

July 16, 1979

Let us consider...

We have written previously about priorities and human needs. This issue can often seem very abstract and distant from our daily concerns. Let us consider:

- we live in a world in which one person dies of starvation each 9 seconds - four out of five are children
- the cost of three Trident submarines with nuclear missiles (approximately \$3,200,000,000) would provide supplementary protein feeding to 160 million malnourished children.

The connections are closer still. Housing in Greater Boston is an enormous problem. Thousands of units are in disrepair unfit for human habitation, while thousands of families and elderly individuals are on Boston Housing Authority waiting lists. (The wait for emergency housing alone is often up to two years.)

Transportation is another urgent problem, especially as gasoline costs rise. \$4.3 billion spent to build 860 miles of subway tunnel to house the M-X missile, could pay the bill for the entire country's mass transit system for two years.

Yet, statistics themselves often blunt the urgency of such genuine human needs. Not far from Draper Lab is an emergency shelter for homeless people where some of us work. Here we confront people in real need -- families, elderly people, pregnant young women -- unable to find housing they can afford and running out of money and hope. Thousands of de-institutionalized mental patients roam the streets or live alone in bare rooms for lack of counseling and community care facilities.

Money alone will not respond to these needs. Billions of dollars have often been used wastefully. (Many of Boston's housing projects are examples of this.) The creative skills in design, research and planning now used in producing more accurate and more deadly nuclear weapons at Draper could help alleviate these problems.

The present federal budget reflects one choice. More and more destructive weapons systems have been given priority over the needs for food, shelter, and health care in our own country and overseas. That we have a balance between "guns" & "butter" is shown to be an illusion.

- What kind of world are we creating?
- Will more powerful weapons provide real security in a world in which the gap between those who live in luxury and those who exist in misery continues to widen?
- Does this really reflect our personal priorities?

We urge you to consider these thoughts, and invite you to respond. Send letters to:

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