

Remarks Made by the Honorable J. Edgar Hoover,
Secretary of State, at the House of Representatives
Protection, January 25, 1950

The Threat of Future Wars

Relations with the Soviet Union



There has been much discussion over the past few years of the anticipated military capabilities of the Soviet Union. Many of these and by their statements the Soviet Union have made the only claim for the basis of their powerful military strength and the threat to the world to induce the free world to accept the Soviet proposal for the settlement of outstanding international issues.

As you know, we will soon be entering into a period of negotiations with the Soviet Union at the highest level and one which the United States government convene in Paris. In these negotiations, representatives of the United States and Soviet bloc countries will be engaged in a series of discussions. An agreement on disarmament, which has been longed for by the United States allies is now engaged in painstaking negotiations but there is no progress in the negotiations. We are firmly committed to the present position on the outstanding issues between ourselves and the Soviet Union. We have not been proached around the negotiation table without threat, without the attempts by one side to dictate terms to the other, and without the use of up by the words which Premier Malenkov used in his recent trip abroad to justify his recent trip abroad.

However, our relations with the Soviet Union are not so simple as they have made clear beyond a doubt that the Soviet Union is not interested in a meaningful peace must be possible upon a simple basis of equality of our own. We must assume that we have on our part, and on the other side the supposition on the other side that we are neglecting our own military preparedness serves neither peace nor the world interest in any way. The only reason that over the years we have done so is our industrial and military capability for retaliation. But we have not been able to do so properly safeguarded and effective means of our own. We must, therefore, provide an alternative means of providing our peace and stability to the peoples of the world. This is the only way in which our own security will be strengthened.

A vital part of our military program is the development of our civil defense program which, in addition to our own security, creates a strong deterrent to potential aggression by other nations.

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 must be used in all practicable and 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 would provide us the opportunity to continue the fight successfully. In other words, a capacity to retaliate will be a far more effective deterrent than the ability to survive. And only thus can we deter any potential aggressor from attacking.

This conclusion of course has implications for our foreign policy and for 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 consideration in a report on civil defense. In it we find the following statement:

"There is an enormous difference in the bargaining table of a country which can, for example, put its people under 'fallout safety in 24 hours' notice conditions which cannot be done by the Russians had they had the same capability. The reader is asked to visualize this by first imagining a situation in which the Russians had done exactly what we had done and then to ask himself how he thinks they would be treated at the bargaining table."

There is evidence that the USSR is stepping up its civil defense program. Combined with a substantial program for a fallout shelter, this gives Soviet negotiators with a good deal of assurance that their people will be able to withstand attack. A similar assurance with respect to our own country would clearly strengthen our bargaining position.

What I have said not only applies to the Anglo-American military and diplomatic posture; it applies to our NATO partners who should participate actively in the various NATO committees which deal with emergency planning, and much progress already has been made. Our NATO allies and other friendly countries are further advanced in fallout protection than we ourselves. It is recognized, however, that further progress is needed before we can have the same deterrent as a deterrent against enemy aggression.

We count on our NATO allies to remain firm in the face of our aggressive threats. An effective program of fallout protection will give them further support for their determination to do so. But we must continue to take further measures to protect our own population, with the fallout shelter behind.

As I have said, any additional increase in our civil defense will minimize the fallout danger will reinforce our military defense position, thereby increasing our political and negotiating strength. If in any circumstances we are to make prompt and substantial progress in this direction,