

## Disarmament is the nuclear answer

In regard to Mark Rupert's article of Nov. 17 concerning the need to ratify SALT II, readers should consider two preliminary remarks. As a columnist, Mr. Rupert's opinion commands greater authority in the minds of most than my opinion does, belonging to a freshman student. Status gives him a fair psychological headstart. Secondly, Mr. Rupert cries for a radical alternative to present policy through ratification of SALT. His proposal, however, is squarely in the mainstream of American thought. SALT II is not a departure from other weapons limitation agreements negotiated by the U.S. government over the past 40 years. The desire to intensify our weapons build-up is also mainstream American. The dichotomy between the two policies merely exhibits a degree of flexibility in American ideology. My point is that the range of options in American thought are all based on the idea that security can only be insured with lots of weapons. A *really* radical proposal such as total disarmament of the U.S. arsenal is never entertained. But back to the argument . . .

### opinion

Mr. Rupert cites two indices of nuclear instability: the need for weapons parity (presumably guaranteed by SALT II) and the fear that both superpowers' second-strike retaliatory forces are vulnerable to first-strike nuclear attack, thus destroying the concept of mutual assured destruction. Unfortunately, if stability were ensured by the strength of second-strike nuclear forces, Mr. Rupert would need not fear. Both sides have expanded their arsenals well beyond the "hardened concrete silos of U.S. and Soviet land based missiles". Nearly two-thirds of the 9,500 American nuclear warheads are at sea posing as submarine launched ballistic missiles or in the skies as air launched missiles. The U.S.S.R., while not quite so well outfitted, has similar variety including mobile land-based silos. Either nation could retaliate with cobra venom if attacked, yet the arms race is intensifying and along with it, Rupert correctly notes, nuclear instabilities. Why did a Canadian military journal find that only 10 of the last 1,600 arms races since 600 B.C. did not end in war? Why did the present weapons competition lead the Canadian Peace Research Institute computer model to conclude in 1979 that wor'd war is likely between 1985 and 1990?

Rupert answers: "Arms race instability" will result when each side attempts to regain a secure deterrent by improving its strategic forces in quantity and quality. Both will acquire more, and deadlier weapons, but neither will feel safe in the face of its competitor's build-up. As missiles become ever more numerous, the warheads more precise, this perception of insecurity will become acute on both sides. During periods of high international tension, the efficacy of deterrence will come increasingly into question."

SALT II would not result in weapons parity. Before the ink had dried, 'allowable' weapon systems would be made deadlier, more powerful, more threatening to the foe. Neither government would know what improvements the other was making. Technology outpaces international treaties, exacerbating tension and uncertainty. When multiple-warheaded missiles and other jumps in weapon 'sophistication' came along, SALT I was scrapped in favor of SALT II. Surely SALT II would become SALT III and IV of tomorrow.

Eliminating nuclear uncertainties is the solution, but SALT II cannot pull the trick. Why? Because neither

superpower wants to abide by *any* treaty of equality. Each body seeks to increase its power and influence over the rest of the world.

As long as both superpowers possess nuclear weapons, tensions will worsen. The way to stop this insanity is through disarmament, *total* disarmament by the United States. If we disarmed everything, we could throw uncertainties out the window. Russia would have no reason to fear an American attack. What Russian leader would push the button when there was no perceived threat, no hidden star-spangled Death Star ready to blow-up entire nations with laser torpedos? A person holding a shotgun has no logical reason to shoot an unarmed bystander, *unless* he or she is being physically threatened. Russian officials are neither stupid, nor crazy. Take away the instabilities by completely stopping the arms race and you have a chance at survival . . . and maybe peace.

Now turn the picture slightly. America has the most influential economy in the world. More nations depend on the function of our economic machine than at any point in history. If our economy were physically destroyed by nuclear holocaust, the world economy would collapse like a string of dominoes. The Soviets are heavily indebted to the global economic network. Not only is their foreign trade fairly extensive with the U.S., but with other European countries as well. If Americans were unarmed, what would 'the enemy' gain by bringing chaos to the Russian market?

