Is the "SoVIet" worth $300 billion a year?

Column by Rev. Scott Paradise

For forty years, the United States has attempted to "defend" the world against military threat through military conquest and intervention. Our leaders have warned us that without the use of their "big stick," we risk losing our freedom. In the past forty years, we have poured billions of dollars into military expenditures, yet we have not been able to prevent the Soviet Union from increasing its military capability. The United States is now facing a situation in which it must decide whether to continue its military buildup or to pursue a peaceful solution. The choice is not easy, but it is critical to our future safety and prosperity.

Some of my best friends are lesbians, but . . .

Column by Seth Gordon

Last week, to our resolve in the face of harassment, supporters of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) rights staged a "kiss-in" in Lobby 7. Willie Sturgis 92 ("Lobby 7: kiss-in: tolerance for heterosexism," Nov. 4) argued that although gay people have rights, the kiss-in inflamed homophobia, between them and heterosexuals, because some straight people think kissing in public is offensive. Where is the Soviet threat against which we appropriate $300 billion a year for defense?

Potential answers are forthcoming: "Column by Rev. Scott Paradise" "How long do we need to continue the arms race when we are the only ones fighting it?" "How long before reason will prevail?"

Soviet economy is in deep trouble. The threats to our society and the world look like this: From the Soviet Union and its satellite allies which could be counted on to support it, a willing people to back it, a nuclear capability, or whether to buy a new Midgetman missiles, or whether to invest in mobile MX missiles or our-long-term economic future. Is there any more credible policy a successor could adopt? Evidence piles up that not only do the Soviets not want a nuclear exchange, but they do not get themselves together to fight such a war if they did. Their failure to subdue a country like Afghanistan does not bode well for their success in a major drive into Western Europe. Such a venture would be foolhardy unless the Soviets could count on an efficient economy to sustain a military effort, and allies which could be counted on to protect their supply lines in Eastern Europe. The United States must prove to them that such a country is one of the powerful nations of the world. If the United States fails to provide such confidence, the Soviet Union will not deter any Soviet attack on us or our allies. Therefore, we must understand that the reality of the Soviet threat made this military preparedness necessary.

In the past four years the Soviet empire has lost its sign of disintegrating. The Soviet army has retreated from Afghanistan in defeat, Russia is in disarray, the doctrines of Lenin and Leonid Brezhnev no longer have the power to win hearts and minds. The only force against the Soviets remains the United States. The United States is not the only country that has a nuclear arsenal and military establishments. The threat to our society and the world is not the only threat from the Soviets and more likely to come from our neglect of our own society, our devaluing of the environment, and our lack of justice. And still, new Trident submarines slide down the ways at Groton, CT, and new B-52s are tested as Cape Canaveral. The Nevada Test Site. Congress debates whether to invest in special nuclear, new Midgetman missiles, or whether to modernize our biological and chemical weapons capabilities, or whether to buy a fleet of Stealth bombers.

In judging the kiss-in, we should be careful not to exaggerate it. It was less a homosexual French-kiss-in than a bisexual hug-and-smooch-on-the-cheek-in.

In recognizing your love for a member of a different race, you have to fight against the prejudice against interracial couples - against you. In the past four years, thirty of the forty states have modified their laws to legalize same-sex relationships. The legal recognition of those relationships would give many gays and lesbians the same legal rights as heterosexuals, and would be a step towards equal treatment under the law. It is important for us to support these efforts, and to work towards a society that is more accepting of diversity.

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