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A REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT
AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY
COUNCIL BY THE PANEL ON

The Human Effects of Nuclear Weapons Development



WASHINGTON, D. C.
NOVEMBER 21, 1956

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PANEL ON THE HUMAN EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL:

In compliance with NSC actions 1430-p, 1448 and 1502, I am forwarding herewith the Report of the Panel on the Human Effects of Nuclear Weapons Development. The recruitment and orientation of the Panel members has proceeded in accordance with the proposal in my memorandum of March 23, 1956, approved that date.

I would be remiss if I failed to report to you on the dedicated manner in which the Panel members addressed themselves to the complex and difficult issues on which they were requested to render judgments. It is a tribute to both the skillful chairmanship of Dr. Frank Fremont-Smith and the earnestness and devotion of the Panel members that the report reflects no dissents.

The backgrounds of learning and experience represented on the Panel are indeed impressive. One or more of the group have made highly respected contributions in each of the following fields of learning: anthropology, medicine, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, philosophy, biophysics, political science, radiology and social science research. The aggregate experience also includes distinguished careers in military science, journalism, and university teaching and administration. Specialized experience pertinent to the Panel's mission includes responsibilities in the programs of nuclear tests and in the work of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey. It is perhaps also worth noting that more than half of the group have served in the armed forces.

I should also like to express my conviction that we in Government can make much fuller use of the knowledge and insights of the social sciences than we customarily do. My own opportunity to observe the discussions of this group has clarified for me a number of specific areas in which we can profit from the contributions of the social sciences in our civil defense program. I have also obtained from the group a number of valuable ideas for applied research on problems of attitudes and behavior as they affect our civil defense program. Without the detailed knowledge necessary to support a judgment, I have the impression nevertheless that other agencies could similarly profit from a fuller use of our current knowledge in the social sciences and from utilization of applied social science research. This suggests also the desirability of increased support, from both Government and private sources, of the basic research in the social sciences so essential to the steady advance of knowledge of human behavior and relationships.

In forwarding the report of the Panel, I commend it to your careful study and reflection.

VAL PETERSON



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THE PANEL ON THE HUMAN EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Val Peterson, Administrator
Federal Civil Defense Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Governor Peterson:

I am submitting herewith, for transmittal to the President, the report of the Panel on the Human Effects of Nuclear Weapons Development.

Your personal participation and that of Mr. Ralph E. Spear, Assistant Administrator for Planning, Federal Civil Defense Administration, in the panel discussions has made it possible for us to turn to you freely for information and guidance. While we are most grateful for this invaluable assistance and for the many courtesies you have extended to us, we wish to express our particular appreciation for the complete freedom we have enjoyed in forming judgments and in preparing the report.

We are deeply conscious of the trust and responsibility placed in us in this assignment.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Fremont-Smith, M. D.,
Chairman

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MISSION

To make an estimate of:

- A. The effects, over time, on human attitudes and behavior of
 - (1) General awareness by the civilian population of a nation that an enemy or potential enemy has the technological capability of annihilating such nation; (see text, page 5).
 - (2) the same awareness with the additional factor that the equivalent technological capability of annihilation is possessed by such nation, or friendly nations, which could produce mutual annihilation in the event of resort to such technological capabilities in a war. (See text, page 17.)
- B. The probable attitudes (of people) toward the initiation of general war by the constituted leaders of nations, or members of power blocs, possessing mutually destructive technological capability. (See Summary, para. 1f, and text, page 19.)
- C. The effects upon the civilian population and upon organized society in a nation engaged in a general war where full use is made of known and readily foreseeable technological capabilities. (See Summary, para., 1a and text, page 9.)



SUMMARY

1. *The Panel believes that:*

a. A massive nuclear attack on the United States resulting in casualties of the order of 50,000,000, without drastically improved preparation of the people, would jeopardize support of the National Government and of the war effort, and might well result in national disintegration (p. 9).

b. The major weakness in the preparedness of our people results from the fact that while pertinent information has been made available, it has not been successfully conveyed to them. The people would, therefore, be psychologically overwhelmed by the extent of damage and casualties in such an attempted "knock-out" attack (p. 10).

c. The prospect, however, is not a hopeless one. A vigorously supported program of "involvement" of the people would bring about a significant change, not only in post-attack attitudes and behavior, but also in the necessarily correlated pre-attack attitudes and behavior. A panel of governmental and citizen leaders should plan and implement a program of public education and action designed to involve progressively increasing numbers of citizens, their leaders, and organizations and institutions in the issues of national security in the nuclear age, including preparation for any possible nuclear attack and designed to sustain that involvement as necessary over a prolonged period (p. 11).

d. Such a program of "involvement" of the people would increase national unity and thereby strengthen the hands of our leaders in pursuing the policies and taking the actions necessary to preserve and develop the basic values of democracy. It would also result in greater citizen support of national efforts to prevent war (p. 17).

e. Involvement of the people would be substantially stimulated by independent evidence that action is being taken by Government at all levels to strengthen our civil defense program. To the maximum extent, civil defense programs and recommended measures should be blended into the normal governmental machinery and community patterns, and should have a recognizable social value in peacetime (p. 13).

f. Increased awareness of nuclear weapons effects would, to a varying extent in different nations, create public attitudes which would tend to restrain the initiation of general war by the duly constituted leaders of nations. (See text, page 19, for qualifications of this judgment.)

g. The heritage and institutions of the American people give them the potential strength to meet successfully the complex problems and perils of the nuclear age, but that strength must be nourished by effective knowledge and inspiring leadership (p. 12).

