

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Eisenhower's Dilemma

How to Talk about Nuclear Weapons

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For Christopher & Michael, My Brothers

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Introduction

Studying President Eisenhower's use of language raises a question best articulated by a former speechwriter of President Jimmy Carter, Hendrik Hertzberg. Speaking at the National Press Club during a September 1996 reception for presidential speechwriters, Hertzberg asked, "After, all if a politician is not the words he says, then what is he? And if someone else is writing the words then is he really there?"¹ This question articulates the complex relationship between politicians and the words they use. Meditating on this relationship, Hertzberg seems to suggest that a politician's identity becomes inseparable from the words he or she uses. So this study will consider the second question; how did Eisenhower shape his use of language?

Dwight David Eisenhower is not remembered as particularly masterful in his use of language. Instead, the public arguably remembers Eisenhower's speech the way contemporary *New York Times* columnist Arthur Krock described Eisenhower's televised press conferences. Krock characterized Eisenhower's speech as "ungrammatical," elaborating, "...numbers and genders collide, participles hang helplessly, and syntax is lost forever."² Writing later, communications scholar Richard E. Crable would agree with this unflattering assessment, concluding that Eisenhower lacked oratorical skill. Roderick P. Hart, also a scholar of communications, would further criticize Eisenhower's sometimes incoherent word choices.³ In short, Eisenhower does not lack for critics of his use of language.

¹ D'Ooge, Craig. "History's Wordsmiths: LC's New C.D. Introduced by Presidential Speechwriters." Library of Congress Public Affairs Office. 22 January 1996. 55: 1. <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9601/cd.html>

² "Eisenhower and the Media." Dwight David Eisenhower Memorial Commission. 2 Mar. 2009. <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/stories/Eisenhower-and-Media.htm>

³ Crable and Hart paraphrased in Martin J. Medhurst, Martin J. *Eisenhower's War of Words*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994. 8.

Arguably more than any other president in the twentieth century, Eisenhower assumed office in January 1953 the most inexperienced in public speaking. Prior to 1945 Eisenhower rarely if ever needed to speak publicly at length, having spent most of his professional life in the more insular environment of the military.⁴ Over about the next fifteen years however Eisenhower would rise to the highest military and political offices in the United States: from the Supreme Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in the Second World War to the Army Chief of Staff, and finally to the presidency. These offices demanded from Eisenhower considerable skill in the use of language. He would deliver innumerable speeches, many of which would discuss atomic and later nuclear weapons. Certainly no subject demanded a more careful use of language in the postwar world than nuclear weapons. Eisenhower would have to exercise the considerable sensitivity that he did in discussing atomic and later nuclear weapons with the American public.

After the Truman presidency, the task of defining the significance of nuclear weapons to the American public fell almost entirely on Eisenhower; a man whose competent use of language many questioned. Yet Eisenhower was responsible during his tenure of office for coining and popularizing two phrases; the “military-industrial complex” and the “domino principle.” Moreover, Eisenhower’s famous “Farewell Address” especially demonstrated his considerable ability to deliver a prepared speech. Considering the enduring influence of these examples of Eisenhower’s use of language, a fuller appreciation demands a reevaluation of his public rhetoric. This study will do precisely that.

⁴ Eisenhower delivered what he considered his first lengthy speech, the 6 June 1945 Guildhall Address in London, England. See Ambrose, Stephen. *Eisenhower, Vol I.: Soldier, General of the Army, President Elect, 1890-1952*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. 411-413.

An examination of Eisenhower's use of language ought to begin by considering how the social environment of Eisenhower's youth shaped his use of language. In a small town setting like Abilene, a degree of familiarity exists between the inhabitants. A nod and a word will suffice in place of a conversation. This familiarity results in a coded silence of mutual understanding between the inhabitants. Moreover, there was little opportunity during Eisenhower's education to practice public speaking. Eisenhower's elementary school in Abilene emphasized "rote learning. 'The darkness of the classrooms on a winter day and the monotonous hum of recitations,' Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs, '...are my sole surviving memories.'"⁵In high school, Eisenhower thrived in English, history, and geometry, but he did not participate in any school plays, debate, or other form of public speaking.

Absent formal instruction, Eisenhower nonetheless seems to have developed an early style of debate. As Joe Howe, the editor of a weekly Abilene paper whose offices young Ike frequented, recalled, "He had an ability to absorb facts and he had a logical mind; during debates, he would listen awhile, then jump in with an obscure fact that contradicted his opponent, or ask a series of rapid-fire controversial questions that would lead his opponent to contradict himself."⁶ Eisenhower would answer a question by asking a question. This strategy enabled Eisenhower to control the conversation by framing the debate through questions. Eisenhower would commit his opponent to a fixed position while he would maneuver the adversary towards contradiction. The young Eisenhower would barrage his opponent with questions in rapid succession, overwhelming his adversaries' willingness to discriminate in their word choice, and blinding

⁵ Ambrose Vol. I. 31.

⁶ Ambrose Vol. I. 37.

them to the contradiction intended to discredit them. Naturally, the inclination to oppose would quickly confuse and trap Eisenhower's opponent in a contradiction, as he would adopt Ike's original position. Through this style of persuasion, Eisenhower sought to discredit his opponents by trapping them in a contradiction by badgering them with questions.

As Joe Howe further reveals, the famous Eisenhower smile constituted a valuable persuasive device, one that Ike began cultivating from an early age. If Eisenhower "was being cornered he would come forth with some witticism and put on his best smile...I think his grin saved Ike a lot of trouble."⁷ Unlike other politicians of his day, Eisenhower became identified with a single facial gesture: his smile. It allowed him to evade recriminations through a visual display of harmonious cheer, an infectious sentiment that gave the impression of agreement and dissipated animus. Arguably, Eisenhower's smile even formed the cornerstone of his presidential campaign, as the tremendous personal appeal that derived from his smile led supporters to embrace the slogan "I Like Ike." Certainly contemporary *Los Angeles Times* reporter Holmes Alexander attributed Eisenhower's election success in part to his smile when in a 27 March 1953 column he ventured that "Nobody surely has forgotten the famous Eisenhower grin which did so much to make him a candidate and a winner [...] It was impossible to see that ear-to-ear spread without knowing that here was a man who liked people in a howdy-brother way that simply couldn't be faked."⁸ Even Eisenhower seemed to acknowledge the important role smiling played in his political campaign, when he counseled fellow Republican candidates, "Get out there.

⁷ Ambrose Vol. I. 37.

⁸ Alexander, Holmes. "The Smiles of Ike." *Los Angeles Times*. 27 March 1953. A5. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 29 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=2&did=426311391&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&ROT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238359770&clientId=17822>

Don't look so serious. Smile!"⁹ Eisenhower advised these candidates to smile because he personally found the gesture contributed to his success as a politician. His smile projected not only confidence but also reassured the public of his personal sincerity. He cultivated this persuasive device without instruction in his hometown of Abilene.

Nor would the army offer Eisenhower formal instruction in public persuasion. At West Point, Eisenhower studied engineering, science, Spanish, law, mathematics, French, English, history, and drawing.¹⁰ Before the introduction of news media to radio, or a persistent threat of invasion, the army did not need public speakers. West Point did not educate recruits to question the information presented, only to provide solutions given certain set of facts. The English classes at West Point failed to instruct Eisenhower in modes of persuasion. "The chief requirement of a good essay at West Point was a logical presentation of fact."¹¹ The substance of the education offered by West Point assumed the credibility of the speaker and rendered criticism unthinkable, which certainly made it difficult to empathize with those holding opposing views. The West Point essay did not appeal to emotion or consider maintaining the interest of the audience. Instead the ability to frame the facts of discussion became the means of persuasion. Coupled with the skills acquired in his youth, the education Eisenhower received at West Point only taught him how to promote his own view or discredit opposing views, not the more subtle art of converting his opponents to his point of view.

⁹ Greenstein, Fred I. *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Clinton*. New York: Martin Kessler Books/Free Press, 2000. 50.

¹⁰ Verticle File, DDE-West Point (1911-1915). I should like to note that drawing particularly, which the military required so that officers could reconnoiter enemy positions, would remain a favorite pastime of Eisenhower's as he frequently sketched or doodled in the margins of pages.

¹¹ Ambrose, Stephen E. *Eisenhower, Vol. I.: Soldier, General of the Army, President-elect, 1890-1969*. 47.

The only practice in public speaking Eisenhower got during his time at West Point came after receiving a football career ending injury he became a cheerleader. This “gave him his first experience as a public speaker-he would address the entire Corps of Cadets the night before a big game, exhorting the members to make an all-out effort as fans the next afternoon.”¹² While such moments gave Eisenhower a certain experience in public speaking, it scarcely educated him how to persuade, nor respond to criticism, answer questions, or arguably even articulate. Cheerleading did not require using an extensive vocabulary to convey a complex set of ideas; instead it encouraged the monosyllabic speaking of Eisenhower’s youth. When cheerleading, Eisenhower did not have to confront a hostile audience and convince them of his viewpoint; he merely led a group that already shared a common conviction. Thus the suggestion that cheerleading significantly contributed to Eisenhower’s rhetorical abilities would constitute a gross exaggeration and possibly even misrepresentation of his experience.

After West Point, Eisenhower’s years in the army presented him with little if any opportunity to engage in public speaking. But they did impart him with an informal style of persuasion cultivated by staff work.¹³ What exposure to the press Eisenhower received came from his 1929 stint as a staff officer in Washington, D.C., where his brother Milton held an important public relations post in the Department of Agriculture. Eisenhower became acquainted, though how well is debatable, with members of the national press who came to know him as “Milton’s brother.”¹⁴

¹² Ambrose Vol. I. 50.

¹³ Allen, Craig. *Eisenhower and the Mass Media: Peace, Prosperity & Prime-time*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993. 6.

¹⁴ Allen 11,12.

Despite these social encounters with the press, not until the 1941 Louisiana Maneuvers on the eve of the Second World War did Eisenhower, then Chief of Staff of General Walter Krueger's Third Army, have any professional interactions with the press. According to Stephen Ambrose, reporters noticed Eisenhower's "frankness" and "honesty."¹⁵

The honesty was a special surprise to the cynical reporters, accustomed to writing about public figures who inflated their own importance while covering up any shortcomings in their organizations [...] he told them frankly about what was going wrong, and made it possible for them to see the problems with their own eyes. He made it possible for them to make the country aware of what was needed.¹⁶

Yet it remains important to acknowledge the limitations of Eisenhower's interactions with the press during the maneuvers. Eisenhower particularly notes that a newspaper caption identified him as "Lt. Col. D.D. Ersenbeing."¹⁷ This typo reveals that Eisenhower still had not made enough of an impression upon the reporters for them to correctly identify him in a photograph, while they correctly identified the other officers pictured. The role Eisenhower assumed with the press during the Louisiana Maneuvers resembled cheerleading. In what would become a familiar pattern, he actively framed the need for greater military preparedness and mobilization. Whether Eisenhower intended to or not, he effectively co-opted the press during the maneuvers. Eisenhower's frank and honest response to questions allowed him to establish his credibility with the journalists. However the responses the journalists solicited masked the fact that Eisenhower, as yet, had no motivation to lie. The Louisiana Maneuvers largely comprised a public

¹⁵ Ambrose Vol. I. 129.

¹⁶ Ambrose Vol. I. 129.

¹⁷ Eisenhower, Dwight David. *Crusade in Europe*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1977. 12.

demonstration of the woeful state of American preparedness for war, thus his willingness to bad mouth the army. Moreover, Eisenhower had nothing to hide as he successfully executed his duty during the maneuvers.

