

## opinion/editorial

# Nukes eliminate humans not evil ideas

Almost remarkably, the debate continues as to whether or not the Soviets are militarily superior to the United States. It seemed clear that most Americans felt the Soviets were superior on Nov. 4, and probably still do.

Yet the dogma of both sides clatters about occasionally, if nowhere else in our letters to the editor.

The Daily Nebraskan's editorial pages this semester has provided a great deal of discussion concerning nuclear arms and general military power. This editorial is a final summary of our views on the Cold War-type question of Soviet versus American military strength.

First, it is true that in some ways the Soviets are far superior to the United States. But there is good geographic reason for that.

Similar to the Cold War "missile gap," today's weapons hawks cite a wide "tank gap." The Soviets have somewhere in the neighborhood of 30,000 more tanks than we do. But they have much greater possible need for tanks. Canada and the Gulf of Mexico for example, do not threaten the United States in the same way that China and NATO threaten the Soviets.

For those Americans who cite the tank gap,

there must be an equal number of Soviets who cite the submarine gap. The United States has a far superior submarine detection system, as well as quieter subs able to stay at sea longer than Soviet subs.

The Soviet Union is bordered by land. They have tanks. The United States is surrounded by water. We have submarines and an elaborate submarine detection system. In an area where little seems totally logical, this military development makes perfect sense.

In the nuclear arena, numbers can be thrown about to support any argument or position. We can talk about actual numbers of delivery systems. Oh no, the Soviets are ahead. But wait, the United States has more actual warheads (can hit more targets). Whew! We're ahead.

But wait. If we talk about throw weight, the Soviets have more. This is where the numbers game becomes ridiculous. Each side has engaged in arms racing to the point that each person on earth could be killed many times over if the superpowers launched their nuclear arsenals.

It has long been accepted in U.S. government that only 400 equivalent megatons—a small fraction of our nuclear force—would be needed to

destroy 70 percent of Soviet industrial capacity and 25 percent of the Soviet population.

Overkill and throw weight are irrelevant in the face of such massive destruction, which only a few of our weapons are capable of inflicting.

The unfortunate thing about discussion of military readiness is that people who care about it tend to take extreme positions. One side wants to remove nuclear weapons from the earth, and the other wants to build every new toy dreamed up by the world's Dr. Strangeloves.

When the United States exploded the first nuclear device, the world was changed. When the superpowers developed highly refined missiles to deliver the weapons, the change was permanent.

Nuclear weapons are here to stay, and doubtlessly will proliferate like cancer cells to countries far from superpower status. Our primary hope must be that humans are here to stay too, despite the quickness with which thermonuclear weapons can end all of our lives.

Rational weapons deployments and arms talks designed to preserve parity are the only way to achieve that. Nuclear war fighting, and the ability to do it, is only a simple way to rid the earth of humans, not a way to prove superiority or to rid the world of any perceived ideological evil.

## Polish support could be a threat to world peace

The Polish labor movement "solidarity" is growing in numbers and is achieving ever greater influence in the formation of Poland's internal policy. This represents a clear threat to the absolute power of the Communist party dictatorship in Poland. While this development appeals to our Western values of political and human rights, we must restrain our enthusiasm; for the situation in Poland may have profound implications for world peace.

rupert

Solidarity began as a union of Gdansk shipyard workers. It has grown to include much of the Polish labor force and touches on every sector of the Polish economy. This represents power for Polish workers; power which the Polish Communist Party has been unable to curtail. Most importantly, it represents a clear example to those in other East European dictatorships of the ultimate vulnerability of their repressive regimes.

For this reason, solidarity is viewed

from the Kremlin with the utmost concern. The Soviets fear the erosion of Communist power in Eastern Europe, almost to the point of paranoia. They have in the past used their military might to prevent its decay, most notably in Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968. After crushing the Czechs, the USSR formalized a long-standing policy by announcing that Brezhnev Doctrine: The Soviet Union will not hesitate to intervene in the internal affairs of another Communist state whenever the Kremlin perceives a danger to "socialism" in Eastern Europe.

This week the armies of the Warsaw Pact were engaged in the same kind of maneuvers which preceded the incursion into Czechoslovakia. Poland's borders with East Germany and the Soviet Union have been sealed off, and the Red Army has been placed on top alert. The message could not be more clear. If Poland's current leadership is unable to re-exert its political control to the satisfaction of the Kremlin, the Red Army will do so by force. The Poles are expected to actively resist any such intervention, and the Soviets may even have to face the Polish Army before Soviet hegemony is re-

established.