2. While we are unanimous in the judgments expressed above, we suggest that they be tested systematically during the period of implementation of any program of action which is adopted. The skills and tools required for this purpose are themselves well tested and available (p. 12).





INTRODUCTION

We have been appalled by the importance of the subject we have been asked to consider. Over the past dozen years, we have seen the technological development of frightful weapons of mass destruction. At the same time we have recognized the vast potential of peaceful technological advance which the release of nuclear energy promises. But just as the Industrial Revolution of the early nineteenth century, with its far-reaching effects on war and peace, required vast social and psychological adjustments, so the present period faces extremely complex social and psychological changes. Resistance to change is one of the most common psychological phenomena; and the overcoming of such resistance in order to gain predominantly positive social values is a real challenge in social engineering.

We have been asked to make an estimate of:

A. The effects, over time, on human attitudes and behavior of (1) general awareness by the civilian population of a nation that an enemy or potential enemy has the technological capability of annihilating such nation; (2) the same awareness with the additional factor that the equivalent technological capability of annihilation is possessed by such nation, or friendly nations, which could produce mutual annihilation in the event of resort to such technological capabilities in a war.

B. The probable attitudes (of people) toward the initiation of general war by the constituted leaders of nations, or members of power blocs, possessing mutually destructive technological capability.

C. The effects upon the civilian population and upon organized society in a nation engaged in a general war where full use is made of known and readily foreseeable technological capabilities.

Limitations

As was indicated in the proposal for this specific undertaking, submitted to you on March 23, 1956, by Val Peterson, Federal Civil Defense Administrator, some boundaries to the effort were established. While there was no directed limitation on the point, it was accepted that the Panel's estimate would reflect an inevitable bias in the direction of concentration on the people we know best—the people of the United States. We have developed our conclusions largely—but not entirely—in these terms, with the understanding that our judgments would be critically reviewed for application to other nations, cultures, and peoples by area experts available to our Government.

We have therefore deliberately omitted subparagraph A (1) ¹ of our assignment, since the people of the United States are not now, nor have they ever been, in a position of helplessness before the nuclear superiority of any other nation.

With respect to subparagraph B ² of our assignment, we have felt less qualified to render an estimate, since our Panel has not included the balance of "area expertise" that would be required. We have made some observations on the point of this subparagraph, as will be noted below, but we feel less confident in our judgment than in the other subjects we have treated.

Furthermore, we have not attempted to refine the regional and cultural differences within this country that are likely to result in different human reactions. This would be a vast undertaking requiring a great deal of careful research. It is important, however, to recognize that such differences exist, and that there will be significant departures from the behavioral norm, attributable in part to such differences. Such factors as the interdependence of city dwellers, degree of assimilation into the community, degree of educational, cultural, and economic advancement, and temperamental differences of various background

¹ "The effects, over time, on human attitudes and behavior of (1) general awareness by the civilian population of a nation that an enemy or potential enemy has the technological capability of annihilating such nation";

² "B. The probable attitudes (of people) toward the initiation of general war by the constituted leaders of nations, or members of power blocs, possessing mutually destructive technological capability."

cultures pose special problems that need to be recognized and dealt with in all efforts to encourage positive, constructive behavior.³ In this report, however, we have dealt mainly with what we estimate will be the average reaction of the American people.

The Panel's Approach

In preparing ourselves to arrive at the required judgments, we have held several meetings in order to achieve a common understanding of the assignment, to be briefed on pertinent undertakings which have a particularly close bearing on our task, and to exchange viewpoints stemming from our several backgrounds and disciplines.

We have had a briefing on nuclear weapons effects by Mr. Harold Goodwin, Consultant to the Federal Civil Defense Administrator and Director of Atomic Test Operations for FCDA. In this connection, we were also fortunate in having on our Panel Dr. Stafford Warren, whose experience in this specific field dates from his early participation in the Manhattan Project and includes service in Joint Task Force One and National Test Site Field Operations.

We were also fortunate in being able to call on another member of our group—General Benjamin Chidlaw, former Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Air Defense Command—for a briefing on our air defense system.

A significant amount of data has been accumulated on human behavior under stress by the Committee on Disaster Studies of the National Research Council. Dr. Irving Janis of Yale University, a member of that Committee, and Mr. Harry Williams, its executive secretary, provided for us a very valuable summation of their experience as well as copies of several specific disaster studies completed under the Committee's auspices. A further valuable resource that has been repeatedly drawn on was the experience of two Panel members on the U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey following World War II.

