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Where Now, World?

The magnificent scientific mind of man had devised the means of man's total destruction. The laggard political mind of man would now struggle with the problem of saving man from his own ingenuity.

And that struggle was to determine what human history would be like in the age beginning with 1954—unless the struggle was lost and history stopped there.

For the H-bomb tested by U.S. officials in the Pacific was so destructive that it would wipe out any city in the world and that city's far environs. And a still more explosive bomb was loaded and about to be dropped.

Washington experts thought Russia probably didn't, as yet, have anything quite that big, but they were sure it soon would have. Both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had planes capable of delivering H-bombs to the other's centers.

U.S. officials already had intimated that they would use every weapon available to them—including the latest H-bomb—if the Russians, in furtherance of their ambitions for world power, persisted in their encroachments upon free world territory. Last week, however, Administration spokesmen were at pains to explain that its so-called new-look military policy was aimed at preventing, not starting, an H-bomb war.

Meanwhile, American and Russian officials exchanged notes exploring ways of creating an international pool of atomic materials in furtherance of a plan proposed to the United Nations by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. This plan, if it worked out, could be a preliminary to eventual atomic-arms control.

Man seemed to be faced with a simple choice—whether to destroy himself or live on. But that choice was complicated by the conflict between a system of freedom and a system of slavery over social man's future living arrangements. It wouldn't be as simple as it looked.

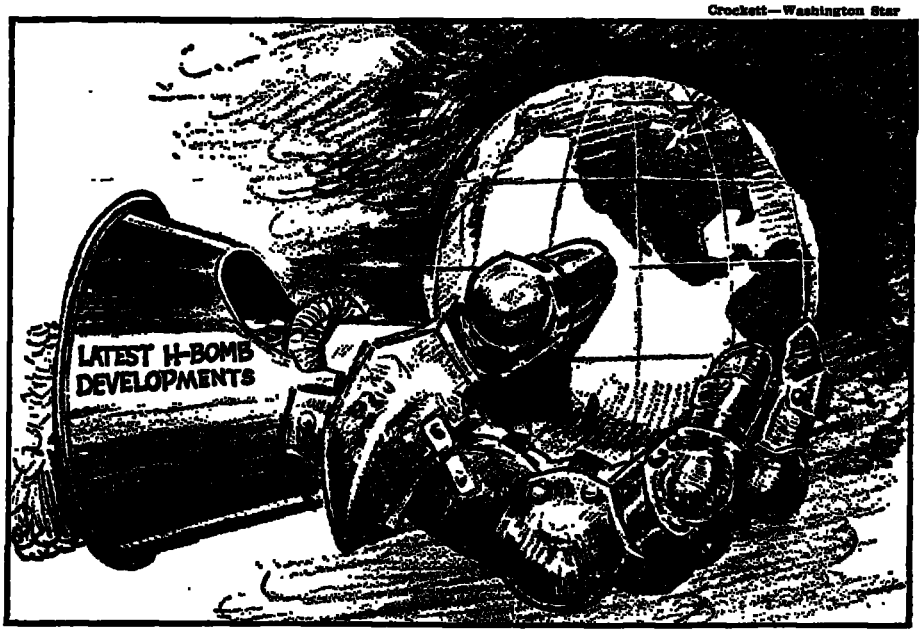
THE BLAST:

Moment in Eternity

In Washington, a city famous for leaks, the secret was too big to keep: the Atomic Energy Commission had exploded a spectacular H-bomb at Bikini. Dropped from a tower, it was packageable, deliverable in combat, twice as devastating as the thermonuclear device tested in 1952, and four times as powerful as scientists had expected. And the AEC was ready this week to drop an even more powerful bomb from a plane.

When word of the mighty blast

Crockett—Washington Star



reached the U.S., the AEC merely offered a tight-lipped explanation that a "routine" atomic device had been exploded and that it was "the first in a series." But the less reticent members of the Joint Congressional Atomic Energy Committee were willing to supply some startling details.

▶The new bomb was a revolutionary "three stage" weapon. An atom bomb triggered small amounts of tritium, touching off lithium, which in turn set off the thermonuclear reaction. Because tritium is prohibitively expensive, the cost factor had held up production of the new bomb until the AEC devised the three-stage method.

