Candidates should attack deficits, not arms race

American politicians have a curious tendency to emphasize the cold war over the real, and the 1984 presidential campaign has provided no exception to this rule. For several months now, Democratic candidates have been accusing President Reagan of ignoring the threat of a nuclear war, while ignoring the issue that most affects the average American: the economy.

Sen. Alan Cranston, D-Calif., is the most outspoken of the Democratic challengers on the nuclear arms issue, and his views typify their attitude: "The nuclear arms race is the greatest threat to our nation and our economy. While we are always fighting a nuclear war, we are destroying our economy...loosening interest rates and budget deficits.

Cranston has also claimed that President Reagan wants to spend over $2 trillion on "defense-related matters" in the next five years. It is about 70 percent high in his estimate. Cranston implies that defense spending is the cause of our economic woes, and most of the other Democratic candidates made similar points at last week's forum on nuclear weapons at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

All of this posturing is designed to make people believe that the nuclear arms race is the gravest threat to the future of this country. They want to know whether they will have a job tomorrow. They want to know whether they will be able to send their kids to college. They want to know whether they will be able to maintain their businesses and their jobs tomorrow.

Unfortunately, neither political party seems to be ignoring the problem. Cranston, Former Vice President Walter Mondale, and other Democrats pretend the budget deficit is not a problem. Cranston, Former Vice President Walter Mondale, and other Democrats pretend the budget deficit is not a problem. Cranston, Former Vice President Walter Mondale, and other Democrats pretend the budget deficit is not a problem.

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