The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan has been conducting for the past five years, for the Federal Civil Defense Administration, a series of surveys of public attitudes and knowledge on civil defense, including knowledge of the effects of nuclear weapons. The high points of this experience were summarized for us in a briefing by Dr. Stephen Withey of the staff of the Center. Here again, we were able to draw continually on this background through the presence on the Panel of Dr. Rensis Likert, Director of the Institute for Social Research, of which the Survey Research Center is a part.

Finally, we were given an informal but important briefing on morale components by another member of the Panel, Dr. Alexander H. Leighton, whose experience in the Foreign Morale Analysis Division of the Office of War Information is treated in his book *Human Relations in a Changing World*.

In addition to the briefings, we have had available to us an imposing library of pertinent reports, reprints and publications bearing on virtually all phases of our assignment.

It may be valuable to add a word on the effect of this total experience on the members of the Panel. At the outset, we were a group of individuals, largely unknown to each other except by professional reputation. Roughly a fourth of us had been closely identified in the past with certain phases of the national security program; the rest had had little more exposure to it and contact with it than has the average citizen. We have recognized among ourselves that through the process of being given a job to do—one which seems to us important—, of having successfully conveyed to us significant knowledge bearing on the problem, and of having participated in a series of group discussions leading to judgments and convictions as to desirable courses of action, we have become thoroughly "involved." As one member of the group put it, "We shall never be the same again!"

This was a predictable human reaction. As individuals, however, we have experienced a degree of identification with the group and with the task that has been surprising. The point in all this is to illustrate with a specific example the importance of "involvement," which we shall discuss more fully in the main body of the report.

³ Reflection on the probable differences in reaction on the part of the Puerto Ricans, Czechs, Finns, Poles, Spanish-Americans, etc., in varying degrees of assimilation into their communities, will illustrate the complexities of the problem.

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In the organization of the report, we have chosen to exercise the latitude permitted in the approach to the basic assignment. It has seemed most useful to address ourselves first to the last item of the assignment. We have felt that from an analytical estimate of probable physical, sociological and psychological effects of a nuclear attack on this country we could more readily adduce judgments bearing on relevant attitudes.

A final observation is in order. The estimates that follow constitute our best judgment, but they are only a judgment. They are supported by current knowledge of the workings of the human mind, of human reactions and motivations, and of human interactions that make up organized society. We are acutely aware, however, that there are vast uncharted areas in these regions, and recognize that there is a substantial deficit in available information and in the needed basic social and psychological research. It is our hope that in the years ahead there may be found fruitful ways for private institutions and government to cooperate in the support of an accelerated program of both basic and applied social science research, which have not yet been sufficiently focussed on these problems.



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ESTIMATE OF THE EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR ATTACK ON THIS COUNTRY UPON THE CIVILIAN POPULATION AND UPON ORGANIZED SOCIETY

Assumptions

In order to arrive at our estimate of effects, it was necessary to make certain assumptions with respect to the weight of attack and degree of physical damage. We have made such assumptions, not as a result of any precise war-gaming, but simply premised on the basic thought that an attack is unlikely until an aggressor has achieved nuclear plenty. The only logical assumption that can be made is that an attack, if it comes, will be an attempted knockout blow. The year 1959 has been arbitrarily chosen as the time when the U.S.S.R. will have achieved nuclear plenty, and has been used as our base year for the assumptions and estimates that follow. We concede readily that there may be more logical times, and do not attach any particular intelligence significance to our assumption. If different assumptions were made either as to magnitude of damage or timing, our estimates would be influenced in the relevant direction, but the essential character of our conclusion would remain.

We have assumed that such an all-out attack on this country, if any degree of strategic surprise could be achieved, would substantially destroy about 90 of our metropolitan centers, leaving perhaps an equal number unaffected by blast and heat. Included in those not structurally damaged would be perhaps 10 or 15 of our 50 largest cities. We assume that about 50 million of our people would be casualties, possibly more than half as a result of radiation exposure. Of the 50 million total, we assume that 30 to 35 million would either be killed instantly or die within a few months. Most of the 120 million people who were not casualties would be assailed in varying degrees by fears that they had been subject to sufficient radiation exposure to cause illness, sterility or death.

We assume that an attack of the magnitude suggested by these figures would also have destroyed or caused major damage to manufacturing and processing plants, communication lines, transportation facilities, electric power and other public utilities, and to the nation's housing. Radiation hazards would beset the nation's agriculture.

We assume that enough of the national leadership would have survived to furnish a potentially effective rallying point for a national effort toward recovery, provided our people have been sufficiently prepared in advance.

Interaction of Types of Damage

Some gross assumption of physical damage is necessary, since physical, sociological and psychological effects influence each other to a significant degree. Widespread physical damage would be accompanied by damage to the organization of society at least in the immediate environs and would also have a depressing effect on the behavior and attitudes of individuals. Damage to the social fabric would tend to increase negative individual behavior and impair efforts to reduce or repair physical damage. And finally, extensive psychological damage to the population would be reflected in social disorganization and ineffective efforts to reduce or repair physical damage.