▶The March 1 blast was said to have obliterated the test island.

▶The blast equaled in explosive power some 12 million tons of TNT, as compared with the 5-million-ton power of the 1952 test and the 20,000-ton effect of the Hiroshima A-bomb.

▶The explosion shot a nuclear cloud 17 or more miles into the air.

▶There was "complete" damage in an area at least 6 miles in diameter, or roughly 20 square miles, and diminishing damage in an area of about 20 miles in diameter, or over 300 square miles.

▶The AEC was reaching the point where, according to chairman Dewey Short of the House Armed Services Committee, "H-weapons are getting so big that if they get much bigger, we won't be able to test them."

Preparations for the H-bomb test began last January when thousands of servicemen from Task Force 7 and AEC technicians moved into the Eniwetok proving grounds. A tower was rigged, measuring and testing devices were set up, and planes warned all fishermen to stay out of waters within an 80-mile radius of the test island.

'Death of Civilization'

Premier Georgi Malenkov, recognizing the power of the H-bomb but opposing its effective control, has said:

"The Soviet government is for a relaxation in the international tensions, for a lasting peace, against the policies of a cold war, because these policies are a preparation for a new world war, which under contemporary conditions of war [air-borne nuclear bombs] means the death of world civilization."

Unexpected Forces: On the morning of March 1, the first great bomb was detonated. Kwajalein Island and U.S. military bases 176 miles away were badly shaken by the concussion. Many testing and measuring devices were knocked out completely by the unexpected force of the explosion. Seconds after the blast, observers realized that something else was wrong. The upper winds suddenly shifted, carrying radioactive dust swiftly in the direction of witnesses within the 80-mile radius and to a neighboring atoll populated by natives.

Several planes and Navy vessels turned and sped away from the blast. But atomic ash showered down on 264 natives who had been thought safely out of range of the "fall out" of the burst. Twenty-eight Air Force technicians, some of whom were flying at the time of the wind change, got lighter doses of radioactivity than the natives. All got much heavier doses than the AEC considered safe.

Those exposed, both native and American, were rushed to Kwajalein for treatment at the U.S. base hospital. Unknown to the AEC, however, a Japanese fishing vessel, the Fukuryu Maru, which had been cruising some 80 to 90 miles from the test island, was also badly peppered by the "fall out." It headed for Japan with 23 burned seamen and a tainted tuna catch (see page 23).

Extended Danger Area: The story of the accident reached Washington and became a topic of Congressional concern and gossip. On March 11, the AEC publicly admitted that natives and Americans had been overexposed but added reassuringly: "There were no burns. All are reported well." Late last week, it announced that the danger area was being extended to include a radius of 450 miles around the proving grounds.

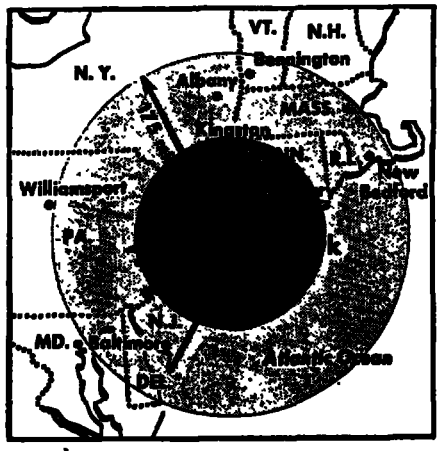
The magnitude of the first test, and the news that the more powerful bomb was at the test stage, set official Washington on edge. The Hell-bomb, experts hurriedly noted, was not exclusively American. Dr. James Beckerley of the AEC warned that the Soviet Union was not far behind and had sufficient scientific know-how to catch up. And chairman W. Sterling Cole of the Joint Congressional Committee offered his opinion that soon the Russians would be able to deliver a bomb as potent as any produced by the United States.

The Men Who Know the Worst Weapon Have a Warning . . .

The new H-bomb is a "horrible thing" whose magnitude was not foreseen by the U.S. scientists who tested it. Yet it can now be delivered by this nation to any place in the world. The Russians may not have it yet, but if they don't they will in "one to three years." When they get it, they'll have what it takes to devastate any metropolitan area in the United States. (Maps show in solid color areas in which victims would be killed or burned and in light color areas in which they would feel jolt and radiation in New York, Chicago, and L.A. districts.) Members of the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy—the laymen who know most about the new bomb—are authority for these statements to NEWSWEEK.

