

## A Pause in the Arms Race

BY ROBERT E. SEGAL

Now that President Reagan has flashed to a world alive with protests against the threat of nuclear war the good news that the United States stands ready to join with the Soviet Union in a gigantic effort to reduce that threat, we have reason to praise Mr. Reagan and to rejoice over this historic move towards peace.

Few of us can find our way through the technical talk of intermediate - range nuclear missiles, American Pershing cruise missiles and the SS-4s, 5s 20s, etc. Nor does Moscow find much good in the Washington proposal. But at least a light has been kindled at the American end of the tunnel. And the millions in Europe and here at home who have been crying out against the drift towards nuclear incineration can stand by for a moment to see if a concrete gain comes through.

Worry over the possibility of nuclear war has been spelled out in countless American college forums and on numerous European streets. For some this recalls the fiery protests against continuance of the war in Vietnam during the Johnson Administration. But this time, the cries have come from many people who were not demonstrating in the 1960s but now find themselves moved to speak out in the pulpit, in the media, in assemblies day after day.

Monitoring this welcome turn of events this observer recalls favorite lines often repeated by an old acquaintance, a state education commissioner:

"The strength of our nation  
Lies not in our guns,  
But deep in the hearts  
Of our daughters and sons."

Simplistic? Perhaps. But with the new groundswell of opposition to any thought of starting a war that would be truly unwinnable, Americans have now reached high ground as vantage point from which to decry the peril, the anguish over possible participation in a

senseless war by our children and our grandchildren, and the same of lavish expenditure for ever larger lethal weapons.

Must this nation bowed low by recession, hit by an unemployment rate of eight million, and driven to despair over harsh cuts in human services, continue to earmark 57% of its budget for military - related expenditures while holding the tab for aid to the elderly, disabled, mentally ill and other key needs down to 21%. The Jobs With Peace campaign reported recently that it estimates some \$322 billion of the taxpayers' money will be transferred from domestic to military programs over the next five years. If the tendency to fatten the martial expense account escalates the way it is presently routed on Washington drawing boards the cost for bombs, tanks, troops, etc., is expected to reach one billion dollars a day.

But the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Lew Allen Jr., has said that we can afford the expense of defense. Taking as his text the cost of preparing for war vs. the cost of such highjinks as consuming booze and gambling the general reckoned that Americans are willing to shoulder the burden of military spending. Look, he said Americans spend more on alcoholic beverages than it does on its Air

Force and casino gambling revenues are running double the Air Force's annual fuel bill.

So the daughters and sons mentioned above should wave more flags and tighten more belts as the administration's knife whittles down their school lunches. Even after the ax has gone as deep as a government ax can go, the kids still get two slices of cheese, a fourth of a cup of grape juice, a cupcake a cup of whole milk, and a quarter - cup of canned peaches for lunch.

Go hungry? No. Yet it seems paradoxical when one recalls that the national school lunch program, established in 1946 by Congress, was aimed in part at shoring up national security. The reasoning stemmed from studies showing the poor nutritional measures found among potential World War II recruits.

Well, we lose that one. But at least there's hope now for bringing new reason to bear on the nuclear scene.

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