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## Co-Existence or *Non-Existence*

Publicly the line in Washington is to treat Malenkov's announcement of a Soviet H-bomb with skepticism. The word passed out is to laugh it off. Privately, however, there is no disposition to assume that Malenkov was bluffing. When Molotov in 1947 said the "secret" of the atom bomb had "long ceased to exist", the Atomic Energy Commission called this a misleading statement for home consumption. This time the Commission's reaction is sober. Malenkov's wording is important. Molotov in 1947 spoke only of the atom bomb's "secret". Malenkov now says, "the U. S. has no monopoly in the production of the hydrogen bomb either." Note the word "production".

It is not impossible that the U. S. S. R. may have beaten the U. S. in the race for the H-bomb. Truman directed work on the H-bomb in January, 1950. But at least four years earlier, the Austrian physicist, Hans Thirring, with no access to secret information, American or Russian, devoted a chapter to describing the theory and mechanism of the hydrogen bomb in his book, "Die geschichte der atombombe" (Vienna, 1946).

It would be naive to suppose that the Russian government had to wait for this book to appear before it was aware of the H-bomb. Fuchs is said to have learned of it when he was in Los Alamos from 1944 to 1946. The Russians may well have tackled the problems of the atom bomb and the H-bomb at the same time. If Malenkov spoke truthfully, the Soviets are already producing the hydrogen bomb. Whether we have produced it yet is not known. The well-informed *Washington Post*, which follows atomic developments closely, speaks of the "thermonuclear device" exploded in the Pacific last year as "the forerunner of the hydrogen bomb." Since U. S. military-diplomatic policy has been based on the hope of frightening the Russians into submission, the production and test of an American H-bomb would probably be well advertised.

Unlike the Pentagon, the Kremlin did not use its announcement as an occasion for threats or bluster. Malenkov followed his news about the H-bomb with another plea for peaceful co-existence of the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. "It would be a crime before mankind," he said, "if the certain relaxation which has appeared in the international atmosphere should be replaced by a new intensification of the tension." Unfortunately the news must lead to greater tension unless it is seized upon as a means of breaking the ice of the cold war and initiating top level talks for a settlement.

If Churchill is well enough, the Russian announcement may give him the leverage he needs for another try at negotiations. The public is so punch-drunk on large numbers and mass destruction that one despairs of awakening some realization of what H-bomb warfare would mean. Thirring wrote, "God protect the country over which a six-ton bomb of lithium hydride will ever explode." In the April, 1950, issue

of *Scientific American*, Dr. Hans A. Bethe, who was chief of the theoretical physics laboratory at Los Alamos, warned "By the blast effect alone a single bomb could obliterate almost all of Greater New York or Moscow or London." In the July, 1953 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, J. Robert Oppenheimer explained, "We may anticipate a state of affairs in which two Great Powers will each be in a position to put an end to the civilization and life of the other . . . We may be likened to two scorpions in a bottle, each capable of killing the other, but only at the risk of his own life."

Though the words may sound like a soap slogan, it is literally true that whether the Russians or ourselves have the H-bomb now or will have it tomorrow, the issue simply and literally for millions of us on this planet is a choice between co-existence or non-existence. There is no safety in an arms race, especially an H-bomb race. "Suppose," Harold C. Urey writes, "that two countries have the hydrogen bomb. Is it not believable that sooner or later an incident may occur which would precipitate the use of bombs? . . . The probability that a war will start is increased if two groups each believe they can win that war. . . . An exact balance of power is very difficult to attain. This is what we know in physical science as a situation of unstable equilibrium; one like balancing an egg on its end. The slightest push topples the egg in one direction or another."

Gordon Dean, in his final press conference here on June 25 when retiring as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, tried to get across some of the suicidal potentialities in the present situation. "We have said many times," he declared, "that we are ahead of the Russians, but that is not enough. It does us no good to reach the point where we would be able to wipe out an enemy 20 times over if he reaches the point where he can wipe us out just once." The statement provoked these alarmingly cryptic questions and answers:

"The PRESS: . . . You are not suggesting that the Russians have reached the point where they can wipe us out ?

"Mr. DEAN: I am not suggesting because I can't answer the thing I would like to see publicly discussed. Today I can't.

"The PRESS: You are not saying they can or they can't?

"Mr. DEAN: I am not saying they can or they can't. . . .

"The PRESS: Mr. Dean, do you think the public's attitude toward defense would change if they knew these various things about the Russian's atomic bombs?

"Mr. DEAN: Yes, I think they would be much more sober about what the real danger may be in the next few years."

## Total Diplomacy and Total Destruction

The Russian H-bomb announcement is important because it may open a door the Truman Administration kept tightly shut against public discussion of the super-weapon. The H-bomb is a striking example of the way atomic secrecy has served to ensure control of national policy by a handful of military and political leaders.