▶Chairman W. Sterling Cole (Republican Representative, N.Y.): "We have passed another milestone. We now have a deliverable hydrogen weapon that can be dropped anywhere in the world.

"The recent blast means that we have made great progress, yet we can't relax, and we must assume that the Russians are doing just as well. Russia may be able to deliver similar weapons on the U.S. in one to three years.



"I feel that greater precautionary steps should have been taken, and should be taken in the future, to protect human life from radiation hazards. But I don't want to blame anyone for the March 1 overexposures."

▶Vice Chairman Bourke B. Hickenlooper (Republican Senator, Iowa): "These present tests are a part of the program of experiment and development of atomic force. In fact, I would call them routine necessary operations, some of which produce far greater power than others.

"They will contribute to the maintenance of our great and necessary superiority in atomic matters.

"I am sorry that some sensational claims have created unwarranted confusion, and I have no evidence of any

Meanwhile, production began on the "long rifle of the air age," an eight-engine swept-wing bomber capable of delivering the new bomb wherever and whenever the U.S. decided to drop it. As the first production model B-52 rolled off a Boeing assembly line in Seattle, Gen. Nathan F. Twining, the Air Force Chief of Staff, told workers who had built it that this was the plane which would "keep that Red fellow in his place."

THE PROBLEM:

Let No War Come

The most powerful weapon of war ever devised by man is also the most powerful deterrent to war in the world. Winston Churchill first recognized this fact, but it since has become an integral part of American foreign policy. As far back as March 1949, speaking at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Churchill declared that Europe would long since have been under Communist rule and London under bombardment "but for the deterrent of the atomic bomb in the hands of the United States."

Churchill was speaking of the relatively primitive A-bombs which then were a U.S. monopoly. The new, awesome H-bomb, the first of which the Atomic Energy Commission exploded this month, was certain to give the Russians even greater pause, even though Russia now possesses atomic weapons, too. Last week, for the first time, the Russians admitted—at least by implication—how much they feared atomic retaliation by the U.S.

The admission came from the Soviet Premier, Georgi Malenkov. Making a new plea for a settlement of the cold war (on Russia's terms), he declared that a third world war, "under contemporary conditions of war, would mean the death of world civilization."

At the same time, other Soviet leaders were boasting of Russia's progress in atomic development. Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov, for example, was saying: "Our scientists all the more occupy advanced positions in the development of world science." Malenkov's words were far more significant, however. In the Aesopian language that Communists characteristically employ, he was finally confessing that Russia hesitated to start a third world war because it would mean the destruction of Russia.

The threat of U.S. atomic development might conceivably have another historic effect. In December, President Eisenhower made a proposal for an international pool of nuclear materials for peaceful development. The President did not deal with the question of international control of atomic weapons, but his proposal clearly was designed to open the way for such control eventually.

Last week, for the first time, the Russians got down to considering the proposal. State Department officials weren't too optimistic about the possibility of reaching agreement with them in the near future, but they were heartened anyway. Some progress had been made.

Meanwhile, the precise role that atomic development should play in U.S. foreign policy was the subject of continuing debate in Washington—and elsewhere in the Western world. Reckless, uninformed talk about the "new look" in defense had made many Americans and most Western Europeans fearful that some foreign-policy planners were on the verge of going "bomb happy." These policymakers seemed to place exclusive reliance on atomic retaliation. They talked as though any new Communist aggression anywhere should be answered by wiping out Russia and China, even such outbreaks as the Communist civil war in Greece and the North Korean attack on South Korea.

Dangers in Retaliation: The allies of the U.S. had no objection to atomic retaliation if the situation warranted it—but they wanted a voice in deciding whether the situation did, since atomic retaliation would mean a third world war, which could end in their destruction too. Some critics saw another objection in relying solely on atomic retaliation: Congress simply would never

'No Sane Victory'

President Eisenhower, in his famous and sober speech before the United Nations, called for use of atomic power for peace, not war:

"The retaliation capabilities of the United States are so great that . . . an aggressor's land would be laid waste . . . To stop there would be to accept helplessly the probability of civilization destroyed . . . Surely no sane member of the human race could discover victory in such desolation."

