

Caldicott: Nuclear disarmament crucial

By Chris Burbach

The patient is infected by rapidly spreading lethal microbes. Though terminally ill, the patient could be saved by drastic action. Without that action, the patient has less than two years to live.

According to physician-turned-crusader Dr. Helen Caldicott, the patient is the planet Earth, the lethal microbes are nuclear weapons, and the drastic action needed is nuclear disarmament.

"We're living on borrowed time — like a cancer patient," Caldicott said.

Caldicott described in detail the medical effects of a 20-megaton nuclear explosion. She said people within six miles of the blast would die instantly, many by vaporization. Most people within 20 miles would die because of the blast and

accompanying winds up to 500 miles an hour.

The aftermath of a nuclear explosion would include fallout, partial and possibly total destruction of the ozone layer and soil and water contamination, Caldicott said.

"It's possible that we now could destroy most of the life on this planet," Caldicott said.

She said there is no such thing as a limited nuclear war, that any nuclear exchange would escalate to global conflict.

The most dangerous weapons are tactical nuclear weapons, particularly cruise missiles planned for Western Europe, Caldicott said, because the presence of such weapons near Soviet borders could force the Soviets into a first strike warning system. She said such a system would rely totally on computers, which would

automatically launch missiles in response to a perceived attack.

Computers can and do make mistakes, she said, citing a near nuclear war in 1979. American computers signaled a nuclear attack and American forces prepared to respond. However, it was discovered that a war game cartridge had been fed into the computer system.

"We were six minutes from nuclear war," she said.

Before the nuclear arms race, the United States was invulnerable, she said.

"I consider that (the arms race) an unpatriotic thing we have done."

"The splitting of the atom has changed everything save man's mode of thinking," Caldicott quoted Albert Einstein as saying. Americans must force themselves to think about a nuclear holocaust so that it can be avoided, she said.

The American people must use their democracy and force their government to pursue bilateral disarmament, Caldicott said.

"Everyone's looking to America. America's going to save the world," she said.

Caldicott spoke at First United Methodist Church, 2723 N. 50th St. Friday night as part of "A Peacemaking Workshop." The workshop was sponsored by several Nebraska churches and peace groups.

Caldicott, a native of Australia, gave up her teaching position at Harvard Medical School several years ago. She organized and currently is president of Physicians for Social Responsibility, a non-profit organization of doctors that seeks to educate the public about the medical dangers of nuclear war.

Wolz, Wallace clarify RHA views

A phone conversation between Bob Wolz, Residence Hall Association president-elect, and Matt Wallace, the Reach Party's ASUN presidential candidate, Friday was not meant to be a threat, Wallace said.

According to Wolz, Wallace called him and asked why his Progressive Party had endorsed the Action Party in the election. Wolz told the Daily Nebraskan that the party's executive officers chose to endorse Action because they believed Action has addressed issues relevant to residence hall students.

"We were offering our personal opinions of the parties that were running, assuming our constituents respected our opinion," Wolz said. "I feel it was our right and responsibility to do that."

He also said that in their conversation, Wallace warned him that such an endorsement could jeopardize the relationship between ASUN and RHA.

"I never said (in his phone conversation with Wolz) we wouldn't work with them. I never threatened him. I merely disagree with his policy," Wallace said.

Wolz said he believes it is the responsibility of the ASUN president to represent the entire student body and "not exclude any organizations or individuals based on their endorsements in the campaign."

Landis bill views...

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LB5, the bill that would have put the university under the Legislature's control had it not been killed, received a hearty endorsement from Landis.

Landis said the sense of neglect the university is entitled to feel under the regents would be mitigated if the Legislature took control. He said the Legislature sees the university as aloof and as a "fat cat", he said the university does not deserve. This is because no one in the Legislature, except the Lincoln senators, feel responsible for the university, he said.

The breakfast was not without entertainment. Landis closed the breakfast with a demonstration of how to properly knot a bow tie.

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