In an age which boasts of world wide communications, the Truman Administration was able to keep the H-bomb a secret in this country though its theory had been fully discussed in a book published in Vienna after the war. It was only when a Senator indiscreetly mentioned the super bomb on the air in the Fall of 1949 that it became known to the American public.

The remarks of Senator Johnson of Colorado opened a promising debate in foreign policy. David Lilienthal appealed to Truman to negotiate with Moscow before embarking on an H-bomb race. The late Senator Mc Mahon and Senator Tydings began a campaign for disarmament, co-existence and a 50-year program for world development. Discussion was cut short (1) by Truman's decision in January, 1950, to proceed with production of the bomb, (2) by Acheson's campaign for "total diplomacy," and (3) by Mc Carthy's debut on the national scene with a sensational attack on the State Department in February, 1950. This diverted the energies of Tydings and Mc Mahon and distracted attention from the H-bomb.

Recently there have been overtures by Gordon Dean and Robert J. Oppenheimer for a reopening of public discussion. The drive for private control of the atom has had the good effect of stimulating a campaign for greater release of information to the public. Unless the grip of secrecy is loosened, the industry can hardly be handed over to private ownership. The White House has shown its sympathy. There has been pressure from scientists and others concerned with civil defense and worried by public indifference.

A major obstacle to the release of more information is that public knowledge of the danger would make impossible the maintenance of that rigid foreign policy which Acheson called "total diplomacy." It is total in the sense that it demands total acquiescence at home in a policy of totally avoiding any negotiations which might relax tension.

There is unfortunately no sign that the present Administration is prepared to abandon total diplomacy. Though the resistance in Congress to any increase in the debt ceiling showed the strength of business forces which want economy in government, the same men often demand lower taxes at home and more costly commitments abroad. The truce in Korea is regarded by Dulles and the Pentagon merely as an occasion for returning to the policy of the arms race and more bases. The strategy is to "sit tight" in Korea, walking out of the political conference after 90 days to avoid withdrawal of American troops and the political headaches of unification.

The "sit tight" strategy was made clear by Dulles at his last press conference before leaving for Korea. When asked what hope he had for the unification of Korea without making "undue concessions" to Red China, the Secretary replied, "I have not only the hope, but I have the faith and belief

that it is possible to detach satellite areas . . . I think some of the things that are going on in the satellite area of Europe—in the Soviet sector of Berlin and in the Soviet zone of Germany and Czechoslovakia—all indicate that there can be an attraction of these areas for the Western world so strong that it will not seem worthwhile for the Soviet masters to keep them under their rule." If North Korea and Eastern Germany can be "detached" by continuing the cold war, there is no need to negotiate for the unification of either country.

But centrifugal forces are set in motion on both sides by this kind of a policy. Capitalist Japan cannot afford to give up the China trade permanently. Adenauer—to Washington's dismay—has been talking of offering Moscow a "non-aggression" pact in return for a unified Germany. The burden of the arms race is reviving Popular Frontism in both Italy and France.

The most important political development in Italy has gone almost unnoticed in the American press. The right wing Socialist, Saragat, continues to urge that the Left wing Socialist, Nenni, be brought into the government, though Nenni is allied with the Communists. In France the general strike in which Socialist, Catholic and Communist unions joined forces was a portent. A "sit tight" policy can maintain the pump-priming benefits of rearmament here but the other non-Communist countries are too poor to stand the pace. Western Europe, if allowed freedom, will move further toward socialism. Its economic problems are insoluble under the kind of decadent capitalism to be seen in Italy and France.

The latest bulletin of the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe shows severe crisis conditions in Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany, but it also shows a slowdown in West European economic growth. The figures indicate continued expansion elsewhere in the Soviet zone and there is no reason to believe that East Germans and Czechs cannot be held by force if necessary. "From the most skeptical studies" of Soviet economic statistics, says a writer in the July, 1953 *Foreign Affairs*, "the fact of a superior rate of growth does emerge." The article is called "The Soviet Economy Outpaces The West". It should be required reading for those who assume that a few riots in East Germany may shake the Soviet dictatorship.

Unless America's allies and our own German and Japanese satellites press hard for a settlement, the danger is that the Soviet H-bomb announcement will merely intensify total diplomacy and let it drift toward a war of total destruction. The American military may easily seize on the possibility of a Soviet H-bomb to exploit public panic for greater arms expenditures, and the swift development of a garrison state regime.

Now is the time to press for peace talks. H-bombs cannot be made in hall closers. The enormous plants required lend themselves to enforcement by inspection. As for international public ownership of atomic facilities, the U. S. Congress would be the first to balk if the Russians ever agreed to it. Above all solution depends not so much on any treaties or enforcement devices but on a different atmosphere. So busy are the spreaders of hate that one almost despairs of achieving it.