. . . Reds Will Have the H-Bomb in 'One to Three Years'

negligence whatsoever in connection with these tests."

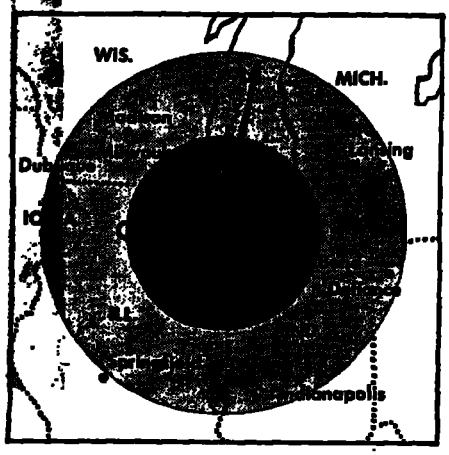
▶**Rep. Chet Holifield** (Democrat, Calif.): "They never expected the magnitude of that March 1 explosion. It was astounding. The weapons we are now testing present completely different problems from the earlier atom weapons. With those, we knew a little more about what we were doing.

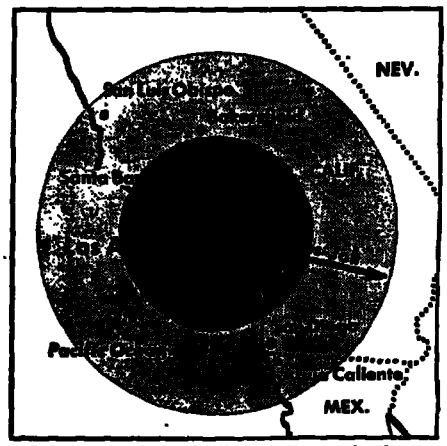
"It is almost miraculous, it seems to me, that there haven't been far more casualties . . . As you know, some residents of the islands received radiation exposures far in excess of the usual tolerances set for people who work with atomic material.

"This unexpected exposure seems to be the result of a much larger explosion than expected, and tricky shifts in winds at high altitudes."

▶**Rep. Carl T. Durham** (Democrat, N.C.): "Hazards have been greatly increased both from the explosive power and from radiation of the hydrogen weapons . . . The people should be told about this tremendous new force . . . it is such a horrible thing that it's best to tell the world about it."

▶**Rep. James E. Van Zandt** (Republican, Pa.): "I am more enthusiastic than ever before . . . It looks like we have had a break, saving hours of research. I think the results out there in the Pacific have amazed everybody."





All Maps—Newsweek—Magill

declare war against Russia over a Communist uprising in a nation like Greece, they declared; consequently, a policy of relying solely on atomic retaliation was a policy that would permit the Communists to "nibble the free world to death," as Adlai Stevenson, one of the chief critics, had put it.

Administration leaders from President Eisenhower down undertook to set these fears at rest. They made it clear that if the U.S. were directly attacked and the nation's very existence put in peril they would order the Strategic Air Force to retaliate instantly against the attackers with atomic weapons. Mr. Eisenhower declared that any President who didn't do all he could when the nation's life was imperiled should be worse than impeached, he should be hanged.

Administration leaders, however, said they certainly would not act in this manner if American interests were attacked only on the periphery, as they are now in Indo-China. They would judge each situation separately. And they would meet each situation in the manner which seemed best.

Deterrent to Attack: The Administration assured the nation that, except in the case of a direct attack, it would not make war without asking Congress for a declaration of war. Nor would it use atomic weapons without first consulting our allies.

Writing in the publication Foreign Affairs, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles pointed out that "massive atomic and thermonuclear retaliation" could not "usefully be evoked under all circumstances." Its major use was as a deterrent to a direct Soviet attack on the United States and the West generally, he declared. In the case of other types of Communist aggression, like Communist-sponsored civil wars and Communist-sponsored peripheral wars, the U.S. would adopt other methods of replying.

"Our program will retain a wide variety in the means and scope for responding to aggression," Dulles declared.