Estimate

In the event of a massive nuclear attack on the United States, of the proportions assumed above, without drastically improved preparation of the people, support of the National Government and of the war effort would be in jeopardy, and national disintegration might well result.

A basic judgment that supports this estimate is the firm conviction that the American people do not have nearly enough knowledge of the consequences of a successful nuclear attack. We recognize that there have been widely held and voiced opinions that necessary information has been withheld from them on grounds of security. We have satisfied ourselves that sufficient information has been made available to them—but it has not been successfully conveyed to them and incorporated in their feelings and actions. Thus the information has not become knowledge, and this, in our opinion, is the crux of the problem.

When people undergo experiences that are much more harrowing than they had expected, a predictable psychological result is the emergence of acute anxieties that find expression in hostilities directed toward constituted authorities. A well publicized example of this is to be found in the widespread hostility directed toward Hermann Goering after the World War II bombings of German cities. He had led the German people to believe that it could not happen to them.

At present we are convinced that too large a segment of the American people believe that a nuclear attack on this country could not succeed in penetrating our defenses. They expect that our military defenses will be so effective that no more than a few bombs would be dropped in targets in this country in the event of a massed aerial attack. These are not sophisticated views, but they are no less dangerous for being naive. Furthermore, it is understandable that these are views that are easily grasped and held; they represent what people wish to believe.

Psychological studies as well as common experience show that people develop "blind spots" when confronted with prospects that are, for one reason or another, intolerable to them. For example, some people who have incurable diseases are able effectively to blot that knowledge out of their minds. In facing the possibility of nuclear attack on this country, some people develop a kind of blind faith that "science" will find an effective defense; others believe that "the Government" is taking adequate steps to protect them. In any event, only a very small proportion believes that there is a sufficiently strong possibility of a successful attack to warrant their becoming involved in preparations such as volunteering for service in the Ground Observer Corps, taking some Civil Defense training, or even bothering to learn elementary matters of survival such as the meaning of the warning signals.

We realize that they have been told on many occasions, by high-ranking civilian and military leaders, that a near-perfect degree of air defense is improbable, but they are much more receptive to the occasional statements that a particular ground-to-air missile offers virtually complete protection for our cities or that such-and-such an interceptor, with truly wonderful electronic equipment, will sweep the bombers from the skies comfortably far from our metropolitan centers. They believe these things because they wish to believe them.

There is another large segment of the population that accepts the possibility of a successful nuclear attack on this country but rejects the notion that anything effective or significant can be done about it. These people are reacting in a not uncommon manner to the shock of contemplating a frightful prospect. In actual disasters, such reactions take the form of a kind of dazed apathy; in anticipation, they are reflected in a hopeless, frustrated, fatalistic feeling.

In the event of massive nuclear attack, without drastically improved preparation of our people, we might expect an initial shock reaction to the sight of more dead and injured than they would have believed possible, to the inadequacy of medical supplies and rescue and firefighting resources, and to the impossible demands for help that the situation would place on the able-bodied survivors. This initial reaction would be followed by a number of other emotional states such as the following:

- (1) An assortment of fears—of radioactivity, of new attacks, of invasion, of loss of absent relatives, of exposure to cold and starvation, of pillage, of strangers, etc.,
- (2) Bereavement, complicated by strong feelings of personal guilt due to a deep-seated suspicion that the lives of dead relatives might have been spared if the survivors had made more adequate preparations, and
- (3) Maladapted overactivity or apathy.

We might logically expect these emotional states to find expression in extensive negative behavior. Judging from experience in past disasters, this would probably take the form of hoarding, petty delinquency,

lower work efficiency, absenteeism, hostility, selfishness and opportunism. Other types of negative behavior, individually more disruptive, would doubtless occur, but they would constitute a less serious national problem since they would be much less widespread. In this category would be: panic, riots, pillage, rape, subversion, sabotage, espionage, exploitation, etc. (These might be expected to increase in time, however, if the social disorganization persists.) In arriving at this judgment of behavior, we have been soberly aware of a tendency to overestimate negative reactions—as the British did prior to the bombing attacks in World War II—but we still think that this is a valid judgment.

With the present state of public knowledge and expectation, we believe the blow to the organization of society would be extremely grave—so grave as to render questionable its ability to recover in time to respond constructively to the Nation's requirements. The death or disappearance of many of the recognized leaders, the destruction of many of our established institutions, and the loss of community facilities and public utilities would critically weaken our social fabric. The physical destruction of the complex nervous system of our society—transportation, communications, and supply—would in turn be grievously aggravated by the negative attitudes and behavior of many of the uninjured survivors resulting from the unimaginable horror with which they would be confronted.

