

# ARIZONA NEWSLETTER Doctors for Disaster Preparedness

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## SOVIET CIVIL DEFENSE: ON PAPER ONLY?

"The fact is that Soviet civil defense exists on paper only."

Michael Heisler, MD, of Physicians for Social Responsibility came to this conclusion on the basis of a visit to earthquake-stricken Armenia. He was flown into the area on Lee Iacocca's private jet.

Heisler spoke to a group of local emergency managers at a seminar sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, MD, on May 10.

Heisler considers the question of a civil defense gap to be important. The ability to protect their own citizens against retaliation would theoretically enable the Soviets to hold Americans hostage.

"If they really had a hard-core system, I would favor trying to build one here, even though we couldn't. . . . But they couldn't base any decisions on their civil defense system -- because it doesn't exist."

Heisler recounted his observations that Soviet physicians do not wear gloves while inserting central lines, Soviet builders do not mix concrete well or use reinforcing rods, and Soviet bureaucrats would not allow communications gear to be brought into the earthquake-stricken area for 10 days.

Since Soviet civil defense is just a pretense (and all-out nuclear war is nonsurvivable anyway), Heisler concluded that attack preparedness is just an albatross that hinders emergency managers in the performance of their real work, such as responding to earthquakes.

Heisler said that Sovietologist Leon Gouré, who spoke earlier at the same conference, is an expert on the subject. But "I disagree with him, I think -- I didn't hear what he said."

### Soviet Words and Actions

Some Soviets are on the record as agreeing with Heisler. In a televised speech, AP Aleksandrov, President of the USSR Academy of Sciences said: "Studies show that the damage resulting from a nuclear war would lead to a situation in which our planet would almost certainly become uninhabitable, mankind would die, and thus the history of mankind would come to an ignominious end." Such statements have been applauded enthusiastically by US citizen diplomats, including Dr. Bernard Lown of PSR.

To the extent that the public is aware of them, statements like Aleksandrov's could erode confidence in civil defense. But as far as the Soviet program is concerned, "it totally disregards this particular propaganda line and in no way suggests that there are any grounds for questioning or reassessing the utility or effectiveness of civil defense," according to Leon Gouré in a 1984 report on Soviet public instruction and training

programs. Actual civil defense capabilities (shelters, protective equipment, and citizen training) are continually strengthened.

According to Gouré, peacetime disasters have not caused the Soviets to reduce their investment in war-related civil defense (which places highest priority on the protection of Communist party members and essential workers, not on groups engaged in "ethnic strife"). Accidents like Chernobyl have stimulated efforts to correct shortcomings in civil defense, not calls for dismantling the program.

### Other Views on Armenia

In Gouré's view, Soviet civil defense performed fairly well in Armenia, considering the circumstances -- such as the total loss of most local civil defense organizations. Some 23,000 USSR Defense Ministry personnel, 18,000 nonmilitary civil defense personnel, and 2,500 trucks -- not made of paper -- were brought into the area (*J Civil Defense*, Apr 1989).

Many political factors hindered the relief effort in Armenia (GJ Libaridian, *Society*, Mar/Apr 1989). The earthquake was used as an opportunity to neutralize the new Armenian nationalist movement. Instead of seeking the support of the Karabagh Committee (an organizing committee of the movement) for its rescue efforts and evacuation orders, the Soviet government jailed at least six prominent committee members. Cooperation with outside rescuers was hampered by fears of security breaches near the border between the Soviet Union and NATO. (While noting the animosity between Soviets and Armenians, Heisler did not think that this accounted for inept rescue operations, because Armenians were involved in civil defense.)

Reporting on the earthquake was less than fully reliable due to Soviet secretiveness and the ignorance of most reporters concerning Soviet and Armenian societies. Western, especially US reporters, were "particularly inclined to notice and report those dimensions of the relief efforts that were inadequate and/or chaotic" (Libaridian, *ibid.*).

### Paper Also

By a process of inductive reasoning (based on observing lack of sterile technique among Soviet physicians, evidence of slovenly socialist construction among Armenian ruins, and ineptitude among Soviet bureaucrats), a socially responsible physician has apparently concluded that Soviet bunkers and blast doors, visible to all perceptive visitors to the USSR, are made out of paper.

But paper and film *also* play a vital role. Training the citizenry for survival, or for despair, death, and defeat (see p. 2) is an important part of an enormous Soviet investment.

## Fact-Free, Fact-Restricted, and Fact-Filled Education

In testifying before the Oregon State Legislature, one of the *proponents* of a "Nuclear Age" curriculum proudly described it as "fact-free." Inclusion of facts in the curriculum might mislead the students into thinking that facts are easy to find.

