

# World backed against thermonuclear wall

SANTA CRUZ — Western military thinking in Europe has backed the world up against a thermonuclear wall, which threatens to come tumbling down at the first blare of Soviet trumpets, according to two retired military men speaking before a UCSC audience last week.

The policy calling for the first use of nuclear weapons against an attack by Soviet conventional forces is outdated, destabilizing and insane, they said.

In a convocation jointly sponsored by the

150,000-member Union of Concerned Scientists, a UCSC arms control class and other groups, retired U.S. Army Colonel Eugene Chomko and retired Air Force Brigadier General Homer Boushey spoke out against the policy of first use of nuclear weapons.

They were joined in their talk by Bill Perry, former public relations officer for Lawrence Livermore Lab — one of the two U.S. centers for developing nuclear weapons — and Nancy Abrams a lawyer, singer and songwriter. A film preceeded the speech.

The film traced the history of the first-use policy. From the time of President Truman, America and NATO depended on massive nuclear retaliation in the event of a conventional invasion of NATO countries, the narrator recounted. However, the U.S.S.R's nuclear arsenal is now roughly equal to the West's, and massive retaliation is now "an empty threat."

The policy is now one of "flexible response." The 2½ million conventional NATO troops will make every effort to repel the looked-for invasion by the 4 million Warsaw Pact troops. Should they be overcome, the NATO forces will use nuclear weapons. (These troop strength estimates are not agreed upon by all analysts. Some place the opposing forces in equal position, and some say NATO troops outnumber Warsaw Pact forces.)

"The basic fallacy of 'flexible response,'" said Sir John Hackett, chief of NATO's northern forces, "is you can never be certain the response of the other side will be as limited as yours is planned to be."

First use of nukes opens "a perfectly terrible Pandora's box," he said, which "leads inevitably to full-scale nuclear war" and would "add a nuclear defeat to a conventional defeat"

as the West's higher technology and more concentrated and easily-damaged target were blasted by the Soviet's nuclear weapons.

The use of tactical nukes would not be considered until the enemy forces were deep in NATO territory, so the damage would be to friendly territory. The civilian populations would suffer heavy losses, the film pointed out.

"We would come out worse in what would surely become a full-scale exchange."

Gen. Boushey, a 30-year Air Force veteran who favored the nuclear freeze proposition in this month's election, said there is no "window of vulnerability" in U.S. forces. Rather, the Soviets have attained parity in nuclear weapons, he said.

He said the chance of a false alarm starting a war grows greater every day as computers take over from humans. There have been thousands of false alarms, and there is no calling back missiles once they are launched. He favors improving air and submarine forces, which he called "stabilizing" weapons.

Also included in his suggestions were an "immediate halt to belligerent rhetoric," ratification of SALT II, and a policy of "TNT" — trade, not terror.

Col. Chomko, also a freeze advocate, was an intelligence officer with Gen. Alexander Haig in NATO headquarters and was in charge of the Washington-Moscow hotline among his other duties during 30 year's service. He favored bolstering conventional forces to increase the options available.

He said while he was with Haig in Europe, war games simulated a Warsaw Pact attack were held six times. Six times the games, which began on Monday, ended Friday with a nuclear attack by NATO forces.