Dulles spelled this out further at a press conference and in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. At the press conference, he gave specific assurances to Lester Pearson, the Canadian Minister for External Affairs, that allies of the U.S. would be consulted before atomic weapons were used.

Military Forces Intact: The Administration insisted that it had not sacrificed the nation's conventional military forces in the interests of atomic development. The Army and Navy, they said, still were capable of carrying out any mission they might be assigned.

This view was supported by Admiral Arthur W. Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who told a Senate Appropriations subcommittee that, despite recent cutbacks in the Army and Navy, U.S. defense forces continue to constitute "an effective and efficient contribution to the collective strength of the free world." However, there evidently were military leaders who disagreed. Testifying before the committee, Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, Army Chief of Staff, clearly implied that he believed the Army had been cut back too much.

Whether or not this was so, the Administration had no idea of putting all its defense eggs in one basket labeled "Atomic Retaliation."

None Could Live Half a Minute

International

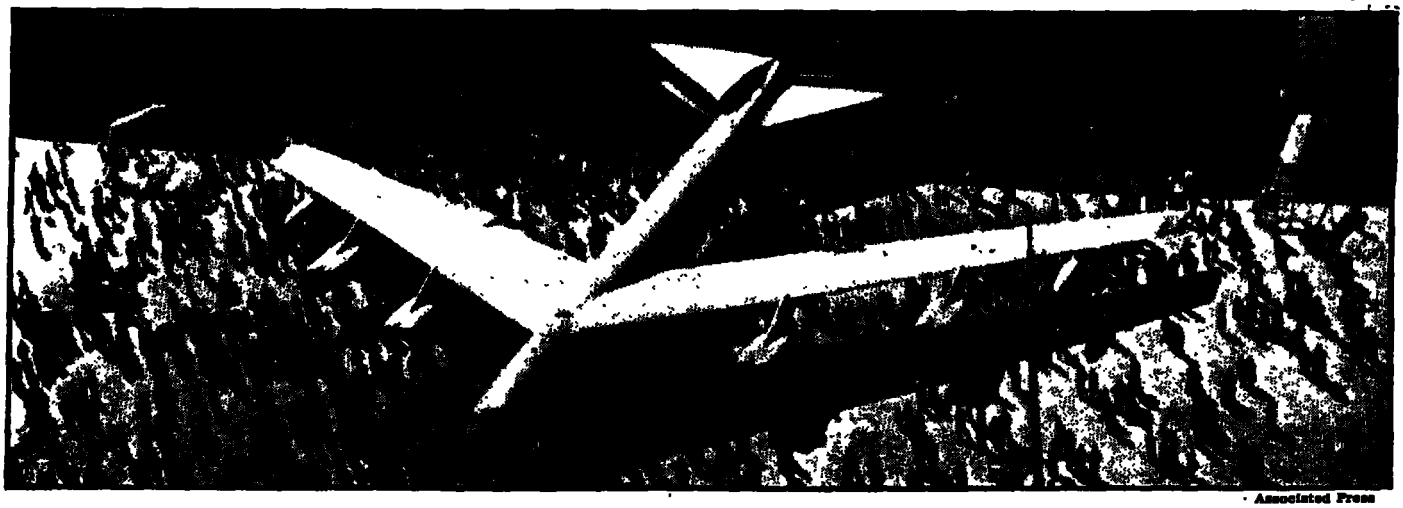
In liquid form, a tiny drop splattered on a man's hand would paralyze him instantly, deaden his brain in a few seconds, and kill him in 30 seconds.

Depending on the winds and the weather, a quart could kill every living thing within a cubic mile.

It's the deadliest gas that man has ever invented. You can't see it, smell it, or taste it—but it will kill you on contact.

The Army calls it G-gas.

Out at the $50 million Rocky Mountain Arsenal near Denver, where the gas is now being produced—in steel and concrete buildings, behind barbed wire—the workers must wear gas masks and rubberized suits, and they must take frequent showers. There is a highly intricate electrical-alarm system to warn of leakage. White rabbits and canaries are used as a second alarm system; they are more susceptible to the deadly gas than humans.



Associated Press

Big plane for big bombs: Near Seattle, Boeing began to produce this B-52, which could carry the H-bomb