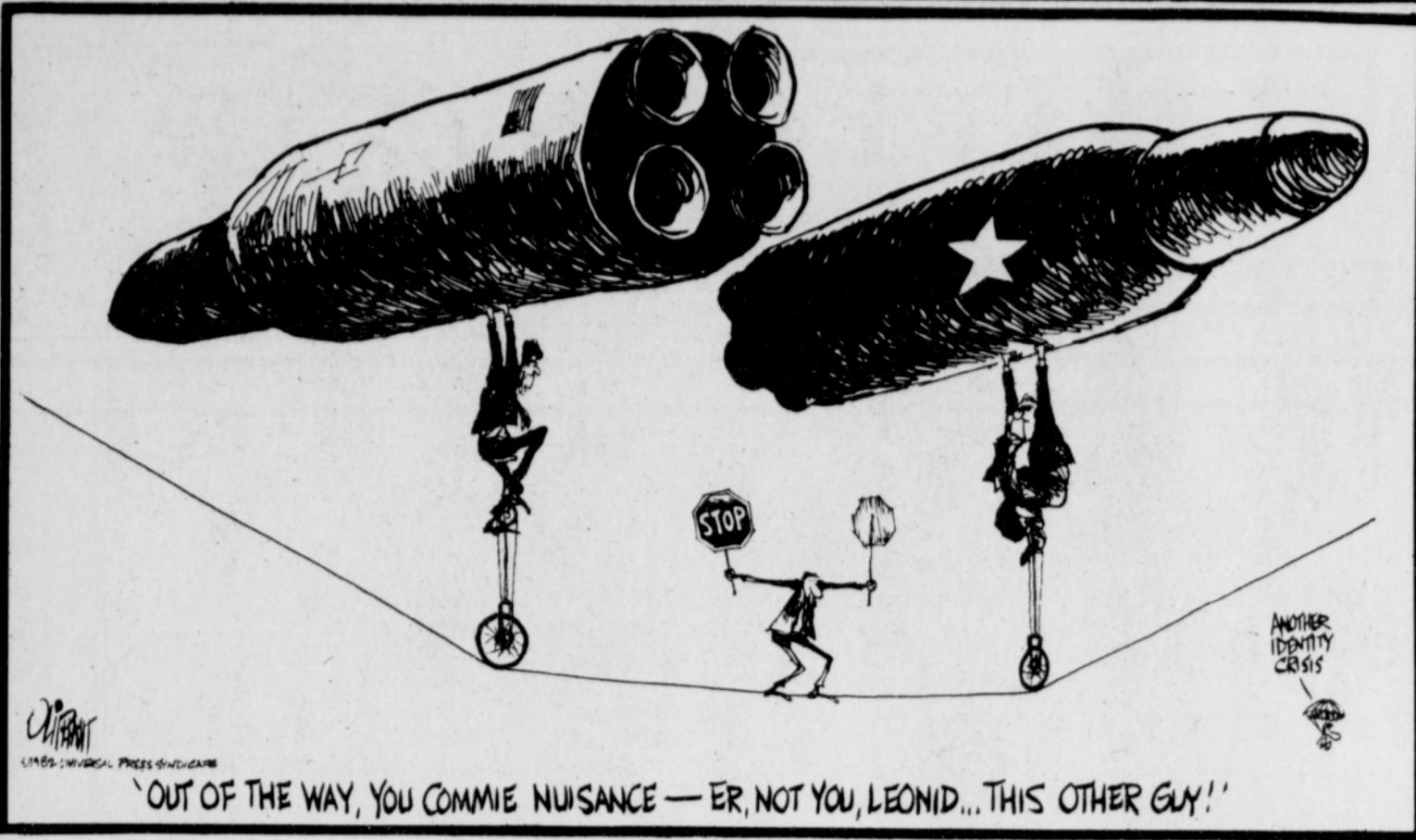


Pat Oliphant



important part of deterrence was that long-range missiles were neither fast enough, nor accurate enough, to wipe out all of the enemy's weapons in one strike. Thus the other side could strike back and the damage to both sides was unacceptable enough to deter any first attack. The U. S. now is planning to deploy the cruise and Pershing II missiles, accurate to within one hundred feet, and wants to put them in West Germany, six minutes from Soviet borders. Cruise missiles threaten the long-range ICBMs in land-based silos, which are seventy-five percent of the Soviet arsenal and twenty-five percent of the American arsenal. When three-quarters of the Soviet Union's weapons are threatened with destruction within six minutes, the weapons will be set on a launch-on-warning system, the "use them or lose them" approach. Six minutes is not enough time to verify whether a satellite has picked up an attack or a computer is malfunctioning, and someone will have to decide if the country can afford to wait and find out. American computers have falsely indicated a Soviet nuclear attack one hundred and forty-seven times in the past two years. This new nuclear weapons technology is intimately tied to the concept of civil defense, and both are taking the nation closer to the possibility of nuclear war, not securing us against it.

First, one major thrust of the plan is massive evacuations from "about four hundred 'high risk' areas to about two thousand presumably lower risk 'host' areas, at least fifty miles away." FEMA is assuming that everyone, including the elderly, shut-ins, the sick, single mothers, and college students, would have available and reliable transportation. It assumes that everyone would be calm, freeway traffic would not jam, and traffic and emergency broadcast personnel would all stay on the job for the three days it will take to complete the evacuation, instead of leaving with their families. Furthermore, it presumes that "host" towns would happily welcome the sudden arrival of thousands of evacuees with all their belongings. It assumes that an evacuation would take place sometime in the week before the bomb was dropped, and that the Soviets, seeing massive population movements via satellite, would not fear an imminent U.S. attack and launch their missiles, thirty minutes from U.S. borders, before the three days are over. Finally, it calls for upgrading one and