There would be, of course, some types of positive, constructive reaction and behavior. In any disaster, there are varying degrees of emotional adaptation. As was repeatedly learned in the U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey, people always seem to be able to bear more hardship than they think they can. The basic human will to survive is strong, and it has positive as well as negative behavioral effects. In any disaster, there are individual acts of heroism and devotion to duty. In times of great stress, there is usually discernible among some people a heightened sense of morality, of increased identification with spiritual goals and ideals. The religious conviction of many of our people would be a major source of strength. The recognition of much urgently needed work to be done would be an important morale stimulant. Furthermore, new and effective leaders of communities would emerge.

It is our considered opinion, however, that initially these positive factors would be overwhelmed by the negative ones, and that without drastically improved preparation of the people for such an event, the negative factors would persist sufficiently long to jeopardize the continuation of our nation as an integrated society.

It should be emphasized that the same weaknesses in the psychological preparation of the people that would result in negative behavior following attack make them psychologically vulnerable at the present time. To the extent that they lack knowledge and real understanding of basic national security considerations, they are in danger of accepting wild exaggerations and misinterpretations of news events. Furthermore, they are more likely to believe unfounded rumors and to react to them in inappropriate ways.

A Program of Psychological Defense

We share a firm belief, however, that the prospect is not a hopeless one. We believe that it is possible to prepare effective psychological defenses, and that in even as short a period as three years it would be possible to effect a sufficient change in the preparation of the American people to warrant a significantly more optimistic estimate. It will not be accomplished easily; resistance to change will need to be overcome on many fronts, and successful efforts will need to be substantial ones.

In our opinion, the keystone of the program is knowledge—not merely information made available, but information, both frightening and hopeful, so successfully conveyed as to become useful knowledge, translated into plans, procedures, and the capability for constructive action. It has been wisely said, we think, that courage is based on knowledge of the grounds of fear and hope.

In order to prepare the people, we believe that it will be necessary to *involve* them, and to involve them at deeper levels than mere factual information. They will need to have, to some degree, the same type of experience we have had in our current undertaking. We all resist change and require prods to progress. We all alike learn to do by doing, and we learn *why* by talking our purposes out. Attempts at short cuts to involvement generally prove long in implementation.



To this end it is necessary that leaders of both thought and action be properly briefed on our present situation—necessary but not sufficient. It is necessary to tell the people the truth, but this is also insufficient. What is required is the mutual involvement of the people at the “grass-roots” level and their leaders in a sustained program.

In approaching such a difficult task, we have vast resources for success in our national traditions. Our pioneer background and inheritance predispose us to count hardships a challenge and fortify us against complacency. We are a resourceful people, inventive no less socially and politically than technologically. We have turned every form of association to cultural account. Even our business associations are more creative than acquisitive. We have easy access to one another. In this mighty freedom of association lies an important aspect of the genius of American life.

We suggest that advantage be taken of these strengths in the development of a nationwide program of continuing discussions in small groups, designed to achieve maximum citizen participation and involvement in the crucial issues raised by the development of nuclear weapons. The leaders of many of our nationwide voluntary associations might be initially called together—possibly under the aegis of the American Assembly—with a view to “fanning-out” the discussions within the structures of civil organizations, labor unions, professional associations, commercial and industrial groups, and the many other voluntary associations that characterize our national life. The ultimate objective would be the widest possible participation in repeated meetings at the “grass-roots” level, and such intermediate group discussions would be encouraged as might be necessary to achieve this.

The basic subject matter of discussion would have to be as broad as national security itself. As people become involved in discussions of how to survive under nuclear attack, they will inevitably become concerned with the problem of prevention. It is important that the subject matter not be so narrow as to lend plausibility to any criticism that the undertaking is designed to generate support for any single program or appropriation.

We believe that the prospects of success of such a venture would be greatly improved if you, Mr. President, as voice of all the people, were to take the leadership in this, as you already have in regard to education. Such evidence of interest and solicitude at the top could be heightened by the participation of your entire Cabinet at the initiation. What is required is such leadership to re-dedicate our people to responsible involvement, such as our forefathers were able to find, in less complex times, through the familiar town meeting. The value of the town meeting of yesteryear may be recaptured today through discussion groups in the service clubs, the veterans posts, the farmers organizations, and the other voluntary associations that are found in our cities, towns and villages.

For leaders of both thought and action to join in such discussion would dramatize as nothing else could the need and the technique of national involvement. It goes without saying that such an undertaking would recognize that the Government does not have all the answers, and that constructive help would be expected from our citizens. We believe that such a concerted effort at universal involvement would pay dividends in more sustained support of foreign policy.

What we are proposing would be a monumental effort in the field of public enlightenment, formal and informal, using mass and individual media; and all educational leaders and publicists should be called upon for their best contributions to the program. To further this suggested program, we believe that the importance of the following features should be emphasized:

- (1) The development, by employment of the multiplier principle, of able discussion leaders.
- (2) A systematic reporting to a central point of the conclusions and experience of each discussion group in order that the on-going program may benefit from successes and mistakes.
- (3) Provision for analysis, through operations research on a sampling basis, of the program itself, in order to determine its strengths and weaknesses as a constructive social institution and to assess its effectiveness in encouraging participation of the citizenry in some of the crucial problems of our age.

