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PROBABLE WORLD REACTION TO CERTAIN
CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAMS

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RELEASE IN FULL

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, The Joint Staff, and the Atomic Energy Commission.

Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 19 March 1957. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff; and the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC. The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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PROBABLE WORLD REACTION TO CERTAIN CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAMS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the world reaction to a major US shelter program phased over an eight-year period and costing about \$32 billion.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. The US Government would develop a strong information program that would justify a national effort of this magnitude. In particular, it would:

a. give intensive and extended publicity to the implications of nuclear warfare for human survival; and

b. make clear that there is sufficient risk of nuclear war to warrant the program.

2. At the same time, the US Government would make strong efforts to prevent undue misunderstanding or alarm, and particularly to minimize adverse reaction abroad by assurances that the program did not indicate any significant change in US foreign, defense, or aid policies, or any change in the US view of the likelihood of war.

THE ESTIMATE

1. *General Reactions.* World reaction to the postulated program would depend to a considerable degree upon the world situation existing at the time the program was subjected to Congressional and public consideration and upon the nature of the public debate which took place. The entire subject of nuclear warfare is technically complex and emotionally charged; the debate would be reported throughout the world, and many of the reports and discussions would be over-dramatized and distorted, in some cases deliberately.

The US program would be quickly and vigorously exploited by Communist and anti-American propaganda.

2. Reactions would vary considerably throughout the world. Of all countries, Japan is most sensitive to developments respecting nuclear weapons, and would be most alarmed by initiation of the US program and by the publicity which would almost certainly accompany it. The peoples of Western Europe, conscious as they are of involvement in the East-West

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struggle and aware to a considerable degree of the nuclear threat, would also be greatly concerned. On the other hand, countries such as those in the Southern Hemisphere, far removed from the probable areas of nuclear warfare, would be far less interested. Other nations in which the population is only dimly conscious of the implications of nuclear weapons would also be largely unaffected. The following paragraphs, insofar as they describe reactions in a general way, must therefore be read with these distinctions in mind.

3. Reactions would also vary over time. As described below, we believe that the initial impact of the shelter program would be great throughout many areas of the world. With each annual Congressional presentation there would be some revival of the matter. Nevertheless once the program was established and its implications understood and digested, it would tend to recede into the background of interest. Moreover, it is to be expected that during the next eight years many disclosures of the nature of nuclear warfare will be made, and many developments will affect popular ideas of the likelihood of general war. Thus some of the reactions described below might occur in any case, though in a different context from that indicated by the proposed program.

4. *Reaction among the Major US Allies.* The initial presentation of a program of this nature and magnitude, however qualified by the Administration, would almost certainly generate a good deal of alarm and confusion among the general public in allied countries. Some influential groups would interpret the program as indicating that the US had lost faith in its alliances, intended to cut its commitments, and was preparing to retire into "Fortress America." Others, particularly those inclined to anti-Americanism, would allege that the US, despite its protestations of peace, had concluded that a showdown with the USSR was unavoidable. Many would demand that their own governments undertake a corresponding program. There would probably be demands for more progress on disarmament and possibly for immediately outlawing nuclear weapons. Extremists would claim that the US shelter program furnished evidence

for the contentions they had long been arguing: that US bases should not be allowed on their national territory, that NATO was a failure, that governments allied to the US should renounce the alliance and make the best terms possible with the USSR.

5. Some of these views would initially be held to greater or less degree in all allied governments, who would ask themselves why the US should allocate to shelters such substantial additional resources, which could have been used for other defense purposes. They would fear that the shelter program might be part of a broader decision for American withdrawal, and that the US had lost some of its confidence that general war could be prevented through the deterrent power of its force in being. They would express these concerns to the US Government. However, if the US gives the assurances described in Assumption 2, we do not believe that they would be stampeded by these anxieties or by initial popular reaction. While elements of doubt would certainly persist and lead them to scrutinize other American actions with unusual care, governments, as well as influential elements of the public, would probably come to recognize that the shelter program, taken by itself, was a defensive measure and did not necessarily indicate any basic change in US foreign policy or substantially affect the likelihood of general war. However, they would be exposed to strong popular demands for shelter programs in their own countries. They would be likely to request US aid for carrying out such programs, and if aid were not forthcoming, they might divert resources from other defense expenditures for use on shelters, with resulting jeopardy to the NATO defense effort and its political unity.