If we cannot slow the race, we must stop it. How much liberty do we possess? How much freedom of choice? From birth we've been taught we must have nuclear weapons because we must. I'm still waiting for them to tell me why.

Kirk Cameron

Freshman—Psychology/Math

"The law of Moses says, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say: Don't resist violence. If you are slapped on one cheek, turn the other too."

Jesus Christ

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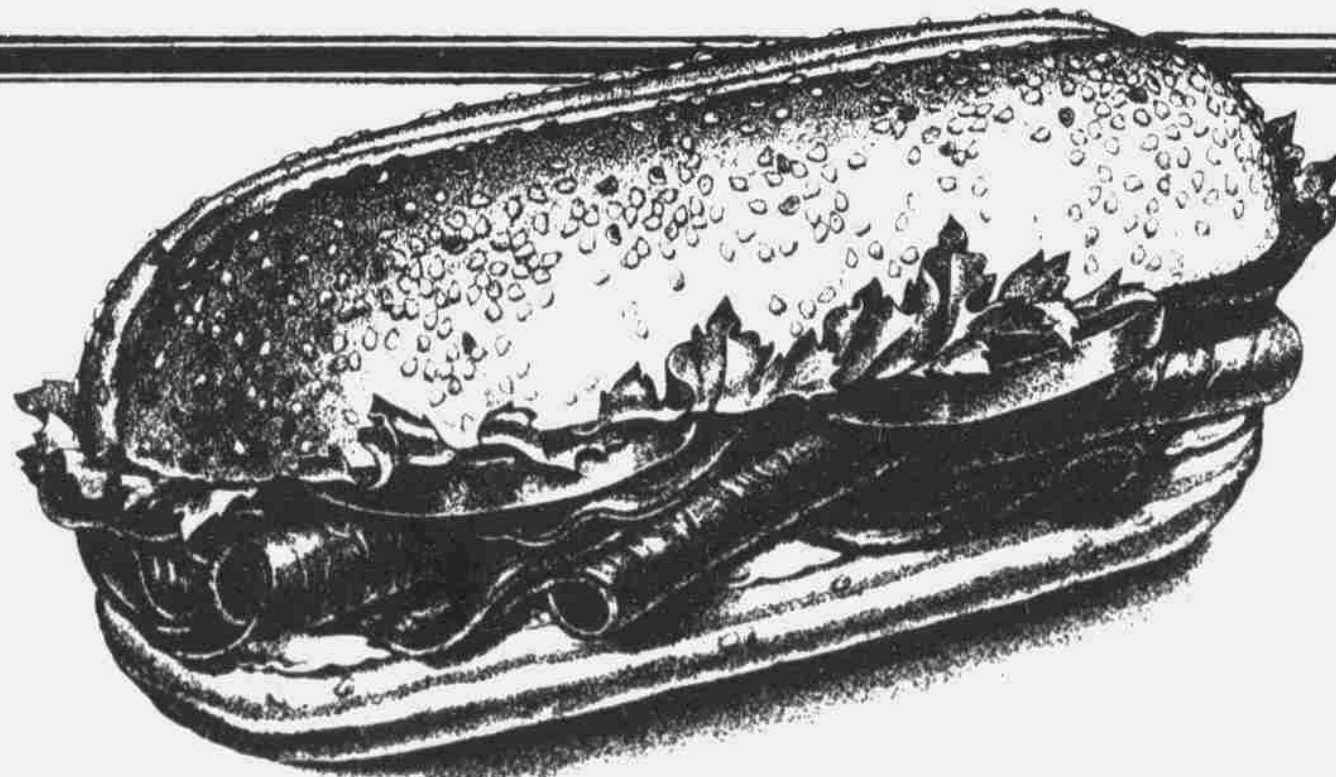
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