

*Lockheed*

*11/2/78 City on the Hill*

# Trident issue explodes at Planning Commission hearing

## Commissioners try to squelch debate

by Paul Glickman and Doug McVadon

Legal hassles and high emotions marked last night's public hearing held by the Planning Commission to consider Lockheed Corporation's application to expand their Empire Grade facilities in order to manufacture various components for the Trident II nuclear missile.

Five hundred people packed the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium to witness the proceedings; the overwhelming majority were in opposition to Lockheed's request. While 59 people were scheduled to speak to the Planning Commission, only five made it to the podium due to procedural haggling over the relevance of testimony to be presented.

The hearing started at 10 o'clock, an hour late. Over the objections of Commissioner Celia Von Der Muhll, the Commission decided to end the hearing at 11 p.m. Then, before any public testimony was presented, Commissioner Jim Eberly moved that testimony be limited to statements strictly relating to "land use." "We're in no position to change the moral outlook of the United States," declared Eberly.

Eberly's motion seemed to be an attempt to limit the amount of testimony given before the commission relating to Trident II's "first strike" capability, and the fact that manufacture of such a weapon violates international law. An outraged Von Der Muhll argued that to "arbitrarily ban testimony sounds like a form of censorship, and I don't want to have any part of it." Despite her objections, the motion passed 4-1. Many angry shouts and comments came from the audience at this point, since People for a Nuclear Free Future had announced at the outset of the hearing that they had assembled several people who would address the larger issues of whether Santa Cruz County should tacitly support the nuclear arms race by approving Lockheed's proposed expansion.

After the tumult died down, the hearing began with a slide show presented by the Planning Commission staff. This presentation explained Lockheed's request to build five new buildings on its 4400-acre site within the next five years. Subject to some technical changes required by the Environmental Impact Report, the staff recommended approval of Lockheed's request. Santa Cruz attorney Robert Bosso, representing Lockheed, informed the commission that his client had no objection to the staff's recommendation. Concurring with the commission's decision to limit testimony, Bosso urged the commissioners to review Lockheed's application "within the scope you've set tonight."

After two PNFF representatives presented the commission with 1315 letters and 873 signatures opposing Lockheed's request, former Lockheed engineer Robert Aldridge attempted to address the question of Trident II's first strike potential.

At this point Chairperson Stanley Nielsen, at the urging of Eberly, asked Aldridge to restrict his comments to how the proposed expansion applies to the county general plan, zoning ordinances, and building codes. During the ensuing debate, PNFF member Scott Kennedy argued that moral issues are indeed relevant, since Lockheed's request for a use permit must be approved only if it legally complies with the County General Plan, the express purpose of which is: "to promote and protect the public health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, convenience, and general welfare" of the people of Santa Cruz.

Commissioner Von Der Muhll then asked County Counsel Dwight Herr for a legal opinion. Herr said that, "in general terms," the moral aspects of an issue could be discussed.

Herr's opinion influenced the commission to finally clear up the question of whether international law relates to this specific issue; the commission allowed UCSC Peace Studies Professor Earle Reynolds to speak. Reynolds, an expert on international law, noted that the Trident missile is a direct violation of the United Nations charter. He also explained that international law becomes binding on national law, and that Santa Cruz County is bound by national law. The commission "should be concerned with use of that property for criminal purposes," stated Reynolds.

Although Reynolds' argument convinced the board to hear all aspects of the issue, time permitted only three more speakers before the hearing ended. A member of the Santa Cruz Society of Friends emphasized that conversion of Lockheed's facility to peaceable production would create more jobs. Then Scott Kennedy of PNFF talked about how the U.S. government has gone from an "avowed deterrent posture" to a situation where we are building offensive weapons, such as Trident II. He argued that building a part for Trident "clearly contradicts the stated purpose of the County General Plan."

A Lockheed employee then told the commission that "this group essentially wishes to disarm the U.S." He added, "This group seeks to use you people in an effort to put some pressure on the federal government to stop the Trident II missile system." Hearty cheers from the crowd accompanied this last statement.

After the hearing, the commission promised to continue discussion of Lockheed's request on January 10.