Supplementary Considerations in Implementing the Program

The proposed program offers hope of involving the people of our Country in the most critical issues of the times and of stimulating widespread understanding of basic problems of national security and international harmony. We believe that when broad questions such as these are involved, the process of involvement through group discussion is more effective than the mass communications media approach, although both have a contribution to make, and can be mutually reinforcing. (For example, surveys indicate that, as a result of efforts largely limited to mass media, 62% of the American people are "aware" of the meaning and role of civil defense, but probably not more than 3% of the people are significantly involved in it.)

We believe that such issues can be discussed in an atmosphere of calm deliberation with less emphasis on the symbols and images of disaster that so often characterize the emergency approach to attention getting, but which carries the danger of provoking apathy and hysteria. Nevertheless, we cannot hope to escape such adverse reactions altogether, and we must, therefore, be prepared to deal with a certain amount of hysterical reaction in the initial phases of the program. We must, furthermore, recognize that we face the problem of possibly sustaining over a long period involvement in these issues and readiness to play a constructive role in a disaster situation. In general, it is reasonable to expect that response to an emergency appeal will be short-lived, in the event that the emergency does not occur. Furthermore, excessive preoccupation in the presentation with "gory" details is likely to evoke the kind of apathetic hopelessness and susceptibility to rumor referred to earlier. On the other hand, failure to present a realistic appreciation of likely conditions will result in expectations being far short of the actual experience. As one member of the Panel put it, "We don't want to pull our punches, but we want each punch to be well-aimed and effective."

There is both an opportunity and a need to analyze, under controlled conditions, the actual results obtained by various types of presentation. Also, it might be profitable to inspect examples of success in this kind of effort in other countries; e. g., the high degree of preparedness for the war that has never come that the Swiss have managed successfully for several centuries to maintain. While gross differences in the situations of the United States and Switzerland immediately spring to mind, these differences do not satisfactorily account for the individual psychological readiness of the Swiss to react purposefully according to prepared plans whenever danger of war threatens the country.

We believe that there would be distinct advantages in achieving a vigorous partnership of governmental and non-governmental leaders in launching and sustaining the program. If this effort to prepare the psychological defense of the people against nuclear attack is to be successful, there must be independent evidence that the Federal, State and local governments are preparing themselves—that they are taking the world situation seriously. The progress of the civil defense program is likely to be taken as a most significant index of this.

This means that there needs to be evidence of sustained governmental action in the stockpiling of food and medical supplies; the development of a system of radiological defense, including the provision of effective shielding of individuals from dangerous exposure; the development of plans for housing, clothing and feeding refugees; provision for the maintenance of law and order in a variety of contingencies, including use of such State and federal military resources as are not immediately required for military missions of the highest priority; careful, well-rehearsed plans for the evacuation of cities when sufficient warning of approaching attack allows; provision of adequate shelter for those who lack time or opportunity to evacuate; provision of training in the several branches of civil defense operations; provisions for toughening and elaborating our communications and transportation networks; and planning for and developing the capability of civil government at all levels to survive the initial blow. This latter effort should be characterized by substantial support and strengthening of the resiliency of local and State government. One of the great historical advantages we enjoy is that of governmental decentralization. While it would be of the utmost importance following an attack to reestablish centralized communication and even con-



trol, in such a crisis, the ability of the local and State governments to survive the impact of attack will be a crucial factor in the reestablishment of central direction of the national effort.

We mentioned above the importance of planning for the continuity of civil government at all levels. There is an important psychological factor here that deserves emphasis. Recovery from the widespread psychological and emotional shock is likely to be much more rapid within a familiar social fabric. While it will be essential that available military resources be used to assist the civil government, it will be equally important to a rapid recovery that the recognized civil leaders and the familiar civil institutions be restored to functioning to the maximum possible extent as rapidly as possible.

A determined effort to strengthen civil defense should be characterized by a blending of programs and recommended measures into the normal governmental machinery and community patterns. Wherever possible, they should be identified with activities that have a recognizable social value in peacetime. For example, first aid training on a large scale will save lives right now. The utilization of the American Red Cross for civil defense first aid training is an example in practice of blending programs into normal community patterns. The reduction of fire susceptibility of our homes and communities prevents loss of life and property in peacetime. The improvement of highways leading into and around our metropolitan centers will reduce peacetime traffic congestion and highway accidents. The dispersion of industry and the thinning out of our congested metropolitan areas in an orderly, evolutionary manner could offer many attractions to both labor and management. The organization and training of the several operating elements in civil defense is also of great value in meeting the impact of natural disasters.

Americans are courageous people. They are somewhat ashamed of being overly careful and unduly self-protective. Many will participate in training to cope with hurricane damage and casualties because they can point to the occurrence of hurricanes in the past, and can recall the demonstrated value of such training. The same people, however, may hesitate to don a civil defense helmet when nuclear warfare is considered unlikely.

