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'Dr. Strangelove' focuses on life's humorous ironies

VIDEO VAULT from Page 7 tions, I will attempt to do the impossible.

"Dr. Strangelove" begins, quite appropriately, with a darkly hu-morous paradox. We view the main titles and two bombers in the sky as a mellow Muzak plays in the background (which, if one is musically inclined, will recognize as "Try A Little Tenderness"). But the serene existence of this flying death dealer is interrupted by an alarm -- the order has been given to bomb the Soviet Union.

Plane commander T.J. "King" Kong (Slim Pickens) rises to the challenge by pulling out his cowboy hat and prepares his crew for "nuclear combat, toe to toe with the Russkies."

Kong is an interesting person to lead a plane for a number of rea-sons, primarily his state of mind. Even though he decides that the Soviets have already decimated the United States (hence the order to attack), he rallies his crew by promising them promotions and citations when the war is over.

As it turns out, however, the plane has been tricked, and there is no attack. The culprit is General Jack D. Ripper (Sterling Hayden) of Burpelson Air Force Base, who has convinced the base of imminent Soviet attack and is holding the skeptical Captain Lionel Mandrake (Peter Sellers) in his office. There, behind locked doors, Ripper reveals why he has ordered the attack.

Thursday, April 13, 1989

"I cannot sit back and allow the international communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids," he says. Irony is certainly the theme. In

"Dr. Strangelove," Kubrick is intent on exploring what George Orwell called "doublethink," that is, hold-ing two contrary ideas in one's mind simultaneously.

As Michel Ciment points out in his book "Kubrick," the worlds in his films are "forever on the brink of collapse." In "Dr. Strangelove" this theme reaches the ultimate proportions of not just being a personal world, but in fact THE

See VIDEO VAULT on 11



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