The reporters' impressions of Eisenhower as a candid spokesman persisted into his wartime press conferences. According to his wartime naval aide and public relations officer Harry C. Butcher, General Eisenhower insisted when revising the censorship rules after arriving in London in July 1942 that "he wanted to work with the newspaper and radio men on a basis of complete frankness and trust. He said he had been double-crossed by only one newspaperman in his life, yet had dealt with the press for many years."¹⁸ Eisenhower wanted to expedite censorship because he knew it would instantly give him good press and would win him friends among reporters. When Eisenhower arrived, reporters had little American involvement to write about. Eisenhower recognized that he needed all the press he could get to ensure his theater continued to attract the attention of the American public and the material support in guns, tanks, planes, ships, and troops of the United States government. He had dealt with the press for many years, but mostly in a social capacity. Fortunately he had closely observed his brother Milton.¹⁹ A peacetime vice president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Butcher affirmed Eisenhower's competence in public relations. "After watching Ike deal with the press, I don't think he needs a public relations advisor. He is tops."²⁰ Again, Eisenhower exercised a role similar to that of a cheerleader, when during his first press conference, he told the reporters that "he considered them 'quasi members of my staff,' part of the 'team,' a thought that delighted the

¹⁸ Butcher, Captain Harry C. *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower, 1942-1945*. 20. Also see Allen 13.

¹⁹ Allen 11, 12.

²⁰ Butcher 20.

reporters no end.”²¹ When Eisenhower described the press as “quasi members of my staff,” he solicited the reporters’ cooperation. The enthusiastic response of the reporters suggests the collaborative role the press would play throughout the European theater. Eisenhower actively co-opted the press into his war effort.

The quaint notion of being on the same “team,” coupled with later accounts of Eisenhower’s surprise at the extent of press criticism surrounding the Darlan Deal demonstrates Ike’s lingering naiveté as to the extent of his personal persuasive ability. The Darlan Deal, arranged from September to November 1942, solicited the cooperation of Vichy French Admiral Jean Darlan in the allied landings in North Africa known as Operation Torch. The press excoriated Eisenhower for negotiating with a Vichy official, who was billed in allied propaganda as a Nazi sympathizer. The intensity of their criticism “took Eisenhower by surprise; his usual sense of public relations had deserted him. He was hurt by it, not so much at the criticism of the deal itself, [...], but by the intensity of the criticism and, even more, at the charge that he was a simpleminded general.”²² Clearly Eisenhower misjudged his own persuasive abilities, as evidenced by his surprise at the intensity of criticism. Yet the journalists’ failure to revise their persistent perception of Eisenhower as “simpleminded,” “frank,” and “honest” demonstrates his immense personal appeal. The journalists’ inability to view Ike as a politician created an image of Eisenhower as incapable of guile. This would prove a tremendous asset in the postwar period.

Despite the limited opportunities to practice public speaking, Eisenhower could use language effectively to convey his thoughts. Eisenhower wrote incisively both in private and

²¹ Ambrose Vol. I. 176.

²² Ambrose 206.

public. As an anonymous 8 January 1949 review of Eisenhower's 1948 wartime memoir *Crusade in Europe* in the *Times Literary Supplement* ventures:

[T]here was aroused an expectation of particularly high quality in the book which, it must be confessed, has not been completely fulfilled. Great soldiers seldom write great books, though they may produce instructive and interesting ones. General Eisenhower does hold our interest throughout a very long book, but he does not raise it as high as would have been the case had he been a skilfull writer with an individual and attractive style [...] If his narrative does not make the most of this remarkable material, it is none the less always clear and readable.²³

While this review comments on the limitations of Eisenhower's style and skill as a writer, it does concede that Eisenhower presents the information in a "clear and readable" manner. The dashed expectation of high quality suggests the public anticipation Eisenhower's memoir elicited. Yet the review also provides clues into Eisenhower's persuasive ability. The author's contention that, "It may be that Mr. Churchill thought too much in political terms, but if so General Eisenhower probably thought too little," directly echoes Eisenhower's claims that military considerations overshadowed political concerns. Eisenhower thereby persuaded his audience of his political naivety; an image that directly conflicts with his later admission to Merriman Smith that he had spent his entire adult life in politics as "there's no more active political organization in the world than the armed services of the U.S. [...] As a matter of fact I think I am a better politician than most so called politicians."²⁴ The considerable political success Eisenhower experienced over his

²³ "Supreme Commander." *Times Literary Supplement*. 8 January 1949.

²⁴ Ambrose Vol. I. 96.

life time then emerges at least in part from the his ability to convince veteran journalists like Merriman Smith that he was not a politician.

Eisenhower's ascent to the highest levels of military and political office from the mid 1940s into the 1950s coincided with the growing American nuclear arsenal and uniquely situated him to discuss these arms. On 6 and 9 August 1945, President Truman became the first world leader to use atomic bombs, ending the Second World War. The Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb and American involvement in Korea compelled Truman to continue to speak about atomic weapons throughout his presidency. Eisenhower also held convictions about the nature of atomic weapons; opinions he voiced during the Korean War and Truman presidency. Unlike Truman, Eisenhower never had to use the atomic bomb. Yet the American nuclear arsenal never reached the proportions during the Truman administration it would under Eisenhower. While the American nuclear arsenal under Truman never exceeded a few dozen bombs, Eisenhower presided over an unprecedented expansion of the American nuclear arsenal to the point where it numbered in the hundreds if not thousands. When Truman spoke about the use of atomic weapons relatively few weapons existed, making atomic war not only conceivable but survivable. During Eisenhower's presidency this reality evaporated. The prospect of atomic war became nothing short of complete annihilation, not of a nation but of the entire human race. Neither Truman before him nor Kennedy after had to communicate this altered reality to the American public the way Eisenhower did.

Chapter 1: The General, 1945-1953

When Dwight David Eisenhower received word of the August 6 atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the mushroom cloud rising thousands of miles away preceded a rain of confetti and tickertape on the American public. Yet when recalling this event in his 1948 wartime memoir *Crusade in Europe*, Eisenhower's thoughts focused not on the recent victory but the future of conflict. "In an instant many of the old concepts of war were swept away. Henceforth, it would seem, the purpose of an aggressor nation would be to stock atom bombs in quantity and to employ them by surprise against [...] its intended victim."²⁵ Writing in 1948, Eisenhower enjoyed the benefit of hindsight that allowed him to construct this seemingly prophetic insight into the implications of atomic weapons in world affairs. Eisenhower in speaking of "an aggressor nation," presumably alludes to the Soviet Union stockpiling atomic bombs to use in a surprise attack against their "intended victim" the United States.

This discourse relied on certain common assumptions, like the presumption of American innocence underlying the above *Crusade in Europe* extract. In the passage Eisenhower exonerates the United States of any claim to aggressive malice by depicting it as the victim, thereby presuming national innocence. The use of the word "henceforth" preserves the image of American innocence by exempting and maybe even implicitly justifying the wartime bombing of Hiroshima by assuming the legitimacy of wartime exigency.

Even while Eisenhower used coded allusions to the Soviet Union as a persuasive device, he remained purposefully vague. Yes, the public might have understood the Soviet Union as synonymous with aggression, but the unnamed aggressor instead provoked alarm. The

²⁵ *Crusade in Europe* 456.

ambiguities of Eisenhower's rhetoric surrounding atomic weapons contributed to the creation of a crisis culture, which ultimately led to the proliferation of a multiplicity of fears. The Soviet atomic test would codify and escalate these fears, thereby contributing to the evolution of the arms race.

Upon returning in November 1945 to the United States from his position as head of the United States Occupation Zone, General Eisenhower assumed the post of the Army Chief of Staff. In this capacity, Eisenhower remained better informed on the development of atomic weapons than many of his contemporaries. As David Allen Rosenberg notes, "From the fall of 1945 to the spring of 1947, President Truman was not officially advised of the size of the American nuclear arsenal, although General Dwight Eisenhower, who [...] received reports from Manhattan District head General Leslie Groves, apparently briefed him informally in September 1946."²⁶ So Eisenhower presumably knew the extent of the American atomic arsenal, and had maybe begun contemplating what effect the bomb would have on warfare. Furthermore, Eisenhower actually briefed Truman demonstrating at least a basic understanding of atomic weapons, if not indicating a central role in the formulation of policy surrounding atomic weapons.

The Atomic Peace

The initial elation produced by the detonation of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that culminated in V-J Day faded as the dawn of the atomic age triggered deep seated anxiety, first in the military establishment and much later in the general population. The prospect that the degree of security assured by the two-ocean barrier might soon evaporate demonstrates the inherent contradictions of the post-war peace. The citizens of the United States, like Miranda

²⁶ Rosenberg 11.

in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, emerged from the isolation of the island to find a brave new world. This new world seemed at once more at peace with itself, and yet more insecure than ever with former allies armed to the teeth.

Public relations took center stage as discussion of the effects of atomic weapons on the military commenced in Congress. Eisenhower anticipated in a 17 December 1945 memo to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that from the increased public discourse surrounding atomic weapons “[t]he military services are certain to be called upon to discuss and justify their plans and programs for both the near future and distant future with specific relationship to atomic energy.”²⁷ Faced with the imminent prospect of public discussion of atomic weapons, Eisenhower almost immediately sought to coordinate the public position of the military surrounding atomic weapons. Eisenhower consciously sought to present a unified message addressing the major concerns of multiple audiences, especially the United States Congress and the international community.

The opportunity presented by coordination also provided Eisenhower with the opportunity to frame the “future basic conditions” or “possibilities” that would shape the discussion of atomic weapons. The conditions Eisenhower outlined included three possibilities: “the outlawry of the use of atomic energy for military purposes”; “a system of regulation by the United Nations”; and “an out and out atomic armament race.”²⁸ The first two possibilities presume the existence of a regime of international control, demonstrating that Eisenhower sought to reserve a role for the military in shaping the requirements of international agreements governing atomic weapons. The specter of an atomic armament race represented a seemingly

²⁷ PDDE VII: 640.

²⁸ PDDE VII: 640.

obvious second alternative that functioned as the military *modus operandi*. Yet Eisenhower's conditions omitted a third alternative outcome present in public discourse: war.

The resulting 16 January 1946 memorandum by Eisenhower on the report entitled "Statement of Effect of Atomic Weapons on National Security and Military Organization" provides insight into how the Army Chief of Staff shaped the discourse over atomic weapons in national security.²⁹ Eisenhower recommends that the authors consult a draft statement by Manhattan District commander Leslie Groves on the atomic bomb which he attached to the memo. Clearly Groves influenced how Eisenhower thought about atomic weapons through these early interactions.

The most important criticism that Eisenhower offers of the report suggests that "the statement seems to take a negative or defensive approach in its analysis of the implications of the atomic bomb and might better present an affirmative analysis of these implications and of lines of development which could profitably be followed to improve our armed forces."³⁰ Above all else, the military should avoid the appearance of "reactionism."³¹ Eisenhower counseled against criticizing or reacting to the sometimes radical public discourse on the effects the atomic bomb would have on military organization. Rather than alienating the public, Eisenhower counseled that the discourse by the armed forces should set the agenda for policy. The counsel Eisenhower offered the armed forces on communicating their vision represented an extension of the rhetorical structure that governed his public discourse. Eisenhower frequently employed "affirmative" strategies, translating the subject of conversation into the means of accomplishing

²⁹ PDDE VII: 760.

³⁰ PDDE VII: 760.

