P.S. to the NEWS
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HOW A "FRAME OF MIND" COLORS THE FACTS

The mythology put out by the Carter Administration, when it recently dashed the hopes of those who had been hoping our country would start an effective civil defense program, goes like this: Yes, the Soviet Union has a civil defense program, but don't worry about it; above all, don't allow it to persuade us to build a meaningful civil defense in the United States.

The Administration conclusion was based largely on a CIA report which has been thoroughly debunked by Leon Goure, America's foremost analyst of Russian civil defense. Dr. Goure called it "a crash effort" by analysts who have "no prior knowledge of either civil defense in general or Soviet civil defense in particular." He called it "a politicized and regrettably distorted treatment."

This is not the first time that the CIA has distorted the facts in order to accommodate White House policy prejudices. The same thing happened in 1962 when the Kennedy Administration refused to believe that the Kremlin had shipped offensive missiles into Cuba.

The Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee subsequently reported that the Administration's almost-fatal delay in believing the evidence was due to "the predisposition of the intelligence community ... that it would be incompatible with Soviet policy to introduce strategic missiles into Cuba."

The July 1965 issue of the prestigious journal of the Council on Foreign Relations, Foreign Affairs, blamed the refusal to believe the evidence on a "frame of mind" that offensive missiles in Cuba were unthinkable. "When an official policy or hypothesis is laid down, it tends to obscure alternative hypotheses, and to lead to overemphasis of the data that support it, particularly in a situation of increasing tension, when it is important not to 'rock the boat.'"

A similar "frame of mind" is preventing the Carter Administration from believing

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the factual evidence about the extent of Soviet civil defense and its strategic implications. Dr. Edward Teller has warned us: "We choose to live in a world of dreams. We choose to call what we don't like 'unthinkable.' And the tragedy is that what is unthinkable will happen. But if we think, we can still prevent it from happening."

The unthinkable event that could happen, even if we don't think about it, has been described by Nobel Laureate Eugene P. Wigner of Princeton University. He estimates that our lack of civil defense exposes 60 percent of our population to nuclear attack or blackmail, but, because of the extensive Soviet civil defense and evacuation programs, their population losses in case of an attack would be, at most, only four and a half percent.

The Administration argues that the Soviets are spending their money needlessly for civil defense. But the Soviets believe they know, from bitter first-hand experience, that preparation for war in the homeland is essential. If we do nothing about civil defense, the Soviets may deduce (a) that we are fools, or (b) that, when the chips are down, because we have no civil defense, we will strike first.

The latter, as a matter of fact, is part of the still-operable Khruchchev doctrine. Repeatedly expressing a paranoid fear of a U.S. attack on the USSR, he warned, "If a country's defenses are paralyzed, then war really is inevitable." Dr. Teller calls this Soviet suspicion "THE unstabilizing circumstance in a situation that is unstable enough already."

If the Carter Administration would allow our intelligence-gathering agencies to report the facts uncolored by the Administration-dictated "frame of mind," it would see that the most stabilizing plan we could undertake would be to build a realistic and effective civil defense program to safeguard the American people from nuclear blackmail.

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