

Remarks made by the Honorable Christian A. Herter, Secretary of State,
at White House Conference on Fallout Protection, March 25, 1960.

The Threat of Fallout Danger to
Relations to Foreign Policy

~~Mr. Dulles has just outlined in vivid and concrete terms~~ the present and anticipated military capabilities of the Soviet Union. By their actions and by their statements the Soviet leaders have made it amply clear that on the basis of this powerful military posture and the threat it poses, they hope to induce the free world to accept the Soviet prescriptions for the settlement of outstanding international issues.

As you know, we will soon embark on a new round of negotiations with the Soviet Union at the highest level and even before the heads of government convene in Paris in May, representatives of the free world and Soviet bloc countries will begin a new effort in Geneva to reach agreement on disarmament. This government together with its NATO allies is now engaged in painstaking preparations for these complex negotiations. We are firmly committed to the proposition that the outstanding issues between ourselves and the Soviet Union should be approached around the negotiating table without threats, ultimatums, or attempts by one side to dictate terms to the other. Our policy is summed up by the words which President Eisenhower used so frequently during his recent trip abroad: peace with justice.

However, our relations with the Communist world since World War II have made clear beyond a doubt that our search for equitable solutions and for a meaningful peace must be predicated upon a strong defense posture of our own. We must assume that weakness on our part, or merely the supposition on the other side that we are neglecting our military defenses, serves neither peace nor the cause of freedom and justice. It is for this reason that over the years we have developed a substantial military capability for retaliation. Until enforceable agreements which are properly safeguarded and effective mechanisms for international law and order provide an alternative means of guaranteeing peace and freedom for the peoples of the world, this military capability will be maintained and strengthened.

A vital part of our military strength for peace must be an effective civil defense program which, in conjunction with our retaliatory capacity, creates a strong deterrent to possible enemy attack upon the United States.

If, despite our earnest efforts at the negotiating table and our defense preparations, we should nevertheless be subjected to nuclear attack, civil defense and measures for fallout protection offer the only reasonable and

possible

feasible means of saving the greatest number of lives. Numerous studies have shown that such a program would give a substantial portion of our population an excellent chance of surviving and hence provide us the opportunity to continue the fight successfully. In other words, a capacity to retaliate will be reinforced by an effective capacity to survive, and only thus can our defense posture serve as a convincing deterrent.

This conclusion of course has relevance to our foreign policy and to the conduct of our foreign relations. I believe this interrelationship is aptly described in a study made by the Rand Corporation and presented to the House Committee on Government Operations for one of its recent reports on civil defense. In it we find the following statement:

"There is an enormous difference in the bargaining ability of a country which can, for example, put its people in a state of safety in 24 hours' notice and one which cannot. If it is hard for the reader to visualize this, let him just imagine a situation where the Russians had done exactly that and we had not. Then we can ask himself how he thinks we would come out at the bargaining table."

~~As Mr. Dulles indicated,~~ there is evidence that the USSR is stepping up its civil defense program. Combined with a substantial program for air defense, it provides Soviet negotiators with a good deal of assurance that their homeland will be able to withstand attack. A similar assurance with respect to our own country would greatly strengthen our defense position.

What I have said not only has serious implications for our own military and diplomatic posture; it applies to our NATO partners as well. We participate actively in the various NATO committees which deal with all emergency planning, and much progress already has been made. Some of our NATO allies and other friendly European countries are further advanced in fallout protection than we ourselves. All of us recognize, however, that further progress is needed before our defense can achieve its full potential as a deterrent against enemy aggression.

We count on our NATO allies to remain firm in the face of any aggressive threats. An effective program of fallout protection will provide further support for their determination to do so. But if we expect them to take further measures to protect their own populations, we should not lag behind.

As I have said, any additional measures which we can take to minimize the fallout danger will reinforce our country's defense posture and thereby, its political and negotiating strength. It is my earnest hope that we can make prompt and substantial progress in this area.