

# Nation's State of Preparedness Weakened by Confusion Over Future of Atom Bomb

(Fourth of a Series)

By GUY RICHARDS

Written for Scripps-Herald Newspapers

NEW YORK, Oct. 3.—Confusion over the future of atomic weapons has in several ways served to sabotage the armed forces and damage our state of preparedness in 1946.

The confusion has placed an air of uncertainty over the value of our navy at a time when our navy was never more important. For several months, it shifted the emphasis on security and defense from the armed forces to the state department to the United Nations' bewildered military staff committee.

It created the public impression that almost all the war-tested doctrines of the army, navy, air force and marine corps were obsolete. Contradictory conceptions of the future of atomic weapons appeared (a) that we spent a national fortune developing the atomic bomb; (b) that the bomb requires us to spend another national fortune redesigning and rebuilding our

were not only supply routes; they were bulwarks of our defense. Now they are not only supply routes but sheltered and secret avenues of approach by which new weapons can arrive with potentially greater security than over the land.

At first glance, the atomic bomb seemed to lessen the importance of barrier territories, sea power and coastal defenses. Considering all the new weapons collectively, including the rockets now zooming through the air, it turns out that just the opposite is true. In parts of the world where we have no land bases and no nearby airfields, defensive instruments and countermeasures must be carried by naval vessels and carrier-based planes—the same planes which can

still impose an airpower checkmate 200 miles inland from all the coasts of the continents.

Atomic weapons will be discarded, not by law, but the dictates of tactical practice, which in the last 10 years brought the mass destruction of non-combatants through aerial bombardment, atomic bombardment, V-2 rockets, glide-bombs, and buzz-bombs, but stayed the hand of poison gas and bacteriological (germ) warfare.

Discard of A-Bomb Seen  
It seems probable that the atom bomb will be discarded as was gas warfare.

Area bombardments by aerial weapons has had a similar history. When the Japs bombed Chinese

cities, when the Italians bombed Ethiopian villages, when the Germans launched their blitz on London, it seemed to the invaders that they had a chance for making knockout blows without much danger of reciprocal damage at home. In time, they were all proved wrong.

## About Bomb Secrets

In the public excitement over the atomic bomb we have forgotten the nightmarish stockpiles of gas and deadly bacteria that were ready on both sides during the past war—but which were never used. The reason? Both sides knew they were ready. The chance for knockout blows was offered to neither side without the certainty of reciprocal devastation.

The spirit of this mutual aversion has already been expressed by the United States in the Baruch Plan. It appears also in the Soviet Plan. For great as the holocaust that one nation can inflict on another through a surprise attack with atomic weapons, it cannot bring a knockout blow before the aggressor is subject to the same damage.

Whether Russia should be left to discover the secrets for herself, and the kind of assurance we ask if we give her the secrets beforehand, must be determined by the status to which our military position reverts on the day atomic weapons are outlawed.

NEXT: Our military positions—minus atomic weapons.

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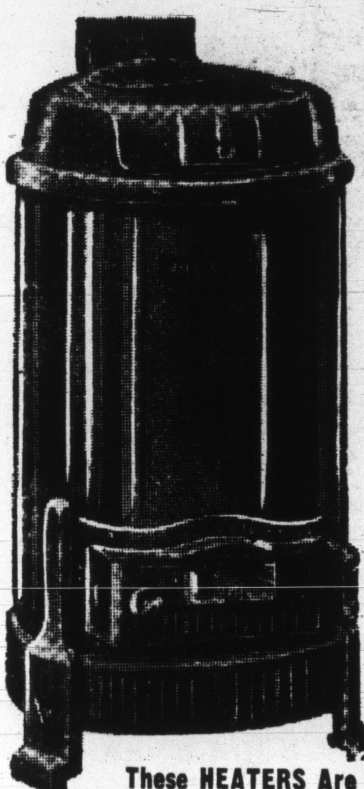
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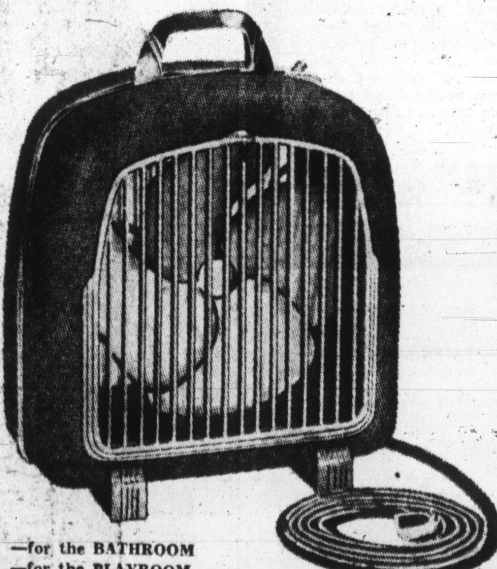
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