State and Local

Student conference examines attitudes of Americans, Soviets about *glasnost*

By Deborah L. West
Staff Writer

Glasnost and perestroika were the topics of the opening address for the 33rd Student Conference On National Affairs on Wednesday night.

"Tales of *glasnost* are eagerly reported by press and Mikhail S. Gorbachev is the smiling master of public relations just like any American politician," Frank E. Vandiver, president of Texas A&M University, said.

Although an unabashed admirer of Gorbachev, Dimitri K. Simes, Senior Associate and Director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's Project on U.S.-Soviet Relations, said the General Secretary should not be seen as American.

"Gorbachev is an admirable adversary," Simes said, "but he has his own heritage, a Russian one.

"The real problem in Soviet-American relations is not that we misunderstand each other. It is that we understand each other too well —and we don't like what we see," he said.

These nations are not at each other throats because of similar political and social systems but because of conflicting interests, he said.

Glasnost translates to public disclosure. Its purpose is to promote *perestroika*, or restructuring a set of reforms to loosen totalitarian control over economic, social and private life.

Simes said Americans either believe *glasnost* is a charade, or it is the beginning of a democracy.

"*Glasnost* is not a creation to lull the west into a false sense of security, it is a real Soviet policy," he said.

"The slogan was used by Russian dissidents for several centuries," he said. "Gorbachev was not born yesterday. He knew the message *glasnost* would send and the fact that he chose it is remarkable."

The Soviets felt they had no alternative to *glasnost*, he said.

"The economic growth rate was down, the mortality rate was up, alcohal consumption was rising and patriotic enthusiasm was down," he said. "The people were cynical and the ruling class was deteriorating. They knew things had to be turned around.

"The Soviet people want a leader to succeed. Unless he makes gross mistakes, the people won't turn against him."

Some Americans predict that when *glasnost* takes effect, it will make the Soviet Union a more pluralistic, economically advanced country that will not have time to worry about exterminating others, he said.

Americans want to think of *glasnost* in familiar terms, but they need to understand it on Russian terms, Simes said.

"The Soviet Union will not turn into the United States," he said. "People are trying to compare apples and oranges. *Glasnost* means more socialism. The people can only express opinions that express socialism and that won't change."

When Gorbachev addresses the media he tells them to be courageous, bold and entrepreneurial, but he also wants them to follow a government agenda. There is no western freedom of the press, he said.

"The media is being manipulated for a purpose — but not for freedom," he said.

Glasnost is not without Soviet critics. Party officials don't like criticism and many of the people aren't comfortable with it, he said.

Glasnost hasn't affected lives yet. It hasn't changed living conditions. It is exciting to intellectuals, but Gorbachev must capture the imagination of the common people. Until then, *glasnost* is just a slogan, he said.

"The Soviet people have a social contract with their government," he said. "The Soviet Union is a welfare state. People are taken care of and are not bothered with the responsibility of government."