one-half million existing structures, and teaching the tens of millions of people who will not have access to them how to construct their own shelters, emergency lamps, stoves, and air pumps. The plans specify that an abundance of small trees or doors will be readily available, three to five people will work six to eighteen hours each, and everyone will be able to gather two weeks of food, water, medical, sanitary and other supplies.

percent in the western hemisphere. Ultra-violet rays that the ozone filters out will come through, blinding all of the animals and insects, which will then eventually die. When this begins to happen, the entire ecosystem will collapse. Animals fertilize the soil, provide food, pollinate fruits; we are tremendously dependent upon the animal world to create a liveable environment. Insects, which are more immune to radiation effects than humans, will spread disease to epidemic proportions. Many of these diseases we have controlled with proper medical supplies which will not be available in the event of nuclear war. The devastation of such a war is nearly unimaginable to our minds. The only survival after Hiroshima was because the western world responded with money, food, medical supplies, and personnel. A great number of those medical and military personnel have since died of leukemia, heart attacks and cancer. Furthermore, if there is a nuclear war in the western industrialized world, there will be no one to respond and nothing left to respond with.

The final criticism left unanswered is that tax money is being misused, and taxpayers are without a voice in it. The President has tied funds for volcano, flood, and other emergency management programs to money for his civil defense plan. It seems that even the national government is aware of how ineffective and unpopular the plan is; the attempt is to force it on towns and cities by tying it to something those towns and cities do not want to refuse. Eight cities have refused to accept any funds for emergency planning because funds for civil defense were included. The Portland City Council recently voted four to one to establish a task force to research the issue and possibly add Portland's name to the list. (The dissenting vote was Mayor Frank Ivancie's; he claimed that this was a national issue, and "Portland is not the appropriate place for a debate." He had used the same argument in voting against a nuclear freeze resolution earlier this year.)

