

Students fret over possible war

SEARCH class on nuclear war draws sell-out crowd

By GAYLA LEOPARD
Of the Emerald

At last count the sociology SEARCH course "War in the Nuclear Age" had an enrollment of 153 students — not bad considering 400-level sociology courses usually draw about 25.

Students take the class, says instructor Joseph Austin, because they are scared.

"We're going to blow ourselves up by accident if we don't some other way," Austin says. "They're (students) frightened, they're concerned."

That concern is not confined to University students. Last Tuesday, Austin spoke by phone for two hours to a Miami radio talk-show audience. And Pres. Jimmy Carter spoke of the threat of nuclear war in his farewell address to the nation the following evening.

Austin devotes a lot of class time to discussing the United States' vulnerability to nuclear attack. In a report on the proposed MX missile system, one author says the United States won't have an adequate defense until 1988, Austin says.

But even when our defense against nuclear attack is considered adequate, Austin says he won't be optimistic.

Austin says possible defensive nuclear weapons are really weapons of retaliation. And whatever the motives of military

planners, "it means hemorrhaging the resources of this country" to build a means of totally destroying our enemies, he says.

That destruction may not necessarily result from aggression, Austin says. It may be caused by simple errors.

"Three times last year, we nearly blew up the world through human error," Austin says, referring to faulty signals received by the United States' early warning systems.

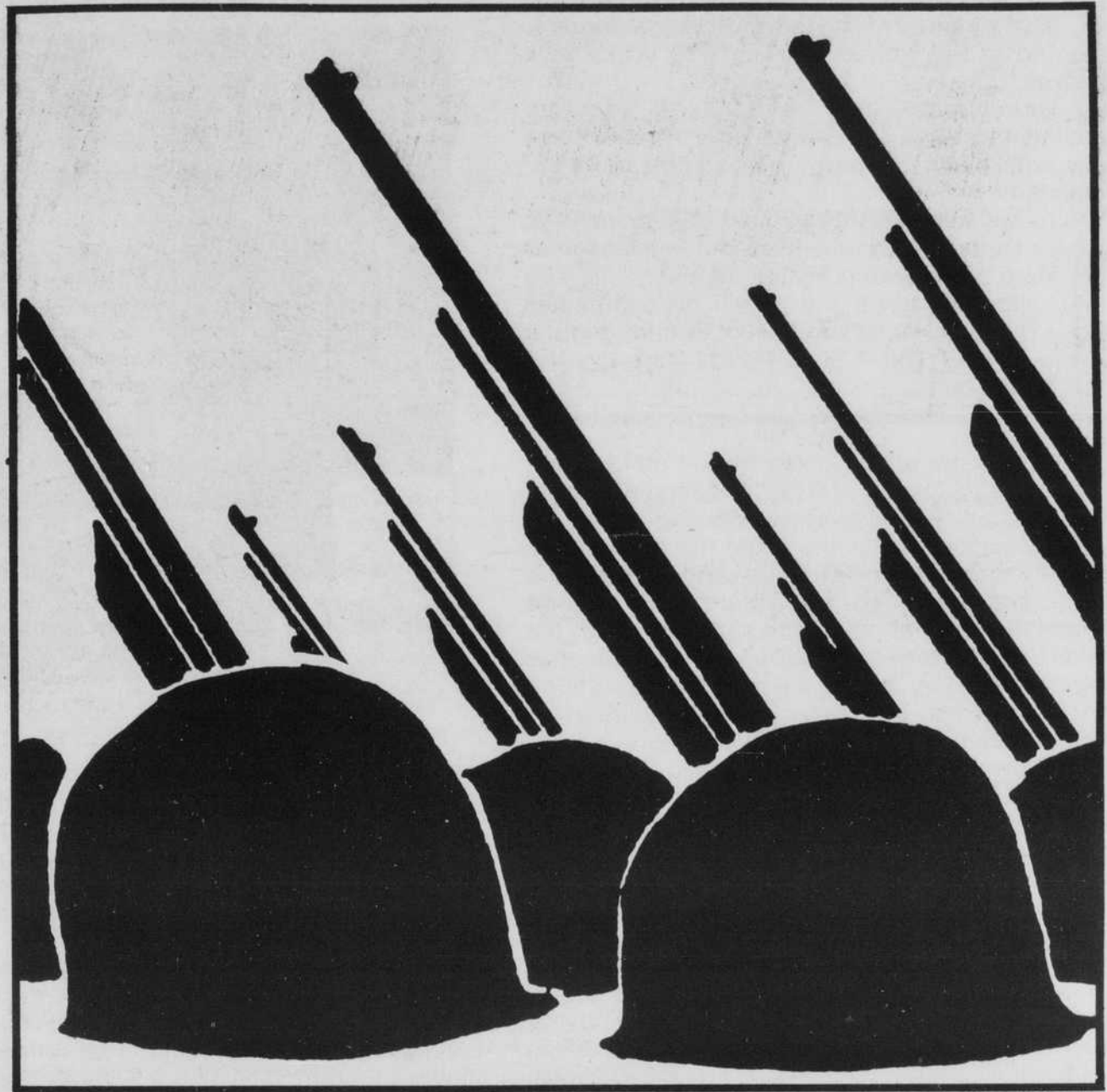
A 20-megaton weapon can devastate 200 square miles, according to Austin. The intense heat can ignite wooden houses 30 miles away.