Actually, most curricula on nuclear weapons are merely fact-restricted. They generally include a definition of megaton, an estimate of the number of megatons that exist in world nuclear arsenals, the number of weapons tests that have occurred, the dates of significant events (e.g. the bombing of Hiroshima), and a description of the gruesome effects of nuclear weapons on unprotected persons.

Facts that are generally restricted, even from the medical school curriculum at the University of Arizona in 1989, include the definition of protection factor, an estimate of the strategic and civil defense resources in the US and USSR, the results of the weapons tests that showed the efficacy of shelters, and the principles needed for preventing burns and other injuries.

In stark contrast, the required Soviet curriculum on civil defense, which begins in grammar school, is filled with boring facts. How many centimeters of concrete, earth, or wood give a protection factor of 16? How does a person measure himself for a gas mask? What concentrations of sodium hypochlorite, ammonia, or sodium hydroxide should be used for decontaminating areas affected by chemical weapons? How will the glorious Soviet government protect its citizens against the evil capitalists?

The actual materials used in Soviet education, with an English translation, are now available on videotape. Because there are no comparable American materials, one might wish to use the Soviet ones for instructional purposes. The series of seven tapes also includes an interview with Leon Gouré, reviewing the Russian language literature on civil defense from 1950 to 1988, so that you can come to your own conclusions about whether or not the Soviet program exists only on paper.

These tapes should be in your library or school curriculum center, next to PSR productions like *If You Love This Planet*. Order *Soviet Civil Defense* from the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, PO Box 1279, Cave Junction, OR 97523, \$145. A list of individual tapes (\$29.50 each) is available on request.

## Soviet Survival Plan

General Jan Sejna, a high-level Czech defector, states that he has actually seen Soviet plans for a massive first strike against the US. Civil defense plays a decisive role in the Soviet strategy for survival as a nation after such a strike.

To aid industrial recovery, many new factories have been built in small towns since 1964. The Soviets might also plan to leave Western Europe intact, so that they could take advantage of the industrial resources.

It is estimated that the Soviets have a six-month stockpile of grain dispersed in storage sites throughout the country.

M Goodkin, *Washington Inquirer*, Aug 26, 1988

## Paper Games: Cheating at INF

If your students are bored with "Dots," "M and Ms," or "Button, Button, Who's Got the Button" from units like *Choices* (produced by the Union of Concerned Scientists and the National Education Association), they can move on to more sophisticated games published in the decision analysis literature.

The INF Treaty, which has a duration of 13 years, allows each side up to 20 short-notice inspections of certain agreed-upon sites per year in the first three years, 15 per year in the next five years, and 10 per year in the last five years.

"Inspection Game" is a recursive strategy developed under a National Science Foundation grant by Steven J. Brams of the New York University Department of Politics, and others. It addresses what Brams views as the central issues of the INF Treaty, which are two sides of the same coin. How should an evader optimally allocate cheating resources that are limited by budgetary constraints? And how should an inspector optimally allocate his limited inspections? Playing this game emphasizes the importance of the underlying assumptions, such as the possibility that both sides may suffer or benefit simultaneously. For example, "uncovering treaty violations is certainly detrimental to a particular treaty that both sides would like to keep intact." Yet "discovering these violations probably has a long-term deterrent effect that strengthens confidence in the arms-control process."

A preprint of the article "Optimal Cheating and Inspection Strategies Under INF" can be obtained from Dr. Brams, NYU, New York, NY 10003. Brams is also the author of the book *Superpower Games: Applying Game Theory to Superpower Conflict*, Yale University Press.

## X-Ray Verification

US on-site inspectors at the missile plant in Votkinsk, USSR, have been unable to determine whether or not illegal SS-20 missiles are still being produced and shipped from the plant. The Soviets have refused to permit import of an X-ray imaging scanner to look into the containers. The Soviets objected to the power level of the scanner, saying that the X-rays might cause the volatile materials in the rocket engine to explode. The next objection was that the images would be too good, giving the US more information about internal components than the treaty allowed. In order to lower the power of the scanner, Bechtel Corporation has been forced to incorporate advanced digital image enhancement technology. A former chief of Pentagon technology security, Colonel Robert Turner, stated that US software for digital imaging is what the Soviets really want (*Washington Inquirer* Feb 3, 1989).

## Is the Arms Race Slowing?

On the US side, military spending has declined to 6% of the GNP, and further decreases are expected in an amount totalling \$300 billion, or one full year's spending from the 1990-94 defense plan. Direct Soviet spending is rising to 20% of the GNP. When indirect costs (such as the KGB, hardened leadership shelters, and civil defense) are added, the total may comprise 25% of the GNP. During the Reagan Administration, the USSR out-produced the US by a margin of 4:1 to 8:1 in nearly all categories of arms (WR Van Cleave, *Global Affairs*, Spring, 1989).