³¹ *Ibid.*

his rhetorical objective. The legitimizing of a “National Guard” by Eisenhower’s extolling the valuable service it would render in the event of an atomic attack against the United States constitutes an exemplary demonstration of this rhetorical pattern.³²

Preventive War

The attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki altered the initial impulse, articulated by Eisenhower, to clothe the atomic bomb in a veil of secrecy in order to preserve an American atomic monopoly. Instead, the revelation of the feasibility of the atomic bomb and the possibility of proliferation generated talk of preventive war to preserve this “wasting asset.”³³ The wartime commander of the Manhattan Project, Leslie Groves, better conveyed than anyone else the newfound exigency of preventive war in a memo dated 21 January 1946:

If we were ruthlessly realistic we would not permit any foreign power with which we are not firmly allied, and in which we do not have absolute confidence, to make or possess atomic weapons. If such a country started to make atomic weapons we would destroy its capacity to make them before it had progressed far enough to threaten us.³⁴

As Marc Trachtenberg reveals, Eisenhower held the memo in which Groves expressed this opinion in high regard. Eisenhower refers to parts of the memo as extreme,³⁵ but fails to specify what precisely he finds objectionable. Although Louis Galambos probably correctly interprets this to refer to the above statement, it does not definitively resolve whether Eisenhower would

³² First mentioned in Eisenhower, Dwight D. “U.S. Conference of Mayors, Washington, D.C.” 20 January 1947. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19470120%20US%20Conference%20of%20Mayors%20Washingon%20DC.htm>

³³ Marc Trachtenberg 6.

³⁴ Trachtenberg 5. Also, Louis Galambos asserts Groves presented Eisenhower with this view at an earlier date. See PDDE VII: 641-642, n. 7.

³⁵ PDDE VII: 760, n. 5, 6.

have advocated for a preventive strike. Eisenhower naturally expressed reservations because, as Groves' concedes, this is a "ruthlessly realistic" appraisal. Even given the greater candor the highly classified and private status the memo allows, endorsing such an incendiary idea would have severely arrested Eisenhower's policy agenda by fueling controversy within the War Department and government. Groves' brutal, even callous, candor had no place in public discourse. Or did it?

General Groves' position within the military afforded him a considerably greater degree of rhetorical freedom than Eisenhower had ever enjoyed as a general. As Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and Army Chief of Staff, Eisenhower did not enjoy the absolute authority of a command. Instead, Eisenhower exercised a negotiated leadership as a "first among equals," presiding over groups of general officers. In truth, Groves' brutally honest statement exceeded the limitations of political correctness.

Eisenhower recognized that the American public found the notion of preventive war objectionable. This acknowledgement emerges in a 25 June 1946 response to a 17 June 1946 letter by celebrated newspaper columnist Dorothy Thompson. Thompson, a widely syndicated journalist who wrote a column in the *New York Post* covering largely foreign relations, acquired a degree of influence and distinction surpassing contemporary reporters.³⁶ In his highly critical reply, Eisenhower expressed what he perceived as a considerable lack of public support for a policy of preventive war, suggesting:

Further, it seems to me you have not given [...] sufficient weight to public opinion in this country [...] Here, I submit, you are going against the very roots of American sentiment.

³⁶ Gordon, Lynn D. "Thompson, Dorothy Celine." *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. 29 March 2009 <http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-01628.html>;

I can not believe that anyone, no matter what his standing, his popularity or his persuasiveness could develop among our people a sufficiently lively fear to lead them into the adoption of such a policy. To do it by an appeal to logic, no matter how unimpeachable the argument, would be miraculous. I believe that in this regard national sentiment would be an unyielding factor.³⁷

Eisenhower's allusion to an "American sentiment" here reflects his conviction that Americans, "our people," would not resort to war without provocation. Margaret Mead's *Keep Your Powder Dry* popularized this notion of a "chip on the shoulder" that served as a source of provocation for initiating war. Presumably Eisenhower shared this conviction when he argued against Thompson's central thesis that the United States should embark on a preventive war. No appeal to logic, Eisenhower contended, would convince the American public to adopt such a policy. But logic represented only one means of persuasion. Fear comprised another means of persuasion. But Eisenhower could not believe that enough fear could exist to drive the American public to preventive war.

But while neither Eisenhower nor any other individual possessed the stature to initiate the kind of appeal for a preventive war, Dorothy Thompson and the American press did possess the ability to frame public debate. Yet Eisenhower dismissed Thompson's assertion that her "job is to help convince the population," instead suggesting, "The very repugnance with which you have accepted your own conclusions is only feeble indication of the resistance you would encounter in others."³⁸ In his letter, Eisenhower issues the non-committal promise to Thompson that he would,

³⁷ PDDE VII: 1149-1150 Eisenhower in Chernus, 127.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

“continue to consider the idea that you present.”³⁹ This did not amount to an idle promise, as he would continue in the years ahead to contemplate preventive war on occasion.⁴⁰ But Eisenhower’s hesitation demonstrates that he preferred alternative outcomes over that presented by a preventive war approach, including the prospect of preserving an American atomic monopoly through international control.

Thompson deferred to Eisenhower’s expertise out of respect for the General. She wrote an article for the June 1946 edition of *Ladies’ Home Journal*, entitled “The ‘One World Delusion.’”⁴¹ Her central thesis in this article argues that “Force, as an instrument of politics, is not desirably.”⁴² Thompson’s views therefore aligned with those of Eisenhower on the matter of preventive war. Whether Thompson had sought Eisenhower’s input for this article remains unclear. Regardless, Thompson presumably had solicited Eisenhower’s opinion because she respected his opinion. It seems exceedingly unlikely that Thompson, a scrupulous reporter, would have written to Eisenhower hoping to deceive the General into making a belligerent statement. Instead, she wrote in confidence seeking his honest opinion. Her expressed willingness to accede to the General’s opinion demonstrates Eisenhower’s considerable influence over Thompson. This correspondence then reveals the high esteem reporters like Thompson had for Eisenhower.

International Control

A resort to force did not constitute the only viable avenue of preserving an American atomic monopoly for long. The concept of international control of atomic weapons quickly

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Trachtenberg alludes to several instances. See “A Wasting Asset”

⁴¹ Thompson, Dorothy. “The ‘One World Delusion.’” *Ladies’ Home Journal*. Vol. 63. (June) 6, 109, 110.

⁴² Ibid 9.

emerged as a result of the Acheson-Lilienthal Plan, initially raising concerns in the military. Eisenhower solicited Groves' aforementioned views in anticipation of increased Congressional discussion of the role of atomic weapons. Groves, a hardliner and vehement anticommunist, included in his assessment the stipulations that would govern the discussion and formulation of a proposed agreement for international control of atomic weapons.⁴³ As historian Barton J. Bernstein argues, "Groves [...] did not want international control; Groves desired American control."⁴⁴ This assertion follows logically after considering Groves' "ruthlessly realistic" appraisal endorsing nuclear non-proliferation through preventive war. Eisenhower's at least partial endorsement of Groves' views strongly suggests that he too favored continuing American control of atomic weapons.

Groves and Eisenhower exerted considerable influence on the recently appointed American representative to the U.N. Commission on Atomic energy, Bernard Baruch. Baruch, a wealthy financier and "political kingmaker,"⁴⁵ worked closely with the Manhattan project commander after Eisenhower assigned Groves as a technical advisor to Baruch.⁴⁶ Still later, in April 1946, Baruch met with military leaders, including Eisenhower and Groves to discuss the international control of atomic weapons. As historian Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. notes "Baruch agreed with the military that no steps should be taken that would threaten U.S. security," which meant, "that the United States should not stop producing atomic weapons until an accord had been reached."⁴⁷

⁴³ PDDE VII: 760.

⁴⁴ Bernstein 914.

⁴⁵ Schwarz, Jordan A. "Baruch, Bernard Mannes." American National Biography Online. Feb. 2000. 29 March 2009 <http://www.anb.org/articles/10/10-00106.html>

⁴⁶ PDDE VII: 636, n. 7.

⁴⁷ PDDE VII: 1078, n. 1.

Later in a 14 June 1946 letter responding to Bernard Baruch, Eisenhower expressed his views on the content of the proposed international control regime for atomic energy.⁴⁸ While outlining his general agreement, Eisenhower counseled that the agreement require “the U.S. does not recede from its position of advantage faster than realistic and practical reciprocal concessions are made by other powerful nations. We must not further unbalance against us world power relationships.”⁴⁹ The fundamental concern expressed here by Eisenhower cautions against upsetting the strategic advantage enjoyed by the United States in the immediate post-war world, thereby undermining the American capacity to extract concessions through a strong negotiating position. Moreover, this statement postulates the existence of a balance in world power relationships comparable to that cited by Mark Trachtenberg in “A ‘Wasting Asset,’”⁵⁰ confirming that Eisenhower understood the balance of power would shift in the direction of the Soviet Union as the United States pursued disarmament unless the Americans extracted concessions.

Enforcement also represented another necessary condition preceding international control. The threat posed by foreign aggression alarmed Eisenhower, who promoted the inclusion of a force armed with atomic weapons to deter aggression, prevent violations of the agreement, and ensure the compliance of all parties through retaliation. Until an inviolable agreement emerged, Eisenhower argued that the United States must retain the atomic bomb which, “in our hands is a deterrent [...] to aggression in the world. We cannot at this time limit our capability to produce or use this weapon.”⁵¹ Deterrence here does not retain the implied limitations later ascribed to it,

⁴⁸ This included atomic weapons.

⁴⁹ PDDE VII: 1125.

⁵⁰ Trachtenberg 6.

⁵¹ PDDE VII: 1127.

but rather simply consists of the ability and willingness to deploy the atomic bomb against an adversary. So, international control of atomic energy relied upon the continued existence of the bomb, along with the willingness to deploy it against non-compliant parties and aggressors. An international agreement, like that sought by Eisenhower, then did not eliminate the potential use of atomic weapons but merely discourage aggressive war.

International control represented for Eisenhower the most attractive solution to the dilemma posed by atomic weapons. Eisenhower revealingly contends that “I completely agree with you that *only* through effective international control of atomic energy can we hope to prevent atomic war.”⁵² This follows logically within the context of Eisenhower’s prioritized vision of atomic weapons. International control, as envisioned by Eisenhower and Baruch, represented the most preferable outcome as it avoided the prospect of atomic war. The proposed agreement that became the Baruch Plan guaranteed American security through a continued monopoly on atomic weapons. This proposal contrasted vividly with the alternative option of pursuing national security through preventive war or an arms race which both eventually threatened to escalate into atomic war. This illuminates why Eisenhower similarly asserted that “[w]e *must* move...toward international control of atomic energy *if* we are to avoid an atomic war.”⁵³

Even before the introduction of the Baruch Plan, Eisenhower in anticipation of the proposal endorsed the concept of international control for atomic weapons in his public rhetoric. International control signified ultimate victory and peace in Eisenhower’s early Cold War discourse. International control of atomic energy operated within a system of meanings that

⁵² PDDE VII: 1125. Italics mine, to emphasis the formal nature of Eisenhower’s logic here.

⁵³ PDDE VII: 1127. Again italics mine to show formal logic.

logically build upon certain assumptions. Eisenhower identified aggression as an act of war. International control of atomic weapons would eliminate aggression, thereby ensuring peace and finally constitute a decisive victory. The international control of atomic weapons therefore became a means of successfully waging Cold War, and winning.⁵⁴

The Middle Way

Aside from preventive war and international control, another alternative, a “middle way” remained. In the years ahead, the idea of a “middle way” or “middle of the road” came to dominate Eisenhower’s public governing philosophy. The “middle of the road” in the case of atomic weapons development endorsed the continued development of atomic armaments. Whereas preventive war and international control represented rather radical alternatives, this position did not depart markedly from the status quo, as the United States had and would continue the construction of additional atomic weapons.

