INDIAN POINT

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area. Despite repeated requests from the head of the Westchester Department of Transportation, no driver has volunteered for this duty—and even if any did, the buses do not have radios with which to be summoned. Patients at the 1200 bed Montrose V.A. Hospital, 2½ miles from Indian Point and impossible to evacuate, are expected to sit tight and be "sheltered," with the assumption that all medical and ancillary staff needed to care for the patients will remain at their posts. Inmates at Sing Sing Prison are disregarded.

Each area within 10 miles has a specific evacuation route. Specific routes assigned in advance, without knowledge of wind direction and speed, could condemn people to drive for hours straight down the center of the plume, increasing their exposure if they follow literally the plan intended to save them.

The issue at Indian Point, a plant plagued by shutdowns and accidents, the most recent of which was a leak of 8000 gallons of radioactive water spilled outside the plant in April 1981, is not the state of its emergency preparedness plans, but the fact that a dangerous technology is nestled among so many human beings.

—Chris Hoy, M.D., and Jacki Gordon, Ph.D.

SOVIET CIVIL DEFENSE

The Soviet civil defense program has long been the topic of considerable controversy. The debate continues between those who argue that the Soviet program is effective enough to constitute a threat to the U.S. deterrent posture, and those who recognize that Soviet civil defense programs threaten deterrence no more than similar U.S. programs do. Implicit in the former view is the notion that Soviet leaders have such confidence in their civil defense that they "may come to believe that the Soviet Union could survive and win a nuclear war."

The author of the above words, Professor Leon Gouré of the University of Miami, has spent much of his academic career sounding the tocsin on Soviet civil defense. While others—most notably Reagan advisor Richard Pipes—share Gouré's view, Soviet political and military officials have consistently emphasized that they do not believe in limited nuclear war fighting and that they are certain that any use of nuclear weapons would escalate to unimaginable catastrophe.[1] This unfortunately cannot be said of U.S. leaders, especially since last year's Presidential Directive 59 made explicit U.S. willingness to engage in "limited" nuclear wars.

What then is the rationale behind the Soviet civil defense program, and is there any evidence that it is intended to help the Soviet Union "win" a nuclear war?

Soviet civil defense is not a product of the nuclear age. Programs were initiated as early as 1932, and during World War II they protected many millions of civilians from German bombing raids.[2] Civil defense shelters, modeled on those used during the War, were built during the 1950s, and a national civil defense program went into operation in 1961—at a time when the U.S. had an overwhelming nuclear superiority, and the Soviet Union had no capability of waging an intercontinental nuclear-missile war.[3]

The Soviet civil defense troops—estimated at approximately 50,000—are commanded by a deputy minister of defense, although civil defense is not his sole duty.[4] The present commander A.T. Altunin, for example, is also a member of the Central Committee and a general in the army. Soviet civil defense troops themselves fulfill a wide range of functions, including disaster relief, that would be performed in this country by the National Guard (which has been incorporated into the U.S. civil defense program by law since 1964).

In ostensibly working toward the goal of protecting the civilian population from the effects of a nuclear attack, the Soviet government has built shelters and instituted instruction in civil defense and evacuation procedures. Most of the shelters are designed at best for protection against radioactive fallout. Although they would be useless in a major nuclear war, they could conceivably provide some protection in the event of a small-scale Chinese attack on Soviet cities,[5] or a limited U.S. strike on "military targets"—both real possibilities as far as Soviet planners are concerned.

The civilian population is instructed on the basis of civil defense manuals similar to the British government's recent *Protect and Survive*, many of which are to a large extent based on U.S. and other Western civil defense manuals.[6] Shelter drills are administered in grade schools, much as in the West, and to a degree among the adult working population as well. Some observers have attributed these procedures to the Soviet leadership's need to remind its citizens that it is looking out for their security; the major source of legitimacy for Communist Party rule is still the fact that it brought the country to victory following the German invasion during World War II.[7]

Most Soviet citizens respond to civil defense drills with apathy and skepticism, as Soviet leaders have often admitted. There is no telling what the response to or results of a large-scale evacuation would be, because no evacuation drills have ever been staged in any of the major Soviet cities. The latest Soviet "evacuation plan" requires that at least 20 million of those evacuating the cities *walk*.[8]

It is clear that many of the putative plans for Soviet civil defense measures should be relegated to the realm of wishful thinking. One example, concerning medical care in the event of a nuclear attack, can be found in a Soviet civil defense manual which has been translated by the U.S. Air Force: "To carry out medical measures it is necessary to plan in advance the operation of medical institutions, to train medical personnel, to accumulate medical supplies, and to prepare dispersal areas for medical facilities." Nowhere is it stated and nowhere is there evidence to suggest that any of these recommendations have been implemented.[9]

It is no wonder then that Soviet citizens are skeptical about their government's civil defense measures. This skepticism is well expressed in the acronym that some Russian wags—imitating the habit of the Soviet bureaucracy—have created for *grazhdanskaya oborona* ("civil defense"): by taking the first two letters from each word, they come up with *grob*, or "coffin." This is indeed a fitting expression of Soviet popular opinion concerning the effectiveness of civil defense in the event of a nuclear war.