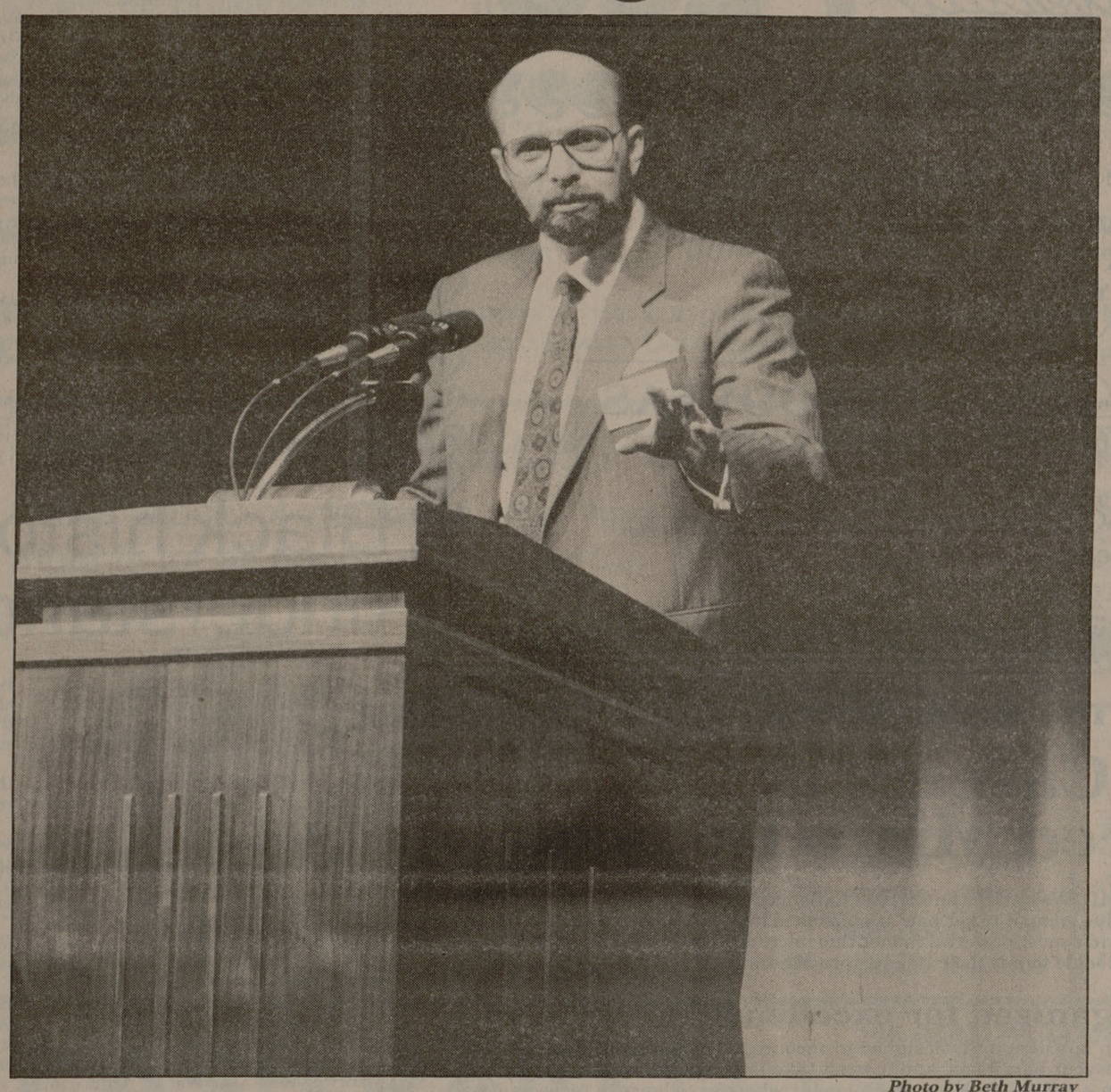

Photo by Beth Murray

Dr. Dimitri Simes, director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Project on U.S.-Soviet relations, discusses *glasnost* Wednesday night.

Professionals: AIDS funding not enough

LUBBOCK (AP) — Health care professionals who work with AIDS patients told members of a legislative task force Tuesday that more funding is needed to care for patients.

In the second of eight public hearings around the state, the task force heard testimony from more than a dozen doctors, public health officials and others about the economic burden of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and existing programs for patient care.

Charged with developing recommendations for state AIDS policies, the task force is scheduled to give its report to the next legislature.

Although specific figures were not cited, most witnesses agreed that AIDS is not confined to Texas' urban areas.

"While, admittedly, the AIDS problem is greater in the larger urban areas, in no way does the rural habitat discriminate against that terrible organism," Dr. Bernhard Mittemeyer, executive vice president of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, said.

Dr. Anthony Way of the Lubbock Health Department said legislative help is needed to protect AIDS patients from job and housing discrimination. State funding also is needed to fund health care because hospitals are not reimbursed for their costs, he said.

"Unreimbursed care right now merely increases the costs to other sick people," Way said.

The St. Anthony's Hospice in Amarillo has treated nine AIDS patients since June 1985, six of whom were indigent, Dr. Gerald Holman, the Amarillo in-patient facility's executive and medical director, said.

"We will take any and all patients for as long as we can keep our doors open," he said.

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