

# Debaters disagree on nuclear parity

By Eric Peterson

A debate on solutions to the nuclear arms race featured agreement on the moral issues involved, but disagreement about whether the United States and the Soviet Union have nuclear parity.

Leo Sartori, UNL physics professor, consultant to the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency



## Nuclear Issues

and former senior adviser to the SALT II delegation, said the time is right for a nuclear freeze when the two powers are about equal.

Steven Steiner, public affairs adviser on European Affairs in the United States State Department, represented the administration's point of view.

About 100 students and some faculty came to hear the debate in the Nebraska Union main lobby Thursday.

The Rev. Larry Doerr, of Commonplace United Ministries, noted the new opposition of many Catholic clergy to the nuclear arms race.

"Morally, to the extent to which you and I consent to this situation, we are all engaging in mass suicide."

### Administration discredits proponents

Philip Dyer, UNL political science professor, said administration is trying to discredit the motives and judgment of nuclear freeze proponents.

"The administration has given the impression that people opposed to the arms race are conscious or unconscious dupes of a foreign power," Dyer said. But the insistence on stopping the arms race now is

completely justifiable, Dyer added.

"It's expected there will be hostility between you and a government which you perceive to be operating in an unwise and unjust way."

The present policy of deterrence by infinite containment — a spiral in which each side of the arms race keeps building in order to equal or pass the other side — must be replaced by one of finite containment, which Dyer defined as "the level of destruction beyond which it's redundant to go."

However, Steiner said, the nuclear freeze movement may hinder efforts by the administration to reduce, not freeze, nuclear weapons. "The aim is to reverse the nuclear arms race, not to cap it."

### U.S. strength necessary

Steiner said continued United States nuclear strength is necessary because of the Soviet Union's history of aggression in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and more recently Afghanistan and Poland.

"We have to watch very carefully what could well be a Soviet race to superiority in certain areas."

Steiner said the Soviets are ahead in the number of land missiles, while the United States has more missiles in other modes, such as submarines and bombers.

Disarmament must be mutual and reach a stable and equal level, Steiner said.

"It's been shown that unilateral steps won't succeed; we need mutual steps," Steiner said. "We want deep reductions down to mutual levels. The "mutual and verifiable" clause in the nuclear weapons freeze propositions shows that most Americans have the same concerns," Steiner said.

Steiner called the administration's disarmament plans "ambitious and realistic." He said the plan's basic success is illustrated by Soviet acceptance of the goal of

reductions in arms levels, an idea Steiner said the Soviets rejected when it came from the Carter arms negotiators.

### Pressure by dissidents

The Soviets may still try to apply pressure on the United States through dissident American opinion, Steiner said.

"The Soviets will do everything they can to drive a wedge between us (the U.S. government) and the people . . ." Steiner said.

Sartori responded with a reference to the gravity of the arms race. "The present level of armaments on both sides is so high that no conceivable turn of events . . . could provide solutions to the danger in which we live," Sartori said.

He said survival depends on two possibilities: getting rid of all nuclear weapons, or changing the climate between the United States and the Soviet Union to eliminate the possibilities of panic or accident.

Sartori said Reagan's arms negotiations are ineffective because neither cruise missiles nor British and French bombs are included in the weapons totals on America's side of the balance.

Sartori said he favors the nuclear freeze idea as a start. "It would certainly be a strong, positive first step," he said, adding that such a freeze would not lock the United States into nuclear inferiority.

Building another generation of weapons before freezing or reducing arms levels simply will not work, Sartori said.

"If we have to build up to try to get equal," the Soviets will do the same," Sartori said. "A nuclear response (other than a freeze and reduction) makes no sense from any point of view."



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