The first incidence of the “middle way” to appear in Eisenhower’s postwar rhetoric appears in his 14 November 1946 remarks to the Advisory Council to Women’s Interest Unit in Washington, D.C. In this address, Eisenhower observes that “The man hysterically fearful either runs and a Munich results, or in his stupid belief that he can bluff the other fellow, he goes too far the other way. The strong man can go down the middle of the road. Someone once said the man who is sure of his footing doesn’t have to mount a horse.”⁵⁵ Eisenhower particularly

⁵⁴ See Chernus, Ira. *General Eisenhower: Ideology and Discourse*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002.

⁵⁵ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Remarks to Advisory Council to Women’s Interest Unit, Washington, D.C.” 14 November 1946. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19461114%20Remarks%20to%20Advisory%20Council%20to%20Womens%20Interest%20Unit.htm>

emphasizes the need for American strength by putting the military on a sure footing. The metaphor Eisenhower uses suggests that the preparation that would put the United States on a sure footing would obviate the need for drastic measures to fulfill the herculean task of mounting a horse. The metaphor operates rather effectively as an argument for developing the armed forces.

The aforementioned 25 June 1946 letter to Dorothy Thompson anticipates Eisenhower's public endorsement of creating more atomic weapons. Eisenhower suggests the desirability building additional atomic bombs, when he states:

Incidentally, you will be interested in the following quotation from another letter I have just read from a scientific friend: 'Bigger and better atomic bombs should be built and their use recognized as legitimate. I believe that if all the major nations had an adequate number of them, we would never see another war. I think that the very fearsomeness of the atomic bomb should be a real insurance to the peace of the world.'⁵⁶

Eisenhower's rejection of Thompson's suggestions demonstrates that he considers the manufacture of more atomic weapons both necessary to wage and preferable to the use of the bomb in a preventive war. Furthermore, this statement endorses the legitimacy of using of atomic weapons, a not unthinkable position at this point in the Cold War when atomic bombs would cause immense damage but not the annihilation of the human race. Even in this statement, Eisenhower does not use his own words when he can launder his ideas by attributing them to another's voice. This strategy does not represent a lack of confidence in his ideas, but his desire not to commit to a particular position. Eisenhower neither wanted to undermine or make administration policy, nor limit American freedom of action regarding atomic weapons.

⁵⁶ PDDE VII: 1150. Also, Ira Chernus omits a significant part of the unidentified scientist's statement, reading "I believe that if all major nations...never see another war."

Moreover, Eisenhower believed that this position possessed substantial moral authority, deriving from the Gospel of Luke. Eisenhower, raised a devout Christian by his pacifist mother in first the Mennonite River Brethren and later Watchtower Jehovah's Witness movement, used this passage in the 1950s to legitimize the atomic "middle road" that became the arms race. Specifically Eisenhower frequently cited the passage, "When a strong man, armed, keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace."⁵⁷ This biblical reference to the plausible use of force to deter violence formed the basis of Eisenhower's moral philosophy legitimizing the arms race.

Proliferation of Fear

The rhetoric Eisenhower employed in the post-war period sought to restrain the public impulse towards disarmament by fostering popular anxiety. Fear represented the means, not the ends, of generating public support for a sustained effort in the pursuit of national security. Importantly, Eisenhower associated fear with peace, and universal fear with universal peace, as he succinctly articulated in his 1948 memoir *Crusade in Europe*.

With the evidence of the most destructive war yet waged by the people of the earth about me, I gained increased hope that this development of what appeared to be the ultimate destruction would drive men, in self-preservation, to find a way of eliminating war.

⁵⁷ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Nassau County Bar Association." 10 June 1950. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19500610%20Nassau%20County%20Bar%20Association.html> ; Also see Eisenhower "Talk to French Statesmen at SHAPE Briefing." 19 November 1951. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19511119%20Talk%20to%20French%20Statesmen%20at%20SHAPE%20Briefing.htm>

Maybe it was only wishful thinking to believe that fear, universal fear, might possibly succeed where statesmanship and religion had not yet won success.⁵⁸

This passage captures a number of conclusions Eisenhower ascribes to the introduction of atomic weapons into national arsenals. Eisenhower postulates that atomic weapons constitute “the ultimate destruction” and will spread fear, culminating in the elimination of war. The word “maybe” represents a rhetorical device that feigns a false sense of reservation or doubt that advances the argument by styling Eisenhower’s conclusion as reasonable. Additionally, while optimism pervades this passage, Eisenhower notably vests his hopes in fear as a means of eliminating war. Yet Eisenhower’s conclusions fail to acknowledge that fear might not produce but instead indicate peace. The message therefore intends to equate the emotive desires for peace with fear, by demonstrating that insufficient fear jeopardizes the peace.

Eisenhower’s remarks sought to translate the fear his comments evoked into real security. To do this, Eisenhower attributed insecurity to the atomic bomb. Particularly, hysterical insecurity demonstrated the need to bolster American security by stockpiling more conventional weapons during the transition from a World War II army toward a nuclear force. Addressing a gathering of the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association in New York City on 25 April 1946, Eisenhower publicly remarked on this hysterical insecurity:

The security establishment of our democracy [...] must not be a belligerent and noisy horde, screaming threats of atomic destruction, disrupting world harmony. It must

⁵⁸ Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Crusade in Europe*. 456.

attempt to build the country into a warehouse or stockpile for war. Belligerence is the hallmark of insecurity-the secure nation does not need threat to maintain its position.⁵⁹

The logic of Eisenhower's argument equates belligerence with issuing threats of atomic destruction, which he claims originates from a sense of insecurity. For Eisenhower in this early period of the Cold War, the atomic bomb did not represent a panacea for American national security. In fact, the atomic bomb threatened to "disrupt world harmony." Following the affirmative pattern of discourse outline in 16 January 1946 memo, Eisenhower presents conventional forces as the solution to public insecurity. Stockpiling conventional force would ensure future security in the event of a future Soviet attack. Failure to pursue the solution outlined by Eisenhower would result in still greater American reliance on belligerent threats of atomic force that would eventually increase public insecurity, thereby building greater support for the solution framed by Eisenhower. Thus Eisenhower attributed disproportionate reliance on atomic weapons as the origins of American insecurity.

The excessive atomic bomb actually made the United States less secure, not more. Eisenhower later introduced this paradox when referring to atomic weapons by euphemism in a speech, directed at a civic reception for the St. Louis, Missouri Chamber of Commerce on 24 February 1947, when he observed:

Our scientists already have astounded the world by their mastery of the universe's hidden power [atomic weapons]. However, I decry loose and sometimes gloating talk about the degree of security implicit in a weapon that might destroy millions overnight...[sic] No

⁵⁹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Bureau of Advertising, American Newspaper Publishers Association." 25 April 1946. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19460425%20Bureau%20of%20Advertising%20American%20Newspaper%20Publishers%20Association.htm>

modern nation has ever equaled, prior to the outbreak of war, the crushing offensive power attained by the German war machine in 1939. No modern nation has been broken and smashed as was Germany six years later.⁶⁰

This comment sought to dispel Eisenhower's audience of the illusion that the atomic bomb afforded the United States a greater degree of security. Importantly, Eisenhower sought to silence the "gloating talk" prevalent in public discourse and replace it with a pervasive fear. So Eisenhower regularly alluded to ambiguous threats to national security as a means of evoking unspecified fears that might require a variety of military responses.

The advent of the Soviet atomic bomb introduced Americans to newfound insecurity. As Eisenhower would later describe this state of anxiety in a 24 October 1949 speech, "our affairs seem framed in an unending series of crises."⁶¹ How then did Eisenhower seek to assuage the American public? Quite simply, he did not. Eisenhower needed fear to generate public support for the programs that would ensure American security. Instead of dispelling fear, Eisenhower's rhetoric sought to acclimate Americans to the existence of some level of insecurity. Fear became a tool for Eisenhower; a means of managing public opinion.

Domesticating Fear

The rhetorical means of pursuing national security espoused by Eisenhower required not just a proliferation of fear, but also ultimately sought to cultivate a public security with insecurity.

⁶⁰ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Address at Civic Reception, Chamber of Commerce Dinner St. Louis, MO." 24 Feb. 1947. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19470224%20Address%20at%20Civic%20Reception%20Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20Dinner.htm>

⁶¹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "18th Annual New York Herald Tribune Forum, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City." 24 October 1949. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19491024%2018th%20annual%20New%20York%20Herald%20Tribune%20Forum.html>

Eisenhower alluded to this necessity frequently as the need for a “disciplined”⁶² populace with “spiritual strength.”⁶³ The drive to familiarize domestic audiences with the prospect of a persistent fear and to prepare them for the proliferation of atomic weapons merged into a singular effort in Eisenhower’s rhetoric.

This purpose led to the adoption of a series of persuasive devices and tropes intended to familiarize domestic audiences with the concept of relative instead of more absolute security. No discussion better conveys this attempt to domesticate fear than Eisenhower’s 20 January 1947 remarks to the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington, DC, where he stated that “there is no absolute security for any nation in arms alone. It just cannot be done. You may surround your house with all the policemen in your city, but that is not absolute security.”⁶⁴ Here Eisenhower analogizes national security with individual security, employing a straw man fallacy that misrepresents the degree of prewar security enjoyed by Americans as total. This device devalues the degree of security enjoyed by the United States prior to the Second World War, but also incited anxiety by trivializing security. Rather than promoting security with insecurity, as Eisenhower sought, statements like these merely increased a sense of anxiety.

An additional persuasive device Eisenhower employed sought to bring home the prospect of an atomic attack on American soil. This persuasive device may have originated from the report entitled “The Effects of the Atomic Bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki” compiled by the

⁶² Eisenhower, Dwight D. “U.S. Conference of Mayors, Washington, D.C.” 20 Jan. 1947. Also see Eisenhower “Remarks to Advisory Council to Women’s interest Unit, Washington, D.C.” 14 Nov. 1946.

⁶³ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Address at Civic Reception, Chamber of Commerce Dinner, St. Louis, MO.” 24 February 1947.

⁶⁴ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “U.S. Conference of Mayors, Washington, DC.” 20 January 1947.

British Mission to Japan,⁶⁵ in which the study projects the destruction inflicted on the Japanese cities onto British cities. Yet little evidence exists to conclusively support this claim.⁶⁶ While this device emerged as early as a 3 September 1946 Address to a Convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars in Boston, Massachusetts, the aforementioned remarks to the Conference of U.S. Mayors. Speaking to the assembled Mayors, Eisenhower postulated:

[L]et's go ahead one little step and say that you visualize the possibility of atomic bombs dropping on Chicago or Detroit [...] can you conceive of the value of a trained body around there, with a trained leader in the National Guard or the Organized Reserves, a man who knows what to do in the face of catastrophe to prevent the spread of hysteria and to control conflagration and that sort of thing?⁶⁷

Significantly, Eisenhower's remarks do not specify the extent of the damage inflicted on the cities. The passage incites anxiety by proposing a hypothetical attack on the domestic constituencies of the mayors. Eisenhower then demonstrates the ability of local authorities to manage and control the fear of such a crisis through the National Guard.

The attempted amelioration of atomic weapons continued after the Soviet atomic bomb test, and would persist well into Eisenhower's presidency. Moreover, Eisenhower did not abandon this strategy in private, as demonstrated by a 28 February 1950 recorded conversation

⁶⁵ Eisenhower, Dwight David. Pre-Presidential Papers, 1916-52 Principal File, Box 127, folder entitled "Atomic Weapons and Energy (1)." Eisenhower's copy of the report is located toward the end of the file, in an unmarked sleeve.

