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WE ARE ALL TARGETS

Scientists find nuclear war unthinkable. The general public imagines that this nation would never use nuclear weapons unless they were first used on us -- that is, that our nuclear policy is pure and simple national defense. Both views give their holders false confidence. Both fly in the face of public facts. Both help generate the apathy and psychic numbness that accelerate the drift toward nuclear holocaust.

Scare talk? We would like to believe so. But some immovable facts stand in the way. For example:

1. July 1, 1975. James Schlesinger, then Secretary of Defense: "Under no circumstances could we disavow the first use of nuclear weapons." Thus the U.S. publicly renounced its commitment never to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

2. October 4, 1977. President Carter, to the U.N. General Assembly: "We will not use nuclear weapons except in self-defense; that is, in circumstances of an actual nuclear or conventional attack on the United States, our territories or armed forces, or such an attack on our allies (our emphasis). In other words, we would use nuclear weapons if they seemed expedient, and either we or our allies were involved. (What country in recent times has ever admitted to being an aggressor?)

3. The willingness of the U.S. to use nuclear weapons on such occasions is borne out by the public record, which shows that on at least eight occasions, presidential advisors have actually advocated the use of nuclear weapons in stress situations. The Cuban Missile Crisis is only the best known of these -- in which Robert Kennedy's memoir states clearly that the likely result would be "the end of mankind."

4. Under a "counterforce" strategy, the U.S. has been building a first-strike nuclear capability. Robert Aldrich, former missile designer for the Trident submarine (who quite his job when he realized the Pentagon was secretly shifting to a first-strike strategy), has documented the development of the implementing technology: (a) pinpoint accuracy of Trident and M-X missiles, which could be used to take out Soviet missile emplacements; (b) infra-red sensors and homing interceptors to take out enemy communications satellites and incoming missiles; and (c) underwater sensing arrays for setting up enemy submarines (whose survival, by the way, is essential to any real deterrent strategy), for a simultaneous strike. All these intricate systems to be closely interconnected by a sophisticated command, control, and communications network which must function so fast that a human being cannot enter the decision-making loop. A thorough treatment of the subject can be found in Aldrich's book, The Counterforce Syndrome, obtainable from the Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Q St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.) Draper is directly involved in some of this work.

5. The Russians meanwhile are simultaneously developing a first-strike capability. When both sides have it and we are at a standoff, the slightest spark could trigger nuclear cremation.

No matter how a nuclear war might begin, it would ensure mutual and total destruction of everything and everybody. In this situation, therefore, there can be no us and no them, no civilians and military, no management and workers, no demonstrators - we are all just human targets. We can at last begin to appreciate the biblical injunction that humanity is one.

Nothing less than a mass awakening of the people is needed to halt this violent technology gone berserk. And Draper Laboratory is a plausible spot for such an awakening to begin -- because you are in a unique position to know the threat being created. Your voice, raised in protest, would be a powerful warning -- like that of Aldrich and that of the Trident workers at Electric Boat, and that of the nuclear engineers who blew the whistle on nuclear power -- that people are determined to regain control of their own lives and destinies. It is the recurrent voice of reason, of humanity, of love.

Because of the experience of similar groups, we would not be surprised if you were made to feel uncomfortable dialoguing with us. We ourselves have been told to move outside Draper, at the risk of arrest. We regret very much that first amendment rights -- ours and yours -- are being threatened in this way, but this is simply a measure of the urgency of the issue. We can, of course, easily remain in touch. If you do not see us inside Draper's actual premises, you will find us immediately outside -- eager to hear your thoughts (pro or con) on both the issues and on our presence here. Or write us at our address below.

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