The second major criticism comes from the medical community. According to Physicians for Social Responsibility, "there is no survival (of nuclear war) in any sense of that word that has social meaning." There will be no heat, no electricity, no uncontaminated water, because power plants and reservoirs are located in "high risk" areas, meaning they are probable targets. There will be little food and few medical supplies, very few physicians to treat the wounded, and very few facilities in which to treat them. Even exploding one-third of the weapons in the U.S. and Soviet arsenals will deplete the ozone layer by seventy to eighty

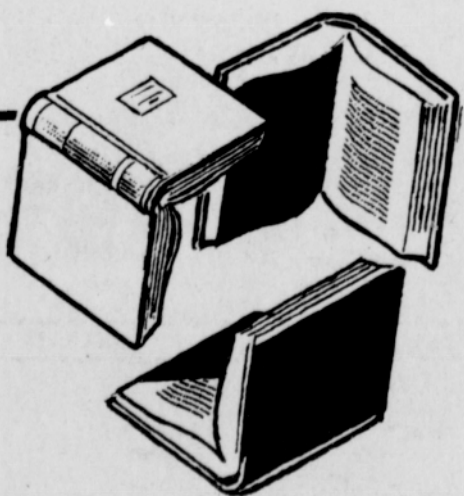
A third criticism, voiced by Jim Cook, a member of the American Friends Service Committee, is that "civil defense is the fourth leg of the triad." The triad is the arsenal of sea, land, and air-based missiles upon which U.S. nuclear war-fighting strategy rests. Civil defense represents a fourth part of American nuclear strategy.

President Reagan said in a National Security Directive in March, 1982, "Civil defense now 'compliments' U.S. strategic nuclear forces." If Reagan believes that nuclear war is survivable, that it will not result in mutual destruction of America and the Soviet Union, then there is no basis for deterrence. Deterrence meant that neither side would attack because the damage to both sides in a nuclear war would be unacceptable. The President is now saying it will not be unacceptable, therefore it is an option.

The same move away from the policy of deterrence is reflected in the kinds of weapons the U. S. has now available. David Onheiber (director of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Coalition of Greater Portland) explained that an

These four criticisms, that the plan is unworkable, that it ignores biological and scientific laws, that it raises both international tension and the possibility of nuclear war, and that it is a manipulative use of tax money, have been answered mostly with rhetoric about "emotionalism" and "communist plots." The civil defense conference in Portland was no exception. Martin Silverstein, moderator of a workshop entitled "Medical Consequences of Terrorist Acts", said to the group, "Those demonstrators out there are not terrorists. But at the same time they're not perhaps the most rational people. And terrorists are not rational." The civil defense for nuclear war plan is a national government program, to be designed and implemented by elected and appointed officials. Those of us who pay for it, and who elect the officials, have a right to hear the answers to our questions, and to demand an alternative to nuclear war and civil defense planning.

Katrin Bridget Snow lives in Portland.



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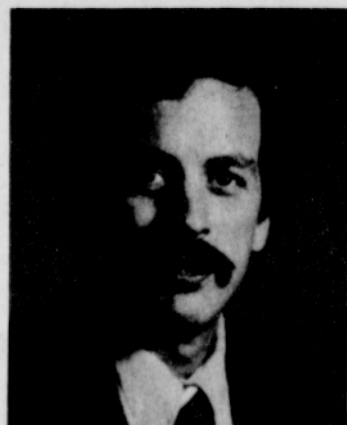
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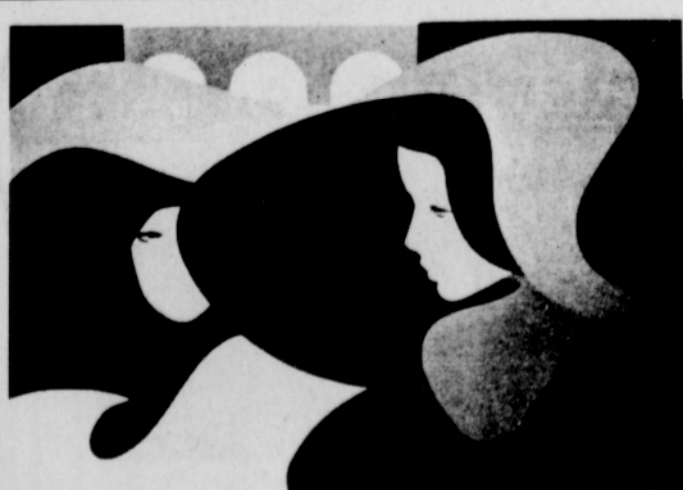
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