⁶⁶ "Meeting with C.W. Bayer." 28 February 1950. Dwight D. Eisenhower-Pre-Presidential Recordings. The Miller Center for Public Affairs: University of Virginia. 29 March 2009 <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/presidentialrecordings/eisenhower/columbia>; A later recorded conversation between Eisenhower and radiologist C.W. Boyer in 1950 seems to allude to Ike viewing images of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, given that the conversation discussed atomic weapons. Yet the audio tape is indecipherable, as the two men appear to move towards the door.

⁶⁷ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "U.S. Conference of Mayors, Washington D.C." 20 January 1947.

with radiologist C.W. Boyer, in which he stated, “Well whoever invented the automobile invented a way to kill 40,000 of us every year, or 45,000 [...] The atomic bomb has sort of captured the imagination [indecipherable] kill a lot of people at one time.”⁶⁸ Sure, the atomic bomb killed a lot of people, but so for that matter did automobiles. The gross misrepresentation of the impact of the atomic bomb partly reflects the empirical realities of the day, as the United States had a limited atomic arsenal. As Eisenhower reveals later in the conversation, the atomic bombs ability to kill a lot of people at once he did not conceive as the “critical part in our equation” to solving the atomic dilemma.

Under the Atomic Shadow

The advent of the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb concluded the era of the American atomic monopoly and introduced an acute sense of insecurity felt by the American public. How then did the Soviet bomb affect Eisenhower’s language? Textual evidence becomes scant as Eisenhower assumed the presidency of Columbia University after his stint as Army Chief of Staff. Other than his public remarks, the sparse evidence of Eisenhower’s private thoughts during this time provides little background illumination into his rhetoric. Fortunately, the earlier discursive patterns and assumptions, established by memoranda and studies like Bernard Brodie’s *The Absolute Weapon*, continued to influence Eisenhower’s rhetoric. What does emerge in Ike’s public remark is a desire to confront the Soviet Union through an oppositional lens framed in terms of good and evil.

⁶⁸ “Meeting with C.W. Bayer.” 28 February 1950. Dwight D. Eisenhower-Pre-Presidential Recordings. The Miller Center for Public Affairs: University of Virginia. 29 March 2009. <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/presidentialrecordings/eisenhower/columbia>

News that the Soviet Union tested its first atomic device on 29 August 1949 found Eisenhower president of Columbia University in New York City. The much anticipated future Eisenhower had predicted arrived. The acquisition of the atom bomb by the Soviet Union profoundly altered Eisenhower's discursive patterns, particularly the readiness with which he evoked fear from domestic audiences. The Soviet test erased much of the earlier ambiguity in Eisenhower's public remarks, as he began eliminating the practical alternatives to an arms race or nuclear war. Eisenhower now openly identified the aggressor as the Soviet Union, something he did not do prior to 1950. Obviously the advent of the Soviet test obviated the need for Eisenhower to counsel that other nations would one day acquire the bomb; they had, thereby fulfilling his claim. Yet Eisenhower dropped other persuasive devices in the wake of the Soviet test, most notably among them the conjured vision of flights of atomic bombers and missiles striking specific American metropolises like Chicago or Detroit.⁶⁹ Additionally, Eisenhower did not for the rest of the post-war period criticize the degree of security provided by the atomic bomb.

The dramatic polarizing effect the Soviet bomb had on Eisenhower's public rhetoric readily appears in his first public remarks following the test on 24 October 1949. Speaking to the New York Herald Tribune forum at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, Eisenhower issued what amounted to an ultimatum against the Soviet Union.⁷⁰ This ultimatum infused a sense of division and rigid dualism into Eisenhower's remarks following the Soviet test. According to Eisenhower, "the world dwells in two hostile camps," one exhibiting appreciably American values and the

⁶⁹ One superb example is Eisenhower, Dwight D. "U.S. Conference of Mayors, Washington, D.C." 20 January 1947. Also Eisenhower did reintroduce the use of hypothetical attacks as a scare device as president, but they remained purposefully vague.

⁷⁰ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "18th Annual New York Herald Tribune Forum, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City." 24 October 1949.

other recognizably Soviet principles. Ideology, Eisenhower assumes, splits the world into two and only two camps. The two camps dwelled “under the atomic shadow,” a phrase that given Eisenhower’s fondness for the Western novel anticipates with a sense of foreboding a sense of imminent confrontation that traditionally takes place at high noon. This comment likely constitutes a rare personal display of genuine pathos by the former Chief of Staff; a man who had little taste for literary flourish or sentimentality in his public remarks, preferring more direct communication of his message.

In private, Eisenhower saw a compelling need to create an ideological framework to define the new direction of mankind. The ever present fear since the introduction of the Soviet atomic bomb generated this need for a new direction. Conversing with C.W. Boyer, a radiologist, while president of Columbia University on 28 February 1950, Eisenhower asked, “Where is mankind going? What is it trying to do to itself? Once, it fails to develop a philosophy that is, will stand up under the stress of fear, the struggle for raising the standard of living and so on.”⁷¹ Later, in the Gabriel Silver Lecture, Eisenhower sought to educate not just the Columbia student body but the American public in this new oppositional ideology that equated the United States with all things good and innocent, and the Soviet Union with all things evil and aggressive.

The Gabriel Silver Lecture delivered by Eisenhower at the McMillian Academic Theater of Columbia in March 1950 represents his most detailed and extensive speech to engage the topic of nuclear weapons in this early period of the Cold War. In the Gabriel Silver Lecture, Eisenhower further rejects accommodation or compromise with the Soviet Union, attaching to

⁷¹ “Meeting with C.W. Bayer.” 28 February 1950. Dwight D. Eisenhower-Pre-Presidential Recordings. The Miller Center for Public Affairs: University of Virginia. 29 March 2009 <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/presidentialrecordings/eisenhower/columbia>

such proposals the stigma of “appeasement.” Specifically, Eisenhower claimed, “The pact of Munich was a more fell blow to humanity than the atomic bomb at Hiroshima.”⁷² Eisenhower rejects accommodation or compromise with the Soviet Union in this instance by equating such actions with appeasement. This particular remark anticipates Eisenhower’s later comment that he would “rather be atomized than communized.”⁷³ Using the fallacy of appeasement, Eisenhower rejected compromise, signaling his commitment to cold war.

Burying Our Heads in the Sand

Following Eisenhower’s public identification of the Soviet Union as the enemy, he began to actively endorse the development of the “Super” or hydrogen bomb. Speaking to the Moles, an organization of individuals employed in heavy construction, at their Annual Award Dinner in New York City on 9 February 1950, Eisenhower stated:

I cannot even agree with those who believe that we should hide the horrors of the H-bomb in ignorance. This I cannot see. I believe that since the beginning of time, every appliance that the scientists of any age have found to assist man, has been capable of either evil or good use. And, certainly in this day and time, faced across the seas by an aggressive and a godless ideology, it does not behoove us to believe that we can be protected by sticking our heads in the sand.⁷⁴

⁷² Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Gabriel Silver Lecture, McMillin Academic Theater.” 23 March 1950. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19500323%20Gabriel%20Silver%20Lecture.html>

⁷³ Chernus, Ira. “The Real Eisenhower.” History News Network. George Mason University. 17 Mar. 2008. Accessed 11 Feb 2009. <http://hnn.us/articles/47326.html>. Also see Chernus, Ira. *Apocalypse Management*, 186.

⁷⁴ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “The Moles’ Annual Award Dinner, Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York City.” 9 February 1950. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19500209%20Moles%20Annual%20Award%20Dinner.html>

Eisenhower clearly sought to draw the attention of his audience to the hydrogen bomb through the alliterative use of words beginning in the letter “h.” Characterizing the bomb as an “appliance,” Eisenhower grossly trivialized the significance of the moral implications of the hydrogen bomb. The word “appliance” misrepresents the hydrogen bomb as it elicits images of refrigerators and toasters, not nuclear weapons. Eisenhower, the consummate salesman, pitches the hydrogen bomb as a potentially friendly device that can “assist man” after alluding to its “horrors” in passing. This argument caters to Eisenhower’s audience, as those involved in heavy construction represent one of the few constituencies potentially interested in and capable of using the destructive force of the hydrogen bomb for peaceful applications.⁷⁵ Moreover, Eisenhower couples the pejorative word “ignorance” with opposing the development of the hydrogen bomb, thereby challenging the very morality of questioning the development of the atomic bomb. This statement by Eisenhower does not even offer an affirmative explanation for why the United States should develop the hydrogen bomb; rather it asks why not?

The moral ambiguity Eisenhower assigns to atomic weapons in the above quotation he borrowed almost verbatim from Frederick S. Dunn’s introduction to Bernard Brodie’s *The Absolute Weapon*. Clearly this early 1946 study exercised a continuing influence on the assumptions supporting Eisenhower’s rhetoric surrounding atomic weapons. While Eisenhower might have disagreed with several of the claims and conclusions made in the study, he certainly embraced the idea that “Moreover, like all physical forces, it [the atomic bomb] was morally indifferent and could just as easily serve evil purposes as good.”⁷⁶ This claim enabled Eisenhower to endorse the development of the hydrogen bomb without having to confront

⁷⁵ Eisenhower would later as president publicly advocate using nuclear weapons to tunnel or build harbors.

⁷⁶ Eisenhower underlined this sentence in his advanced copy of the book. Eisenhower, Dwight David. Pre-Presidential Papers, 1916-1952. Principal File, Box 27, Folder “Atomic Weapons and Energy (2).”

questions of the bombs morality. While this claim conveniently justifies his argument, the fact that Eisenhower recalled the statement almost four years later suggests how strongly he identified with this remark.

Similarly, Eisenhower extended the moral ambiguity of nuclear weapons to war and peace. The most instructive instance appears in his comprehensive 23 March 1950 Gabriel Silver Lecture at Columbia University. In this lecture, Eisenhower rejects the conventional wisdom that “We like to repeat ‘There never was a good war or a bad peace.’”⁷⁷ This paradox reveals that Eisenhower reflects more on the motivations justifying the war rather than the actual conduct of war. By complicating the concepts of war and peace, Eisenhower initiates a war of meaning. Suddenly the need to redefine issues like war and peace or devices like the atomic bomb emerged. Ideology, which frequently departed from empirical realities, created the framework that provided the basis of these definitions.

The Last Word-Peace

The mission of Eisenhower’s early Cold War rhetoric sought to preserve the freedom and peace enjoyed by the United States. Speaking to the Nassau County Bar Association on 10 June 1950, Eisenhower articulated the relationship between atomic war and language. Eisenhower began discussing the loss of peace as a singularly defined term, before observing that “War must never be followed by any other except as the final, desperate alternative to loss of freedom.”⁷⁸ War would result from a loss of freedom if the United States strayed from the “middle way,” and forfeited the considerable freedom of action offered by the several alternative uses of atomic weapons. More importantly, the loss of freedom described by Eisenhower also represented the

⁷⁷ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Gabriel Silver Lecture, McMillin Academic Theater.” 23 March 1950.

⁷⁸ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Nassau County Bar Association.” 10 June 1950.

loss of rhetorical freedom. Words would become Eisenhower's dominos. As president, Eisenhower's language would lose its reassuring quality, and increasingly evoke public fears. Greater fear would impose greater limitations on Eisenhower's rhetoric, progressively eliminating his rhetorical freedom. When words failed, war would come; and Eisenhower articulates what the last domino to fall before war would be, when he states, "We come to the last word-Peace."⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Nassau County Bar Association." 10 June 1950.

