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Speaker links politics with military build-up

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SPEAKER LINKS
POLITICS WITH
MILITARY BUILD-UP

MISSOULA---

What Dr. Ralph E. Lapp referred to as "our military-industrial-political complex" has become a way of life in the U.S., a way of life which employs voters, according to him.

Dr. Lapp, who worked as a research physicist on the Manhattan A-Bomb Project during World War II, told more than 100 listeners at the University of Montana recently that he blames politics to a great degree on the nation's military build-up in recent years.

"When you have politically important people in government," Dr. Lapp emphasized, "somehow their states receive greater amounts of the country's defense budget."

Dr. Lapp, former executive director of atomic activities for the Department of Defense research and development board, now works with Dr. Harold Urey, a UM alumnus, at a Washington, D.C., consulting firm. Dr. Urey won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1934 for atomic energy work. Dr. Lapp spoke at UM on "The Weapons Culture," the title of a book he has written.

Dr. Lapp, whose visit to the UM campus was sponsored by the University Public Exercises Committee, said "politics is heavily influential in defense because a disemployed worker is a worker who may not" cast his vote for solons in his state.

Dr. Lapp referred to defense spending from a political standpoint as "the glue of the weapons culture," and he added that defense spending in Texas has grown from \$1.2 billion in 1964 to \$3.5 billion today.

"Our defense expenditures today," Dr. Lapp said, "now are equal to our defense expenditures of World War II."

more

Dr. Lapp said that outgoing Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara admitted in a speech that the pressure was on him to make more arms than the nation needs for defense.

Threats of loss of life and property have caused great anxiety between nations because there is a feeling of "mutual terror" brought about by missiles and other weapons, Dr. Lapp emphasized.

He said there is enough weapon power in the world "to knock Russia and the U.S. out of the 20th century."

Dr. Lapp said the U.S. has 1,656 guided missiles ready to launch in event of attack, but that only 45 individual projectiles would be sufficient to kill millions of Russians.

Dr. Lapp said one bomb on one B-52 bomber has the destructive power of "21 million tons of TNT." And that would be hundreds of times more powerful than the A-bombs dropped in Japan during World War II, he added.

Dr. Lapp referred to the General Dynamics Corporation as "an artificial industry" because after the 1960 presidential election the firm received "\$12 billion for defense contracts."

He said such things are "a terrible temptation" because "industry depends on war contracts and people depend on war jobs" to live in our society.

Dr. Lapp said that over-arming can give us less security because our opponents see what we're doing and they build more weapons themselves.