Although he is "not necessarily for unilateral disarmament," Austin says he is angered by politicians who advocate nuclear acceleration.

"I can only think of two words — insanity or ignorance."

The public's ignorance on the issue of nuclear war is fed by political misinformation about defense, Austin says. For this reason, he backs up his lectures with "home-grown and reliable" scientific writings.

"Get it off the shelves," Austin advises. Although he says he can't, in good conscience, assign pro-war material to his class, he does encourage varying views in classroom discussions.



Emerald Graphic

Vet: U.S. mobilizing for Mideastern invasion

By DOUG BUTLER
Of the Emerald

The United States' military has crossed the line separating contingency planning from a real commitment to war, a University Veterans Association member claims.

Dave Isenberg, acting UVA director, says scraps of information from U.S. military documents seem innocuous when examined individually, but provide "pretty conclusive proof" of gradual war mobilization when studied collectively.

Detailed plans for the invasion of Iran and the creation of a desert training camp and military and political analyses of Middle East fighting all indicate U.S. involvement in a resource war — a war for oil, Isenberg says.

A group of policy-makers in Washington is spearheading this movement because they

see a war in the Middle East as inevitable and believe the United States could gain the upper hand by striking first, he says.

Isenberg says he believes members of this pro-war group are in the administration, Congress and Pentagon.

To win such a war, the military needs transport systems, material, experienced personnel, plans and public backing. Isenberg claims the group is becoming increasingly successful in securing these needs. Isenberg's arguments include:

- Continued draft registration.
- Mock draft lottery and call-up staged by the Selective Service.
- The formulation of new guidelines for draft evaders.
- Joint military exercises between the United States and Egypt.

• Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat's offer of the use of Egypt's military facilities in the event of a western intervention.

• The military's recall of retired personnel for service on the continent so younger people will be released for deployment overseas.

Isenberg says moves have been made in Washington to spend billions of dollars on a training center in Barstow, Calif., on the creation of a rapid deployment force, on military transport systems and on the material needs of the 82nd Airborne Division.

"This is the critical stuff needed for operation and maintenance of fighting forces," Isenberg says.

These new expenditures don't mesh with the stated goals of the Defense Department, he says.

"These acquisitions are not earmarked for NATO or Korea or Southeast Asia. They have no official purpose."

The training center in Barstow is described by the military as a NATO facility, but European topography is nothing like the California scrub desert, Isenberg says.

With the military well on its way to being prepared, the war effort is aimed at convincing people that war is necessary, Isenberg says. The conflict in Afghanistan boosted the American public's willingness to accept war, he says.

"If the majority of people think we are being economically strangled by the Middle East," then pre-war buildup essentially will go unopposed, he says.

"They are working for a national consensus."

Draft registration, a small part of the war process, has encountered the most opposition, Isenberg says. People must make their own decisions about registering, but resisting registration draws the most attention to war preparation, he adds.

Isenberg, called Doctor Doom because of his grim forecasts, predicts that "it's just a matter of time before it's put into gear."

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