Chapter 2: The First Term, 1953-1957

A “New” State of Affairs

The election of Dwight David Eisenhower to the office of President of the United States of America inaugurated a “new” style in public discourse. As the first Republican president in twenty years, the election of Eisenhower did constitute a change in the American political scene. The President brought to his new office a “New Look” in defense policy. This “New Look” depended heavily on “new weapons,” as Eisenhower increasingly relied on atomic and thermonuclear weapons to offset the decrease in conventional forces that the new President sought to cut from the military budget. Later in 1953 this President would speak in a “new language:” the language of atomic warfare. Before long Eisenhower would begin increasingly appearing on the “new” medium of television. Yet this “new” style also seemed strikingly familiar to a generation of Americans who had lived through the Great Depression and Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s “New Deal.”⁸⁰

Eisenhower introduced a new rhetorical style predicated on the Republican platform of “peace.” Using this rhetorical style, he intended to negotiate public support for the arms race. Peace as America had known it prior to the Soviet atom bomb had evaporated. A new state of affairs existed in the United States attended by a new need for a large peacetime military, unlike any that had existed prior to the Second World War. Amidst the radical revolution in military technologies precipitated by the Second World War, Eisenhower sought to assuage anxiety without allowing the American public to indulge in complacency. The very real prospect of nuclear war overshadowed Eisenhower’s presidency. Nuclear arsenals had not yet acquired the

⁸⁰ Allen, Craig, *Eisenhower and the Mass Media*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993. 27.

nuclear “plenty” that would later in the 1970s create the possibility of “mutually assured destruction,” a word revealingly not coined until 1971.⁸¹ Nuclear war was not unthinkable. But Eisenhower sought to persuade the public to overcome fears of nuclear war. The strategies of persuasion pursued by President Eisenhower reflected his governing style, which he based on a philosophy of the “middle way.” Eisenhower sought to govern by consensus, and similarly he sought to build consensus for his initiatives in his public remarks.

A “New Look”

Critical to understanding Eisenhower’s rhetorical strategy is at least a cursory familiarity with his defense policy. Several deeply held personal convictions influenced Eisenhower’s defense policy, none arguably more so than his fiscal conservatism.⁸² A career soldier, he had personally witnessed the extensive industrial mobilization of the American peacetime economy during the Second World War. He recognized the importance of economic strength to waging total war. He considered the national economy and defense inseparable. The addition of the Treasury Secretary George Humphrey and the Budget Director Joseph Dodge to the National Security Council illustrates the depth of Eisenhower’s conviction that national defense depended on continued economic strength.⁸³ Eisenhower wanted to balance the budget to maintain the economic strength of the United States, an act that would require an overall reduction in military expenditures. In order to achieve this goal without sacrificing national security, he would redistribute defense expenditures to prioritize the development of nuclear weapons while cutting back on conventional military forces.

⁸¹ “MAD.” *Oxford English Dictionary: New Edition*. Oxford English Dictionary. 25 March 2009. <http://dictionary.oed.com/>

⁸² Schaefermeyer, Mark J. “Dulles and Eisenhower on Massive Retaliation.” In Medhurst, Martin J. *Eisenhower’s War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*. Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994. 27.

⁸³ Schaefermeyer, 27.

Codified in a 30 October 1953 National Security Council directive entitled, “Statement of Policy” (NSC 162/2), the “New Look” outlined two basic requirements: the need to meet the Soviet threat to U.S. security; and to avoid seriously weakening the U.S. economy or undermining its fundamental values and institutions.⁸⁴ Eisenhower sought a balanced approach that would manage the threat posed by the Soviet Union while protecting the vital interests of the American economy. Nuclear weapons offered, in the media parlance of the 1950s, “more bang for the buck.”⁸⁵ Because he could not assume or foresee the end of the arms race, Eisenhower had to create a sustainable framework for waging cold war “over the long pull.” The third object reveals just how important the Eisenhower administration considered public relations. The President recognized the need to maintain public support for “the measures necessary for national security.” This vague phrase refers to both public support for the arms race and, euphemistically, to public willingness to accept nuclear war if circumstances required.

But what role did Eisenhower assume in formulating the “New Look” in national security policy? This question emerged even before Eisenhower left office, and received prominent discussion in early scholarship on the Eisenhower presidency. Many contemporaries of Eisenhower alleged the President delegated too much of the conduct of foreign policy to his seemingly hawkish Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.⁸⁶ Dulles had graduated valedictorian of his graduating class from Princeton, received training in law at George Washington University Law School, and served as Bernard Baruch’s chief legal advisor at the Versailles negotiations that ended World War I. After helping write the foreign policy plank of the 1952 Republican

⁸⁴ Schaefermeyer, 37.

⁸⁵ Schaefermeyer, 28. Also see Chernus, Ira. *Apocalypse Management: Eisenhower and the Discourse of National Insecurity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008. 63.

⁸⁶ Ivie, Robert L. “Eisenhower as Cold Warrior.” In Medhurst, Martin J. *Eisenhower’s War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*. Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994. 7.

platform, Dulles received an appointment as Secretary of State from the newly elected President Eisenhower. Dulles quickly acquired a reputation as an administration hawk and committed cold warrior in direct contrast to Eisenhower's image as a man of peace. But in reality Dulles faithfully served Eisenhower as Secretary of State, frequently conferring with and executing the President's policies.⁸⁷ It was Eisenhower who primarily formulated the "New Look."⁸⁸

Yet the President would not announce one of the most crucial components of the "New Look:" the policy of "massive retaliation." On 12 January 1954, John Foster Dulles delivered an address to the Council on Foreign Relations. In this speech, he announced the policy of relying on the threat of retaliation with nuclear weapons to deter Soviet aggression. "We want for ourselves and for others a maximum deterrent at bearable cost [...] Local defense must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power."⁸⁹ Considering the leading role Eisenhower assumed in crafting the policy of the "New Look," why did he delegate the task of introducing the concept of "massive retaliation" to Dulles?⁹⁰ Throughout his presidency, Eisenhower would routinely avoid speaking about nuclear weapons except in those instances where he had prepared remarks. Even then he typically refrained from speaking about nuclear weapons in a belligerent manner. As communications scholar Robert L. Ivie has argued, "Eisenhower cultivated the image of an aspiring peacemaker."⁹¹ This image in part reveals Eisenhower's intentions in delegating discussion of nuclear weapons to his subordinates. Yet broader concerns ultimately motivated Eisenhower to avoid speaking about nuclear weapons.

⁸⁷ Richard H. Immerman. "**Dulles, John Foster**"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/07/07-00085.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. Access Date: Wed Mar 25 2009

⁸⁸ Schaefermeyer, 29.

⁸⁹ Schaefermeyer 39.

⁹⁰ Chernus, Ira. "The Real Eisenhower: Planning to Win Nuclear War." 17 March 2008. History News Network. George Mason University. 25 March 2009. <http://hnn.us/articles/47326.html>

⁹¹ Ivie 7.

The President refrained from speaking about nuclear weapons because he wanted to control public emotion. Discussion of nuclear weapons strategy, he recognized, would only generate public fear. And while not above using fear to benefit the nation, Eisenhower would not use fear if he did not have to, and certainly not for personal political gain. Fear could drive the American public to demand defense policies that would compromise the economic strength of the United States and jeopardize “free institutions” that included not only businesses but also individual freedoms. So Eisenhower reserved to himself the responsibility of lessening public fears and delegated remarks that might incite public anxieties to subordinates.

The Fleeting Chance for Peace

On 5 March 1953, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin died. A ruthless leader, Stalin had led the Soviet Union as its head of state through the devastation of the Second World War into the atomic age with its first test of an atomic weapon in 1949. The death of Stalin represented an opportunity to either improve relations with the Soviet Union or plunge the United States deeper into Cold War. Considerable uncertainty existed within the Eisenhower administration as it scrambled to orchestrate an American response. The substance of the American response almost immediately became the subject of internal policy debate within foreign policy circles. The United States needed to formulate goals for any response before settling on a particular rhetorical strategy.

Among the proposals to receive consideration by the President, that of the journalist and political analyst Samuel Lubell certainly influenced the eventual American response to Stalin’s

death.⁹² Eisenhower received Lubell's proposal from his wartime and postwar political acquaintance Bernard Baruch, who wrote to the President on 7 March 1953.⁹³ Eisenhower had worked closely as Army Chief of Staff preparing the Baruch Plan, in which the United States offered to unilaterally disassemble its atomic bomb program.⁹⁴ Writing to Baruch, Lubell outlined his disarmament plan, which suggested the United States and Soviet Union set ratios "butter over guns," where "butter" meant living standards and "guns" meant war industries. The crux of the plan called for "fixing ceilings upon the proportion of a nation's resources that can be devoted to war preparation."⁹⁵ Lubell based this proposal upon the assumption that "[t]he strongest single internal political pressure in Russia today is the hunger of the people for better living conditions."⁹⁶ A proposal that appealed to the domestic desire in the Soviet Union for consumer goods would create division within the Kremlin by forcing Soviet leaders to choose between raising living standards and pursuing an arms race with the United States.

The Lubell proposal would have forced the Soviets to choose between the above two alternatives. Yet the Soviet adoption of either policy promised to benefit the United States. If the Soviets rejected the disarmament proposal, then they would foment discontent within Russia and the occupied satellites. If the Soviets increased their production of consumer goods at the

⁹² Wallenstein, Peter. "Lubell, Samuel." *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. 29 March 2009 <http://www.anb.org/articles/07/07-00519.html>; Samuel Lubell was also a Polish immigrant, which likely informed the substance and the objectives of his proposal.

⁹³ Bernard Baruch to Dwight David Eisenhower. 7 March 1953. Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 5, Folders labeled "Bernard M. Baruch (1)-(6)"

⁹⁴ Carlisle, Rodney P. "Baruch Plan." *Encyclopedia of the Atomic Age*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2001. *American History Online*. Facts On File, Inc. 29 March 2009 <http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE52&iPin=atomic00045&SingleRecord=True> Inc. <http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE52&iPin=atomic00045&SingleRecord=True>; Also see Chapter 1.

⁹⁵ Sam Lubell to Bernard Baruch. 7 March 1953. Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 5, Folders labeled "Bernard M. Baruch (1)-(6)"

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

expense of their defense industries, then Eisenhower would have slowed the arms race and made it harder for the Russians to mobilize. Lubell alludes to this belief:

We cannot hope the Soviets will loosen their grip on the satellite peoples before they let up somewhat on the Russian people. A lift in living standards inside Russia is probably the key to making the Soviet dictatorship more responsive to the Russian people. If the Russian people ever were given a decent living level, no government would find it easy to take it from them, particularly for an aggressive war.⁹⁷

So the Lubell proposal presented Eisenhower with a disarmament proposal that would either foment discontent within the Soviet Union or create material prosperity in the Soviet Union that would discourage the Soviet Union from initiating a war of aggression. Lubell concluded that “[e]ven if the Soviets reject the idea, as must be expected, the announcement of America’s readiness to disarm along these lines would have an enormous psychological impact on the whole world.”⁹⁸ Particularly in the case of the Soviet satellite states, an American peace proposal would have the psychological effect of fomenting discontent within the Soviet Union. Once they enjoyed enough consumer goods, the people of Soviet states would make it difficult for the Soviet government to appropriate their goods for war. If the United States could persuade the Soviet Union to focus more on producing consumer goods, then the Soviets would abandon aggression. Peace would follow because aggression represented the source of war. While Eisenhower and his staff would continue to weigh additional considerations in formulating the official response, this proposal articulated the objective of the American response. Moreover, the

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Lubell plan would continue to influence another major Presidential initiative later in December 1953, a subject to which this study will return.

