated a readiness take even the most preliminary steps toward providing them with alternative service opportunities, should conscription be put into effect. It is important to note that the Selective Service System, for its part, is ready to go into full operation in a matter of hours.

So, too, with the much heralded peace education programs. They have not materialized, certainly not to the extent anticipated. Where serious efforts have been made to incorporate the pastoral and its teachings into school and parish programs, they are usually of brief duration and often do not reach those most in need of exposure. The attempt to monitor the activities of the various dioceses was at best half-hearted, too restricted in scope, and terminated much too soon.

As their work progresses on the forthcoming pastoral, the members of the Weakland committee would do well to take full account of these failures and resolve to avoid their repetition. It is not too late to redeem the peace pastoral as well. It would be a simple matter for the U.S.C.C. to establish a select committee of "blue ribbon," objective experts charged with the task of producing annual reports of advances and setbacks, taking the bishops' "not-so-strict" conditions as its standard of measurement. Indeed, this might well be a recommendation for the economics pastoral. After all, the Holy See's 1976 condemnation of the arms race as "a crime against the poor" makes this issue relevant to their deliberations, too.

A renewed effort to establish a truly full-scale program of peace studies should be given high priority in every diocese as evidence that the bishops were sincere in their commitment. To carry this a step further, commemoration of World Peace Day could be the occasion for a special collection for the purpose of sponsoring and supporting peace activity of various kinds. It is a tragic inconsistency which finds Catholic organizations devoted to the objectives set forth by our bishops in so formal a fashion forced to operate in a constant state of financial crisis. To borrow Cardinal Bernardin's "seamless garment" metaphor, one need but compare the funds budgeted by the dioceses and by the U.S.C.C. for "pro-life" organizations and activities with those devoted to justice and peace to recognize the inadequacy of the episcopal commitment to the latter.

The "Challenge of Peace" made a distinct contribution when it clearly set forth the conditions to be met before any actual war can be regarded as "just." By including these explicit conditions in a document intended for the pastoral dance of all the Catholic faithful, the bishops freed the issue the morality of modern war from the more limited realm of cialized theological disputation and opened it to the judgnt of the individual conscience.

To little avail, however, if one is to judge by the almost total regard of these conditions with respect to the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Few voices were raised to question the proportionality of full-scale military action, including aerial bombings, to "free" some medical students from factually unsubstantiated danger. Who could claim, by even the most devious of arguments, that military action was undertaken as "a last resort"? Nor was protest voiced by spokespersons for the hierarchy.

Cynicism aside, the failure of the bishops to insist upon an active and effective application of the principles elaborated in their 1983 pastoral threatens to undermine any claim to episcopal credibility. Furthermore, by failing to display a greater measure of persistence and dedication the bishops have left "the challenge of peace" unmet. Can they expect those to whom the pastoral was addressed to do any better? And what does this bode for the future of their proposed letter on the economy?

As already suggested, it is still possible for the bishops to reverse course and demonstrate by action that they meant what they declared at Chicago in 1983. Only if this is done, and soon, will the forthcoming companion pastoral be assured the serious attention it deserves.