

UNITED STATES PACIFIST PARTY REPORT

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EVALUATING THE CANDIDATES

Since the preservation of peace, the prevention of nuclear war, is so important, and the President of the United States has the power to launch a nuclear war, most people are interested in determining which candidate would be the least likely to involve the country in a nuclear war. To do this, they usually examine the foreign relations policies proposed by the candidates, and their voting and administrative records. This approach always will be affected by assumptions made by the analyzer. For example, a person who believes that the essential ingredient for peace is superior U.S. military power, will evaluate the candidates in a different way from someone who regards U.S. military power as a cause of war. The following article will present an analysis of important foreign policy positions of five major candidates: President Reagan, Alan Cranston, John Glenn, Jesse Jackson, and Walter Mondale. An assumption that the article will make is that deterrence is inherently unstable; all configurations of antagonistic nuclear arsenals make nuclear war probable. This assumption is based on a mathematical probability analysis of the assumptions behind deterrence, and the failure probabilities of nuclear weapons systems. The analysis employs the probability equation

$$P = 1 - (1 - p)^{n \cdot m}$$

, in which P is the probability over an extended period of some weapon being launched, p the probability of the launch of a given missile over a 24 hour period, n the number of days in the extended period, and m the number of missiles in strategic arsenals. A characteristic of deterrence revealed by the equation is that the more missiles there are, the greater is the likelihood of at least an unauthorized or "accidental" missile launch.

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SETTING "THE DOOMSDAY CLOCK"

In January of this year, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists changed the setting of its "Doomsday Clock" to three minutes before midnight. The Clock, which has become a well-known symbol of concern about the nuclear arms race, was adopted by the Bulletin in 1947, and has had its hands moved several times. In 1953, several months after the first hydrogen bomb was exploded, the hands were moved up to two minutes before midnight. When the atmospheric weapons test ban treaty was signed in 1963, the hands were moved back to eight minutes before midnight. Since the hands always have been quite close to midnight, the Clock always has served to convey the impression that there are at least some people who believe that the nuclear arms race poses a grave danger to humankind. On the other hand, since there always seems to be some time left - 12 minutes, eight minutes, ten minutes, or three minutes - before Doomsday, the impression also is created that there still is some time left to avert the holocaust. Since everyone knows that the Clock is a metaphor, it's assumed that the "minutes before midnight" are just a symbol, and there actually may be several years before Doomsday.

Also, some people may assume that since the Clock is "set" by scientists, many of whom routinely time experiments in their disciplines in "nanoseconds", billionths of a second, there must be some scientific basis to the changes that are made in the Clock's setting. Actually, there doesn't seem to be a scientific basis. The Clock always has been

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