In the foregoing discussion we have drawn heavily on the civil defense program by way of example. This has been due not only to the fact that more information on civil defense was available to us than on the other security programs, but also to the fact that an effective civil defense program will require more widespread participation and involvement than any of the others. It would be essential however, that any program of "town-meeting" discussion be broad enough to increase public understanding of all of the national security programs and their relation to each other. It is obvious that we are offering here an idea for a program, rather than the details.

Revised Estimate

A vigorously supported program of "involvement" of the people would in our opinion bring about a significant change in preparedness and capacity to withstand attack. We believe that such a program, supplemented by the more usual dissemination of information by mass media methods, can achieve a significant degree of success. Against a background of such preparation of the people, we would estimate that *in the event of a massive nuclear attack on the United States, of the proportions assumed earlier, both the war effort and the national Government would be effectively supported.*

Such an estimate is of course not provable, but it is the best that can be made with the resources available. It may be worth while to examine briefly some of the significant factors in human behavior that lead us to arrive at this judgment.

There would of course be little difference, so far as physical damage is concerned. The important differences would be found in the fact that people would have a more realistic expectation of the experience and knowledge of what to do to meet it. While the damage and casualties would be truly staggering, the more realistic the expectation of the event, the less apathy, disorganizing anxiety and resultant hostility to constituted authority would be generated. This psychological preparation would be an important factor in sustaining both individual morale and the integrity of the social structure.

Fears would be diminished, although certainly not dissipated. Fears of radioactivity would persist, but would be markedly lessened with increased understanding of the phenomenon and of effective measures

to reduce the hazard. Similarly, the other fears referred to earlier would be less widespread and less intense as a result of increased knowledge of the constructive actions that could be taken.

There would be little or no difference in the amount of bereavement. In family situations, bereavement is generally more bearable and less guilt is generated in the surviving members when they can lay with justification to themselves and to each other, "We did all we could." We believe that this would apply, to a significant degree, on a national scale following substantial concern with and participation in a public program of discussion and action.

While such emotional states as apathy, hostility, selfishness, and opportunism would continue to be present, their incidence would be significantly reduced.

The resultant types of negative behavior would be diminished, both in occurrence and in severity. Petty delinquency, hoarding, lower work efficiency, absenteeism, etc., would persist in some cases, but in many instances they would be replaced by recognition of worthwhile work to be done and by response to the exercise of constructive leadership—a leadership which would be considerably strengthened, particularly on the local level, by the processes of involvement and participation.

Such involvement and participation would also, we believe, result in a marked toughening of the social fabric. In this connection morale would be improved and the many voluntary associations which characterize our national life would be stronger elements in our social organization as a result of having been utilized for "town-meeting" discussions.

The interplay of sociological and psychological factors referred to earlier would be effective in promoting positive results. A prepared and receptive people would react more quickly and effectively to repair the damaged social fabric. Physical damage to transportation, communications, and supply would still be very great indeed, but the restoration of rock-bottom capabilities in each of these elements of our society would be accomplished much more quickly as a result of heightened will. Such restoration and the restoration of necessary utilities would in turn fortify the morale of the people and increase their will and capabilities for further constructive effort. In summary, the cumulative or "snowballing" negative effects of social disorganization would be counterbalanced by the cumulative positive effects.

A Note on Morale

We have referred on several occasions to "morale" in the course of our discussion. Probably no term is used more frequently in connection with group behavior and attitudes, nor with less concrete agreement on its definition and components. We have agreed on the following definition of group morale for use in the context of our discussions:

Morale is the capacity of a group of people to pull together consistently and persistently in pursuit of a common purpose.

Morale is sustained by a number of components, all of which are valuable, but in special situations one or more of the components may be missing without impairing morale significantly.

In the first place, the group must have confidence in the purpose. It must seem both worthwhile and feasible.

A second component is confidence in the leaders. The group must believe in both their capabilities and motivation. (The motivation of the leaders includes concern for the welfare of the group.)

Thirdly, there must be confidence in the group as a whole—in its technical capabilities to perform the required tasks and in its motivation.

A fourth component is effective communications throughout the group—from leaders to followers, from followers to leaders, among leaders and among followers.

Finally, the health of the group—both physical and mental—is an element of major importance.

Morale—understood in these terms—is a vital element in maximizing positive behavior and attitudes. We feel therefore that advantage should be taken of opportunities within the Government to utilize persons or groups of people with responsibility for assessing morale and recommending actions designed to improve it.



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ESTIMATE OF THE EFFECTS, OVER TIME, ON HUMAN ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR, OF AWARENESS THAT NATIONS ARE CAPABLE OF MUTUAL ANNIHILATION

The word "annihilation" has given us some difficulty in our discussions. If the dictionary sense of the term—"reduction to nothing"—is literally applied, and it is further postulated that this would be an inescapable result of nuclear war, it is likely that most people would place the avoidance of nuclear war well above any other goals. There would be many who would still hold individual liberty and freedom, and human dignity dearer than life—for themselves and for the Nation—but we believe that a great many more people would rationalize the loss of these as temporary. This could embrace the goal of keeping alive the spark of desire for liberty, for freedom, and for recognition of human dignity, to be fanned into flame at an appropriate time.