With the goals of the American response thus formulated, the proposed response to Stalin's death still required a vehicle for its delivery. C.D. Jackson, who contributed substantially to psychological warfare initiatives while serving as Special Assistant for International Affairs to President Eisenhower from 1953 through 1954, initially asked MIT professor of economic history and international studies Walt Whitman Rostow to draft a speech, presumably before learning of the Lubell plan.⁹⁹ This culminated in the 11 March 1953 draft, entitled "A Message to the Soviet Government and the Russian Peoples." While the title of this draft may seem to indicate an open letter to the Soviet government and people, Rostow wrote the draft as a speech, indicated in both the content and style of the message. Moreover, the religious studies scholar Ira Chernus verifies this conclusion.¹⁰⁰ Rostow's draft of the speech begins in a conciliatory tone directed at the Russian people, recalling the mutual Nazi enemy of the Second World War. The speech takes care to distinguish the Russian people from the Soviet government before condemning the actions of the Soviet government.

The first mention of atomic weapons emerges when discussing the concept that no nation can achieve security by itself. "This, above all, is the meaning of the new weapons that mankind has in its hands. There is no other way than to seek our security together."¹⁰¹ According to Rostow's draft of the President's speech, atomic weapons ultimately signify cooperation between governments; a major theme of President Eisenhower's memoir of the Second World War-

⁹⁹ Chernus, Ira. *Apocalypse Management*. 31. Also, no evidence suggests Rostow knew of Lubell's proposal.

¹⁰⁰ Chernus 31.

¹⁰¹ "A Message to the Soviet Government and the Russian Peoples." Unsigned. 11 March 1953. John Foster Dulles Papers, Draft Presidential Correspondence Series, Box 1, Folders labeled "President's Speech April 1953 (1)-(3)." For cross reference see Chernus 31.

Crusade in Europe.¹⁰² Rostow follows this by reproaching Soviet peace appeals, declaring that disarmament “cannot be done by words. It can only be achieved by effective measures.”¹⁰³ The speech calls for disarmament while observing that the consumption of resources by the armaments industry prevents the use of these resources in improving human welfare, especially the welfare of the Russian people. Even if Rostow wrote this speech independent of Lubell’s proposal, it would appear that this draft shares Lubell’s most important assumption: that the desire for consumer goods represented the greatest demand in the Soviet Union.

While “A Message to the Soviet Government and the Russian Peoples” does primarily address a foreign audience, Rostow’s draft of the speech does appeal, albeit ineffectually, to the American public. “This initiative is not a psychological trick, designed to exploit Stalin’s death,” Rostow’s draft of the President’s speech announces. Instead the proposal “springs from my own convictions, long held, laid before you on many occasions.”¹⁰⁴ This appeal intends to convey the President’s sincerity. But the transparent denial this appeal offers exposes the initiative as a psychological trick. Rostow’s draft then appeals to the American people to cooperate with their government in the spirit of unity. “It is a condition for the success of our new enterprise that the American people exhibit a high degree of unity and that they give unremitting support to our security measures at home and abroad.”¹⁰⁵ This statement reveals the desired ends of the administration: reaffirming the President’s commitment to peace. Rostow fails in this attempt at public persuasion, instead signaling to the American people the insincerity of the President’s address.

¹⁰² Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Crusade in Europe*. New York: De Capo Press, 1977.

¹⁰³ “A Message to the Soviet Government and the Russian Peoples.” Unsigned. 11 March 1953.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Less than a week after Rostow's draft, speechwriter Emmet Hughes rewrote the speech. On 16 March 1953 Hughes drafted the first version of a speech he titled, "The Chance for Peace." Eisenhower's speechwriter Emmet Hughes, a former Rome and Berlin Bureau Chief and articles editor for Henry Luce's *Life* magazine, largely wrote the speech at the direction of and in collaboration with State Department officials. Hughes had taken a leave of absence from *Life* to work on Eisenhower's presidential campaign. Presumably he obtained the approval of his boss, the powerful publishing magnate and Eisenhower supporter, Henry Luce. Nowhere in Hughes' first draft does he mention atomic weapons. In the opening sentences, Hughes' does appeal to the need for "candor," a word that would acquire increasing significance to how Eisenhower spoke about nuclear weapons later in 1953.¹⁰⁶ As the opening salutary remarks reveal, Hughes assumed that the President would address both the international audience of the United Nations and the American public. While Hughes in this draft calls for disarmament, he does not differentiate between nuclear and conventional weapons, in keeping with administration policy. Presumably Hughes felt the draft a sufficiently persuasive appeal to both international and domestic audiences for peace without any reference to nuclear weapons, because he met with the President that same day to discuss the speech.

Yet Hughes came away from the meeting confused, drafting a memo the next day questioning the President's motivation for delivering the speech. "Do we wish at this time to negotiate directly with the Soviets? Only the answer to this meets the question: is a Presidential declaration at this time meant: (a) to wage political warfare or; (b) to invite political

¹⁰⁶ "The Chance for Peace." 16 March 1953. Attached to Emmet Hughes Memo to John Foster Dulles. 1. John Foster Dulles Papers, Draft Presidential Correspondence Series, Box 1, Folders labeled "President's Speech April 1953 (1)-(3)."

settlement?”¹⁰⁷ Clearly Hughes did not understand the aims of the President’s speech. The President sought to simultaneously pursue both objectives. Hughes’ subsequent draft of 18 March 1953 retains much of the substance of his earlier draft but sounds stylistically elegiac, as if he looked for inspiration to Mark Antony’s eulogy in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. Hughes proclaims, “This moment need not be spent in reciting again the free world’s indictment of the aggressions of the Soviet regime. Those deeds speak their own judgment.”¹⁰⁸ Apparently Hughes came to bury Stalin, not to mourn him, but the demise of peace at the hands of Soviet aggression. Atomic weapons come to signify the tragedy of the demise of peace when Hughes mirrors Rostow’s earlier draft by alluding to atomic weapons by euphemism. Hughes writes that Soviet aggression “compelled [free nations] to spend unprecedented resources for arms. It forced them to develop weapons capable of inflicting instant and terrible punishment upon any aggressor.”¹⁰⁹ Hughes blames the Soviet Union for compelling the United States to pursue a wasteful arms race. This draft, then, justified continued American development of atomic weapons unless the Soviets would disarm.

This draft directly appealed to the Soviets to agree to, among other provisions, “a rigid control of [atomic] weapons enforced by the supervision and inspection of the United Nations,” after which both nations would recycle the liberated resources to “serv[e] the needs, rather than the fears, of our age.”¹¹⁰ This passage anticipates the language of rebirth and resurrection that Eisenhower would later employ when speaking about atomic weapons, demonstrating the

¹⁰⁷ “For Discussion.” Emmet Hughes Memo. 17 March 1953. [My copy undated, cross referenced with Chernus 39, n. 38.] John Foster Dulles Papers, Draft Presidential Correspondence Series, Box 1, Folders labeled “President’s Speech April 1953 (1)-(3).”

¹⁰⁸ “The Chance for Peace.” 1. 18 March 1953. John Foster Dulles Papers, Draft Presidential Correspondence Series, Box 1, Folders labeled “President’s Speech April 1953 (1)-(3).”

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid* 2.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid* 4. Brackets around “atomic” and emphasis on “needs” and “fears” are the authors.

expanding role this style would play in the President's use of language. Among the more memorable passages from the "Chance for Peace" speech, one particularly illustrates this style. "This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."¹¹¹ As this passage hints, the projected timing of Eisenhower's delivery might have contributed to the elegiac tone Hughes infuses into the speech. Eisenhower ultimately delivered the "Chance for Peace" speech on 16 April 1953, a mere eleven days after the major Christian holiday of Easter.

While Hughes continued to redraft after his meeting with the President, especially softening the language intended to instigate the Soviet Satellites to revolt, neither the 19 or 20 March 1953 drafts contain anything about atomic weapons except a demand for the elimination of "weapons of mass destruction" and a vague promise to "(Add paragraph on peaceful use of atomic energy)."¹¹² This promise does not reveal how the passage about atomic weapons in the President's 16 April 1953 "Chance for Peace" speech assumed its finalized form. Considerable ambiguity exists about who finally authored the paragraph on nuclear war. Yet this promise does suggest the intriguing possibility that Hughes did not ultimately draft the paragraph. Maybe Eisenhower did not entrust Hughes with the responsibility of drafting this paragraph, instead delegating to another of his aides or reserving for himself the sensitive task. Hughes did not elaborate in his memoir of the Eisenhower administration, *The Ordeal of Power*, who ultimately drafted the "atomic energy" or "atomic war" statement.

¹¹¹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Chance for Peace Speech." American Society of Newspaper Editors. 16 April 1953. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19530416%20Chance%20for%20Peace.htm>

¹¹² John Foster Dulles Papers, Draft Presidential Correspondence Series, Box 1, Folders labeled "President's Speech April 1953 (1)-(3)."

But the “atomic war” statement nevertheless founds its way into the 16 April 1953 “Chance for Peace” speech that Eisenhower delivered before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Presumably he selected this particular audience to ensure a wide distribution of the speech. He begins the speech by providing a brief overview of the developments in international affairs since the end of the Second World War. The repetition of words “hope” and “fear” with varying frequency framed Eisenhower’s brief history of the postwar world. “Hope” appears noticeably less frequently as “fear” increases in frequency. After gradually winnowing away hope throughout the early portions of the speech, Eisenhower broaches the subject of atomic weapons.

This has been the way of life forged by eight years of fear and force. What can the world, or any nation in it, hope for if no turning is found on this dread road? The worst to be feared and the best to be expected can be simply stated. The worst is atomic war. The best would be this: a life of perpetual fear and tension; a burden of arms draining the wealth and the labor of all peoples.¹¹³

The word choice, especially “dread” and “fear,” repeatedly evoked anxiety while the only reference to hope came in a question. He, true to his fiscal conservatism, emphasized the threat posed by the “burden of arms” to the economic strength of the nation. He famously quantifies this burden by comparing the cost of various defense systems to the equivalent expense of various public services, like schools, power plants and hospitals.¹¹⁴ This imagery captured the war weary mood of the public at a time when the United States remained mired in a costly limited war in Korea. Yet Eisenhower continued to nurture this hope for peace in his address.

¹¹³ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “The Chance for Peace.” American Society of Newspaper Editors. 16 April 1953.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

And three months later this attractive alternative to war offered by Eisenhower would partially materialized in the form of a ceasefire in Korea.

A Policy of “Candor”

While Emmet Hughes would continue to serve as an Eisenhower speechwriter after “The Chance for Peace,” he assumed an increasingly less visible role in drafting future presidential speeches, eventually returning to Life magazine in late September 1953.¹¹⁵ Yet Hughes’ 16 March 1953 draft of “The Chance for Peace” speech anticipated what would over the next several months become a larger administration campaign of “candor.” Operation Candor represents the most concerted effort pursued by Eisenhower to talk about nuclear weapons. But how would the administration execute the proposed “candor” campaign? That question consumed the efforts of the brightest minds in the Eisenhower administration, including the President’s, over a period of no less than five months. Over these five months, administration speechwriters produced a new draft every few days. Speechwriters would routinely bury then resurrect titles and themes from draft to draft. Titles of speeches like “The Safety of the Republic” also appeared as the names of campaigns, further confusing the chaotic picture that emerges from the documentary record. To reduce this confusion this section will only analyze the formulation of the public relations campaigns independent of their speeches. The drafts of speeches will receive treatment immediately thereafter.