—Matthew A. Evangelista
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1. L.I. Brezhnev, "Materialy XXIV S'iezda KPSS," *Moscow Politizdat*, 1971, p. 81; Major General N.A. Talentskii, *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* May 1965, p.23.
2. Fred M. Kaplan, "The Soviet Civil Defense Myth, Part II," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, April 1978, p.42.
3. Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1973*, 2nd ed., New York: Praeger, 1974, p.771.
4. Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *The Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R.*, Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1979, p.243.
5. Ulam, *op. cit.*, p.771.
6. N.I. Alabin, I.A. Shlyakov, T.T. Yegorov, *Civil Defense*, translated and edited by Leon Gouré, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Government Printing Office.
7. David Holloway, "Military Power and Political Purpose in Soviet Policy," *Daedalus*, Fall 1980, p.15.
8. Leon Gouré, *War Survival and Soviet Strategy: U.S.S.R. Civil Defense*, Miami: University of Miami, 1976, pp. 114, 118.
9. N.I. Alabin, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

More complete documentation for this article is available on request.

TOWN MEETINGS VOTE FOR NUCLEAR FREEZE

On March 3, 1981, voters in fourteen Vermont Town Meetings strongly said "yes" to a bilateral nuclear weapons freeze. From Burlington, Vermont's largest city, to many small towns, the measure passed each town that discussed it. Nearly 62% of those voting on ballots (total vote: 11,755) called for a mutual halt to the nuclear arms race, and the proposal passed by voice vote in six towns.

The following week in New Hampshire, two town meetings passed similar questions by even larger margins. Plainfield voted almost 80% in favor of a joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. nuclear arms freeze. Hanover passed a similar article by a vote of 308 to 38.

While wording varied somewhat, nearly all proposals called for state or national elected officials to "introduce a resolution calling for an immediate nuclear weapons freeze (U.S. and U.S.S.R.), and call upon the Administration to negotiate with the U.S.S.R. a permanent moratorium on nuclear weapons."

"This is very clear grassroots support for a halt to nuclear weapons growth, at a time when national policy is going the other way," said David McCauley, Vermont Field Secretary for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). McCauley said the AFSC hopes to work with other Vermonters to "put the nuclear weapons freeze before the voters in 100 Vermont town meetings in March 1982."

McCauley quoted James Geier, a Burlington town meeting nuclear freeze organizer, as saying, "Defense is one thing, but suicide is quite another."

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Do you want to further your education, increase your library, and speak about the medical consequences of nuclear war? You might be interested in the following materials:

1. "U.S. Urban Population Vulnerability," August 1979, from the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (USACDA), Washington, D.C. 20451. A computer printout of the numbers of dead and wounded from 16 different kinds of nuclear attacks on the 545 U.S. cities with populations of 25,000 or greater.

2. "The Effects of Nuclear War," (USACDA). A 26 page report summarizing the most important effects of nuclear war, with maps and photos of Japan illustrating the effects of overpressures and thermal injuries.

PROTECT AND SURVIVE

The following are excerpts from *Protect and Survive*, a pamphlet issued by the British government to instruct its citizens on civil defense:

PLAN A FALL-OUT ROOM AND INNER REFUGE

First, the Fall-out Room

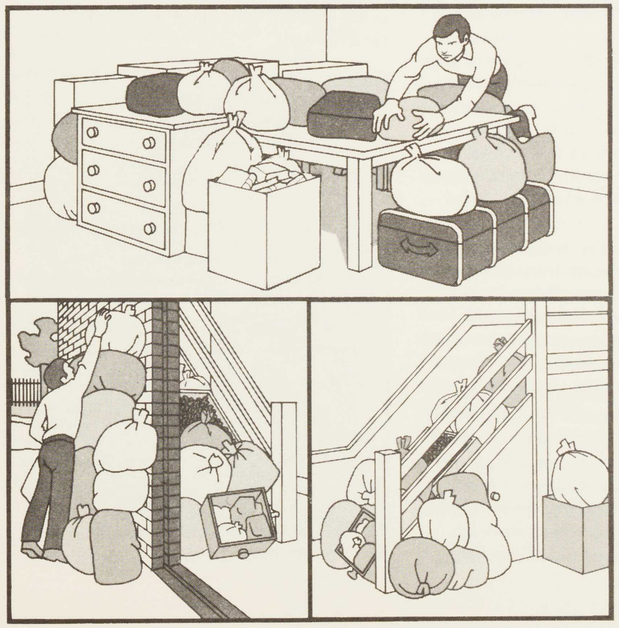
Because of the threat of radiation you and your family may need to live in this room for fourteen days after an attack, almost without leaving it at all. So you must make it as safe as you can, and equip it for your survival. Choose the place furthest from the outside walls and from the roof, or which has the smallest amount of outside wall. The further you can get, within your home, from the radioactive dust that is on or around it, the safer you will be. Use the cellar or basement if there is one. Otherwise use a room, hall or passage on the ground floor.

Stay in your refuge

The dangers will be so intense that you may all need to stay inside your inner refuge in the fall-out room for at least forty-eight hours. If you need to go to the lavatory, or to replenish food or water supplies, do not stay outside your refuge for a second longer than is necessary.

Now the Inner Refuge

Still greater protection is necessary in the fall-out room, particularly for the first two days and nights after an attack, when the radiation dangers could be critical. To provide this you should build an inner refuge. This too should be thick-lined with dense materials to resist the radiation, and should be built away from the outside walls.



Protect and Survive.

Remains of Hiroshima building, 1945. Photograph from the archives of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.