But we believe that something short of this meaning of "annihilation" was intended—perhaps a degree of physical damage similar to that which we have discussed as an assumption underlying our first estimate. At any rate, we have continued that assumption as a basis for treating this part of the question. (See page 9.)

If we were to assume that the "awareness" were to be limited to the potential for damage and destruction, we would then be inclined to the belief that attitudes and behavior of the majority would be attuned to the avoidance of nuclear war, no matter what the cost. There would be weakened public support of policies that involved any substantial risk of nuclear war, even though such policies were designed to defend our cherished concepts of human dignity and freedom, for the "awareness" would be focussed on a result little different from the dictionary meaning of "annihilation" discussed above.

It is of the utmost importance that real knowledge and understanding of the effects of nuclear weapons be accompanied by increased knowledge and understanding of both the broad aspects of national security, including its basic goals, and the specific countermeasures that can reduce the effects of nuclear attack.

We have tried to estimate the effects on human attitudes and behavior of a growing awareness of the potential of nuclear stockpiles of nations for mutual damage and destruction when that awareness is accompanied by greater knowledge and understanding of our national goals, policies and state of preparedness.

In our opinion, the same program of involvement and participation discussed above would have several wholesome effects on human attitudes and behavior during a period of prolonged "cold war" or international tension, whether chronic or acute.

We believe that after such involvement, the people of the United States would be more appreciative than formerly of creative imagination and constructive ingenuity on the part of their leaders in resolving international differences without resorting to general war. This, we believe, would be an inevitable result of full understanding and acceptance of the destructive capabilities of nuclear weapons. We would expect more critical attitudes toward proposed national policies and actions, but the criticism would be more healthy and constructive than it has commonly been in the past. It should be anticipated that the process will initially occasion difficulty and embarrassment for the leaders as public involvement in discussion of foreign policy issues increases. We believe firmly, however, that the immediate problems would give way to long-range benefits.

We would expect that there would be greater understanding of foreign policy issues. Such understanding would result in greater public acceptance of proposals to increase our defensive strength—both military and civil. It would shift the basis of support of the national leaders from a kind of resigned reliance to understanding and active backing. In short, the hands of our national leaders would be ultimately strengthened, and they would have more freedom for maneuver in the development and implementation of foreign policy.

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As noted in the introduction (see page 5), we have felt somewhat less qualified to render an estimate on this question since it obviously requires a greater background of "area expertise" than exists in the Panel. A reasonably comprehensive estimate on this point would have to take into account the probable distortions involved in the development of increased awareness on the part of the publics of different nations. It would need to assess to some degree the impact (or lack of it) of public attitudes on the actions of duly constituted leaders of nations. It would also involve a comprehensive knowledge of the background, traditions, cultures, and temperaments of various peoples.

We believe, nevertheless, that it is a reasonable generalization that the people of all nations, when confronted with the capability of mutual nuclear destruction that is postulated, will be reluctant to support the initiation of general war by their duly constituted leaders. We recognize, however, that it is possible that the attitudes of the people of some nations might be modified if they were led to expect that striking the first blow would enable them to escape a massive retaliatory nuclear attack, which represents, of course, a departure from the postulate of mutual annihilation.

So far as the United States is concerned, we believe that only a small number of people would favor a preventive war. Nevertheless, the topic is obviously important and should be taken into account as a possible danger by those carrying out the program of citizen involvement.

Some members of the Panel believe that in a few nations, under the spell of either religious fervor or extreme nationalism, the attitudes of the people would support the initiation of general war even in the face of almost certain massive nuclear retaliation. Others disagree, or feel that they have no special qualifications to exercise judgment on this point. All agree, however, that it would be more fruitful for the area experts available to the Government to comment on the generalization contained in the second paragraph above.



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Within the limitations expressed in the Introduction, and despite the many variables and imponderables, we believe that the estimates expressed above are reliable. In certain respects we believe the estimates could be improved by additional basic and applied research to advance our knowledge in the fields of the social sciences.

Finally, in the course of our attempts to summarize the purpose of a program of citizen involvement, one of our members, T. V. Smith, expressed it in a manner endorsed by the Panel:

"We propose, in short, no less than a concerted national effort at patriotic renewal and spiritual advance. The extremity of human disaster might become the opportunity for resolute survivors. It is a brave thing, admittedly, to brace ourselves against the threat of annihilation. It is another, and better, thing to nerve ourselves to make the very best of the very worst. At this historic crossroads we would begin with knowledge and we would end with wisdom.

"Thus to take counsel with one another, to the very town-meeting grass roots, would be to draw inspiration from our forefathers and to point our children to the sources which make all American generations one and which raise hope for a new dynamics of the human race. It is a vision, indeed, but where visions flourish nations endure."



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