The ramifications of such an occurrence could reach far beyond the borders of Poland. A Polish-Soviet confrontation could polarize the Warsaw Pact countries, resulting in increased Soviet military presence in all of Eastern Europe, and a widening of intra-bloc conflict. Most serious, however, is the potential for superpower confrontation which an invasion of Poland would present.

Sen. Charles Percy, soon to be chairman of the powerful Foreign Relations Committee, has flatly warned Brezhnev that Red Army intervention in Poland would have catastrophic consequences for U.S.-Soviet relations. In the context of diplomacy, these are exceptionally strong words. Similar statements by aides of President-elect Ronald Reagan suggest the possibility of future U.S. support for Polish efforts to escape Soviet hegemony. Any such support would be interpreted in the Kremlin as a direct threat to Soviet national security and easily could become "the greatest threat to world peace since World War II".

This is so because of the Soviet pre-occupation with matters of defense,

especially those pertaining to Eastern Europe. Historically, the Russians have been justifiably concerned over the security of their Western frontier. They have many times been invaded by enemies using Eastern Europe as a gateway to the Russian heartland; twice in the last century alone. To this traditional Russian insecurity, add the Marxist dogma of capitalist encirclement of, and hostility toward, the U.S.S.R. and one begins to understand Soviet perceptions regarding their security interests in Eastern Europe. Brutal as it may be, the Soviets view their buffer zone of Communist satellites as absolutely necessary for the survival of the U.S.S.R. in a hostile world.

Thus the Soviets are favored by an asymmetry of motivation in any superpower confrontation over Eastern Europe. Moreover, the military capabilities which they can bring to bear on that neighboring region far outweigh those which the U.S. might be able to project halfway across the world into Poland. In short, we cannot hope to free the Poles from their Soviet masters, and we should make no provocative statements of intent to do so.

## Confused world is breeding ground for rightists

The people who call themselves the Moral Majority surely include some whose views are more political than moral: views favoring an increased budget for the Pentagon, for instance, or the repudiation of the Department of Education, or the establishment of economic and social conservatism.

But just as surely their ranks include people who are convinced that America is in danger of losing—perhaps al-

ready has lost its moral compass; that we are, in your grandfather's phrase, going to hell in a handbasket.

You don't have to be a pro-Vietnam, anti-SALT religious fanatic to agree that maybe they've got a point, or to concede that many of the more disturbing trends are interlinked with modern-day liberalism.

The reference here is not to liberalism as it relates to governmental programs and societal ideals, but to the liberalism that is nervous about making moral judgments. Nothing is just plain right or wrong; everything is relative.

Things that decent people used to shun or at least feel guilty about—are now described in morally neutral terms as "alternative lifestyles." Liberals feel guilty about inflicting guilt.

william raspberry

We delight in the sophistication that tells us there are no absolutes, no moral authorities. And one result is that we confuse and frustrate our children, who keep telling us (though usually not in words) that they want rules: Consistent, reliable guidelines for running their lives.

It is this abdication, I suspect, that principally accounts for the continuing attraction for our young people to what we call "sects." These young people (and some not so young) seem to be looking for a value system that comes from outside their own heads. They yearn for an authority who will speak of absolutes, even at the cost of suspending their own intellect.

And the more morally uncertain their families and the

established churches become, the more attractive become the authoritarian sects.

Not everyone, of course, is dismayed at the notion that all questions are open, that there are no final answers. Indeed, some of us find it exhilarating to be freed from the religious, social and political myths we learned as children. We want to give our children a shortcut to this same freedom, by teaching them right from the beginning that truth is relative.

But for many children, the shortcuts produce not exhilaration but frustration. It may be well enough to question everything, but young people seem to need some place to stand, something to hold on to, while they are doing the questioning.

And yet we are giving them less and less to hold on to. Family pride, school spirit, patriotism, universal principles—all these things strike us as so much silliness, which intelligent people quickly outgrow, and we wish to save our children the bother of making these pointless detours in their intellectual development.

And we are dismayed when our children, liberated from intellectual error, run off and join up with Rev. Thus-and-Such who promises them certainty.

Nor is the phenomenon limited to religion. When things start to come apart at the seams, people start looking for something they can believe in and rely on. For some, it is the marvelous immutability of the free market. For others, it is the gold standard, or world government, or pacifism, or political militancy.

And for some—the Moral Majority—it is the old-time religion.

Some of the answers these true believers come up with make me very nervous. But I think it's about time we recognized the legitimacy of their questions.

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