

# November 11th

The November 11th Committee is Cornell University's chapter of United Campuses to Prevent Nuclear War (UCAM). Newsletter No. 21, October 1985

## 50% of Faculty Pledge Not to do Star Wars Work

Opposition to President Reagan's plan to make nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete has changed from intangible disquiet to outright rejection. Over half of the engineering and physical science faculty have pledged to neither solicit nor accept Star Wars funding, thereby cutting themselves off from what is becoming the richest vein of "science" funding since the Manhattan project. Why this unprecedented self-denial? In the words of Prof. Zellman Warhaft:

*"Two reasons. SDI is technologically unfeasible. It cannot work - and is therefore politically destabilizing. It'll lead to greater numbers of offensive weapons. Second, as an engineer, I feel it's my job to point this out."*

So far, 127 out of 253 faculty and 551 graduate students and researchers agree with Warhaft. The breakdown by department is:

applied physics 4 signed/14 total  
astronomy 9/12  
chemical engineering 5/15  
chemistry 12/25  
computer science 8/23  
electrical engineering 17/37  
materials science 4/13  
mechanical & aerospace engineering 11/25  
nuclear science & engineering 1/4  
operations research 15/18  
physics 34/48  
theoretical & applied mechanics 7/15

The pledge and list of names will be sent to the President, every member of Congress, and news organizations. The Cornell drive has been covered by The New York Times, USA Today, ABC News and The Washington Post. To date, 62 institutions in the U.S. are circulating the pledge; it has also started in Britain and Germany. The Cornell petition was written by Dave Wright and Lisbeth Gronlund, both longtime November 11th members. The petition has been

merged with a similar one from the University of Illinois; the nation-wide drive is being coordinated by the November 11th Committee.



Lisbeth Gronlund and Zellman Warhaft

## In Our Own Backyard

### 1300 Nukes at Seneca Army Depot

Local residents and peace activists have long suspected that the Seneca army depot in Romulus, New York (an hour's drive from Ithaca) serves as a major storage site for nuclear weapons. These suspicions have recently been confirmed by the publication of Nuclear Battlefields (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1985), by William Arkin and Richard Fieldhouse of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. Not only does Seneca store nuclear weapons, it is the major Army nuclear depot on the east coast and a primary transshipment point for deployment of nuclear weapons to Europe. There are some 1,300 nuclear weapons housed at Seneca, including the "neutron bomb."

Most of the nuclear weapons stored at Seneca are of the "tactical" variety, intended to support combat on a battlefield. The weapon systems that use these warheads are "dual-capable" - they can fire conventional or nuclear warheads (and often chemical ones, too). That means that the nuclear weapons stored at Seneca can be deployed anywhere the Army goes - not just Europe, but, for example, South Korea, the Middle East, and Central America as well.



Arkin and Fieldhouse identify the following types and numbers of nuclear weapons at Seneca: 60 atomic demolition mines (ADM's); 575 eight inch artillery projectiles, both enhanced radiation ("neutron-bomb") and standard versions; 90 Nike Hercules warheads (for air defense missiles); 50 155mm artillery projectiles; and 490 Lance missile warheads, enhanced-radiation and standard types.

The presence of these weapons in densely populated Western Europe poses a direct threat to that continent. The ADM's, for instance, are essentially nuclear land mines, some of which are light enough to transport in a backpack. There are already more than 350 of them in West Germany alone. In the event of war, they would be used to destroy bridges, mountain passes, and dams, in order to create physical barriers to an invasion of Soviet troops. That means that the ADM's would most likely be detonated in West Germany itself.

The same would hold true for the artillery rounds. Owing to their short range, they would almost certainly be used on German territory, East or West.

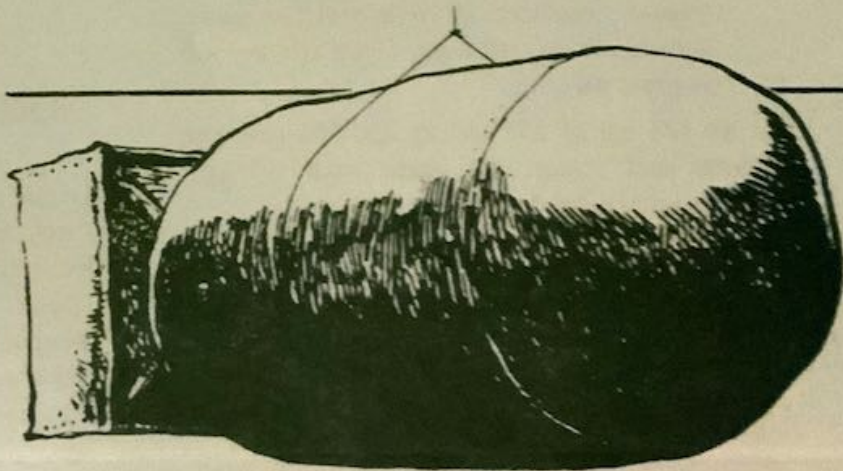
Nuclear-capable artillery poses the threat of early escalation to nuclear war. Their short range necessitates deployment close to the front lines. In the event of war, they might be used quite early, in order not to be destroyed or captured by advancing troops. This situation puts pressure on local commanders in charge of nuclear artillery to "use them or lose them", raising the risks of unauthorized employment of nuclear weapons.

War games conducted with simulated tactical nuclear weapons in Europe have invariably indicated that even limited use of such weapons would probably escalate to all-out nuclear war. A nuclear war in Europe, in which only a fraction of the tactical arsenals of both sides were used, would surely destroy the continent, and escalation would threaten to engulf much of the rest of the world as well. For these reasons, the tactical nuclear weapons stored at Seneca are considered among the most dangerous and destabilizing systems.

Closer to home, the weapons stored at Seneca create additional dangers. For one thing, there is the risk of accidents in transporting them. Early in August, a truck carrying conventional bombs was involved in a collision. The resulting explosion created a huge crater in the mid-

dle of an interstate highway in Ohio. Accidents with nuclear weapons could result in far more destruction. Even if the nuclear component did not explode, the burning and spreading of nuclear materials could contaminate vast areas.

The existence of a major nuclear-weapons storage site a short distance from Ithaca confirms some of our worst fears: that we ourselves will probably be the target of a Soviet attack in the event of a nuclear war. A good deal of Soviet military writings and exercises suggest that one of their early objectives would be to prevent dispersal of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe that could attack Soviet forces. Nuclear storage sites in Western Europe are therefore prime targets. One could not rule out the possibility that, in the event of nuclear war, the Soviets would try to destroy the major tactical nuclear weapon depots in the United States as well - although such an action would certainly risk escalation to full-scale nuclear war.



BY OLIPHANT

'ACTUALLY AFTER FORTY YEARS, I RARELY GIVE IT A THOUGHT...'

There are a number of arms-control solutions to the problem posed by the existence of thousands of tactical nuclear weapons. A pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, if followed by meaningful operational changes, would take the pressure off both sides during crises to try to destroy tactical nuclear weapons in a first strike. The Soviets made such a no-first-use pledge in



June 1982, but any military consequences stemming from it are not yet evident. Other suggestions - such as creating a denuclearized or demilitarized zone in Central Europe - have been proposed by some of the major opposition parties in West Germany, Scandinavia and the Benelux countries. Local groups favoring arms control and disarmament should use the presence of nuclear weapons at Seneca to call attention to positive alternatives.

*by Matthew Evangelista*