6. The program would probably have an effect on NATO relationships, particularly if it were initiated at a time when there were unusually difficult and divisive issues before the community. In such circumstances, the announcement of the shelter program would tend to intensify already existing difficulties.

7. As time went on, the initial popular reactions would almost certainly diminish, and the more emotional manifestations would tend to

disappear. Some people might find reassurance in considering that if the US thought such a shelter program worthwhile, then the possibilities of survival in nuclear war might not be as dark as they had previously supposed. Some might even estimate that the US overall military position had been strengthened. Any initial feeling that the program made the US free to pursue a more risky policy, would give way to a realization that even the completion of the program would still leave the US exposed to vast destruction and danger, and would not put it in any position to engage in provocative actions against the USSR. Despite this tendency to see the program in a normal light, it must be recognized that the USSR and the Communists generally, as well as other anti-American elements, would continue to make capital of the subject in their propaganda.

8. If, despite the assurances given by the US Government, the implementation of the shelter program were accompanied by significant reductions in US foreign economic and security programs or commitments, allied reaction would be substantially more serious. In these circumstances the program would generally be viewed as foreshadowing a substantial US withdrawal. Strong impetus would then be given to third-force and neutralist tendencies in Europe, to reconsideration of existing treaty commitments to the US, and to accommodation by some countries with the USSR. As a result of these general tendencies, US base arrangements might be jeopardized, allied defense expenditures reduced, and the US diplomatic position seriously impaired.

9. *Reaction in Neutral Countries.* Among the neutrals, particularly outside Europe, a US decision to implement a shelter program would almost certainly reinforce the desire to remain neutral. In India, for example,

such a decision would provide a strong argument for justifying the role India has been playing. Among the more sophisticated of the underdeveloped countries, and particularly those which have hoped for US aid in development, there would be fear that a shelter program of the projected magnitude would in effect preclude the kind and scale of US economic aid for which they had hoped. In the larger number of countries which are uncommitted and outside the main stream of international politics, there would almost certainly be a reinforced desire to remain uncommitted; they would feel that it had become even more desirable to keep out of the quarrels of the great powers.

10. *Soviet Reaction.* The Soviet leaders would vigorously exploit a US shelter program in their continuing propaganda theme that the US was preparing for a new war, and they would utilize it in connection with other themes directed towards US allies as well as in neutral states.

11. Initiation of a US shelter program would not in itself lead the Soviet leaders to conclude that the US now believed war to be inevitable, nor would it be a critical factor in their estimate of US intentions. They might believe that a completed US shelter program would somewhat reduce the deterrents upon US action which are now exerted by Soviet capabilities. Thus, the inauguration of a shelter program would help to keep alive their anxieties over US intentions, and they might become particularly concerned if other US military expenditures or military preparations were to have a simultaneous and rapid increase. Even in this case, they would not rely solely upon these moves as indicators of US intentions, but would weigh all the factors in the US military and political posture and in its world position.

APPENDIX

THE SOVIET SHELTER PROGRAM

1. Soviet construction of air raid shelters began in the late 1940's and became a major national program during the Korean War. Since about 1951, it has been standard practice to build cellar shelters in most state-owned housing. This program probably now affords shelter to about one-sixth of the urban population, and this ratio will probably rise to about one-third by the end of 1960. In addition, there are shelters in factories and public buildings, but no reliable estimate of their capacity is available.

2. Although existing shelters were evidently not originally designed for protection from high-yield nuclear weapons, they would probably still provide considerable protection. There are indications that the newer building shelters are of heavier construction, apparently with a view to keeping pace with weapons yields. So far as is known, there has been no construction of large underground shelters separated from buildings. The Moscow and Leningrad subways are evidently intended for use as shelters, however.

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