Among the first to suggest a “policy of candor” were two preeminent scientists who exercised considerable public influence; president of the Carnegie Institute Vannevar Bush and

¹¹⁵ PDDE XIV: 534-535. Eisenhower to Henry Robinson Luce. 22 September 1953. Also see Young, Mark E. "Hughes, Emmet John." *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. 29 March 2009 <http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-03039.html>

scientific head of the Manhattan Project J. Robert Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer, who would shortly thereafter become mired in controversy when the White House revoked his security clearance pending an investigation of his affiliations with several Communists, had in 1949 opposed the American development of the hydrogen bomb. Confronted with the recommendations of these two prominent scientists, Eisenhower did not seriously consider the scientists' recommendations, as evidenced by a memo from the President to Robert Cutler. Cutler, a Harvard trained lawyer and president of Old Colony Trust Company, had campaigned with Eisenhower. In a capacity akin to that of a "personal secretary," Cutler occasionally drafted speeches and performed a variety of tasks for the candidate. After working with Eisenhower to reorganize the operations of the National Security Council, Eisenhower appointed Cutler as special assistant for national security affairs. Cutler headed the Operations Coordinating Board, a group that set the agenda of the National Security Council and supported the execution of its decisions, functioning as the manager of the Board.¹¹⁶ In the memo, the President directed Cutler to "Please notify the members of the [National] Security Council that two visiting scientists will be with us on Wednesday to present *their* views. While of course there will be no objection to questioning them, I think that it might be wise to point out that our own decisions will be reached later."¹¹⁷ The scientists told the NSC that the U.S. public needed to be informed about the threat posed by nuclear weapons. Eisenhower explicitly emphasizes the word "their," which strongly suggests Eisenhower's personal disagreement with the scientists' conclusions. Certainly J. Robert Oppenheimer's highly publicized opposition to the development of the hydrogen bomb had not escaped Eisenhower's attention. The President recognized the potential threat a "policy

¹¹⁶ Nelson, Anna Kasten. "Robert Cutler." *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. 29 March 2009 <http://www.anb.org/articles/07/07-00589.html>

¹¹⁷ PDDE XIV: 251-252. Eisenhower to Robert Cutler. 25 May 1953. Eisenhower's emphasis.

of candor” might present if not appropriately handled. A “policy of candor” might fuel controversy and create public dissent, which would inspire debate, like that of 1949 over hydrogen weapons. Debate would demand Eisenhower speak about nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons had explosive potential as a political issue, creating division rather than the consensus Eisenhower so desperately sought and highly valued as a political leader. Consensus made governing easier by allowing Eisenhower to pursue his “New Look” policies with impunity.

On 12 August 1953 the nuclear arms race took a dramatic turn following the first Soviet test of a hydrogen bomb. According to Lewis L. Strauss, who claimed to have worried that the Soviets would test a hydrogen bomb on 7 August, the United States detected the 12 August Soviet test.¹¹⁸ The new information that the Soviets had detonated a hydrogen bomb dramatically changed the direction of Operation Candor. Initially President Eisenhower contemplated a radical shift in policy, as Robert Cutler records in a 3 September 1953 memo for C.D. Jackson when he states that the President asked him to:

Tell C.D. to take my ‘candor’ talk and make the necessary changes in that part dealing with the Russians having the hydrogen device. We should flatly state the fact that they have it. A very grave question is posed. We have a moral duty to respect others, but we also have a moral duty to look to the world situation and see what we must do. Above all, be frank. It almost seems as if we might have to think about that thing I’ve always regarded as so abhorrent.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Strauss, Admiral Lewis L. *Men and Decisions*. Doubleday: Garden City, 1962. 346.

¹¹⁹ Robert Cutler Memo to C.D. Jackson. 3 September 1953. Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Records as President: White House Central Files, Confidential Files, Subject Series, Box 12, Labeled “Candor (9).”

The President's instructions to "be frank" or honest suggests he considered sharing his fears with the American public. The instruction to write with actual candor demonstrates the considerable angst the Soviet test evoked from the President. Presumably the last statement alludes to the possibility of initiating a preventive war against the Soviet Union. Eisenhower had always considered preventive war as abhorrent, especially because he believed the Americans should not resort to war without provocation. Yet the Soviet test of a hydrogen bomb seriously alarmed Eisenhower, enough to cause him to contemplate preventive war as not merely possible but potentially moral.

Yet what might compel the President to consider preventive war potentially moral, aside from the greater destructive power of the hydrogen bomb? Presumably only the strongest of convictions could challenge his beliefs about preventive war. The conviction that challenged Eisenhower's basic assumptions about preventive war appeared during September of 1953, while he continued to contemplate preventive war against the Soviet Union.

[Massive retaliation] would be a deterrent—but if the contest to maintain this relative position should have to continue indefinitely, the cost would either drive us to war—or into some form of dictatorial government. In such circumstances, we would be forced to consider whether or not our duty to future generations did not require us to initiate war at the most propitious moment that we could designate.¹²⁰

The President's commitment to massive retaliation would only credibly deter the Soviets if the United States could disproportionately retaliate. The United States, then, needed to retain a numerically superior nuclear stockpile to deter the Soviets. To retain this stockpile, Eisenhower

¹²⁰ Lester, Robert, ed. *The Diaries of Dwight David Eisenhower*. Microform. "Memorandum for the Secretary of State." 2. 8 September 1953.

would have to call upon his fellow Americans to financially sacrifice. This sacrifice meant the arms race would result in one of two alternative outcomes: either a nuclear war or the erosion of democracy.

A closer examination of these outcomes explains how Eisenhower's convictions led him to briefly consider preventive war. Eventually the need to justify the oppressive expense of maintaining nuclear arms would drive the United States into a devastating nuclear war. He had already noted this phenomenon in his 23 March 1950 Gabriel Silver Lecture. "Those who have spawned such [an offensive] force must either eventually destroy it by demobilization and find justification for the heavy cost already laid on their people; or use it, tacitly or actively, as a threat or as a weapon."¹²¹ Delaying the inevitable war would only increase the size of the nuclear arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union. More nuclear weapons would not influence the outcome if the United States maintained its numerical superiority in nuclear arms; the additional weapons would only add to the casualties. So Eisenhower recognized the potential morality of a preventive war, if executed to minimize casualties. Alternatively, the arms race could potentially erode the basic freedoms of American democracy, particularly financial freedom. Eisenhower predicted that a nuclear arms race would ultimately sacrifice some of the freedoms enjoyed by the citizens of a democracy in exchange for the security these weapons imparted. He understood that Americans fought for their freedoms. And if continuation of the arms race would erode those freedoms, then he possessed a moral responsibility to defend those freedoms by initiating nuclear war.

¹²¹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Gabriel Silver Lecture, McMillin Academic Theater." 23 March 1950.

Eisenhower, who would never witness a nuclear weapons test,¹²² clearly understood that the destructive power of hydrogen weapons presented an unparalleled threat that potentially required preventive war. The President would later acknowledge this new reality, when after receiving a 23 January 1956 briefing on the estimated damage resulting from the initial stages of a hypothetical war with the Soviet Union he recorded his impressions in his diary.

“The only possible way of reducing these losses would be for us to take the initiative some time during the assumed month in which we had the warning of an attack and launched a surprise attack against the Soviets. This would not be not only against our traditions, but it would appear impossible unless the Congress would meet in a highly secret session and vote a declaration of war.”¹²³

Again, Eisenhower rejected the prospect of a preventive war as “against our traditions.” The President held the belief that the United States could not go to war without provocation; an idea made famous by anthropologist Margaret Mead.¹²⁴ In his 25 June 1946 letter to Dorothy Thompson, Eisenhower had suggested that he did not think anyone could ever cultivate enough fear required for the United States to engage in a preventive war. It would seem the Soviet test caused him to waver, if only briefly, in this belief.

After the President and the administration endured the shock of the Soviet acquisition of the hydrogen bomb those working on Operation Candor began contemplating how to assuage public anxiety. Clearly the Soviet H-bomb had scared the American public enough. Instead of

¹²² PPP 1959 463, 464.

¹²³ Lester, Robert, ed. *The Diaries of Dwight David Eisenhower*. Microform. Diary Entry. 23 January 1956. Reel 7, Slide 0047.

¹²⁴ Mead, Margaret. *And Keep Your Powder Dry; An Anthropologist Looks at America*. New York: Morrow, 1965. See Chapter 9, “The Chip on the Shoulder.”

further playing on the fears of the public, the President's speech needed to offer "a tremendous lift for the world—for the hope of men everywhere."¹²⁵ This passage from a 2 October 1953 memo to the President from C.D. Jackson presented the conclusions of those working on Operation Candor. The United States needed to present a feasible proposal for partial or complete disarmament that would lessen public anxiety. But what would the United States offer to assuage these fears? C.D. Jackson captured the crux of this problem, when in the memo he stated that "What is missing is the 'package'."¹²⁶ Three principle concerns conditioned the substance of the "package," namely it needed a "fresh" proposal that could not seriously impair Western security, and which would, if rejected by the Soviets, thrust blame for the arms race on them.¹²⁷ The "package" would essentially need to present a concerted effort at psychological warfare that would weaken the Soviet position whether they accepted or rejected the proposal. Despite the numerous revisions the purpose of the President's speech remained largely unchanged, as he sought to foster domestic consensus. The 2 October 1953 memo gives an important indication of this motivation when, discussing the timing of the speech, C.D. Jackson suggests, "The speech should be given as soon as possible—certainly before Congress reconvenes, and preferably during October or not later than the first week of November."¹²⁸ This memo captures Jackson's sense of urgency. C.D. Jackson's suggestion regarding the speeches timing indicates that he wanted the President to deliver his address directly to the people. The memo therefore indicates that the President wanted to avoid congressional debate on nuclear weapons.

¹²⁵ C.D. Jackson Memo to the Eisenhower. 2 October 1953. Ann Whitman File. Administrations Series. Box 9, Folder "Candor (1)."

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Soon thereafter Eisenhower conceived “the package” sought by those working on Operation Candor. On 26 October 1953 there appeared what an attached note referred to as the “Strauss ‘Plan’ Outline.” The problem as articulated by this “Plan” sought “to find a formula for negotiation with Russia which will promote peace by total or partial atomic disarmament.”¹²⁹ The “Plan” did not necessarily need to accomplish disarmament, as long as it would visibly “promote peace.” The “Plan” then spelled out several conditions that such a formula would need to consider. The formula needed to benefit the United States regardless of its eventual adoption or rejection, if adopted be advantageous to the United States, and most importantly must function independent of reliance on continued good faith or enforcement.¹³⁰ This “Plan” became the foundation of the “Atoms for Peace” speech, establishing an International Atomic Energy Authority that both the United States and Soviet Union would contribute an agreed upon ratio of fissionable material towards. The “Plan” itself echoed the earlier Samuel Lubell plan that had suggested fixing the ratio of resources that nations might develop into armaments.

As the “Plan” developed, the administration gave increasing attention to the means of disseminating the President’s message. Once again, the administration contemplated using subordinates to spread Eisenhower’s message. Administration efforts to promote his message through intermediaries appears in the “Safety of the Republic” speech and attendant public relations campaign formulated, but never executed, by the administration during the late summer and early fall of 1953. Terminated by a 28 September 1953 memo circulated by the White House liaison officer to the Advertising Council and Special Assistant to the President James M.

¹²⁹ “Strauss ‘Plan’ Outline.” 26 October 1953. Central Files, Confidential Subject Series. Box 12, Folder “Candor 7.”

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Lambie,¹³¹ the Safety of the Republic campaign emerged from a phrase in various copies of the “Draft Presidential Speech for Atomic Energy.” Abbott Washburn, who advised Eisenhower on communications policies, circulated a memorandum to the Safety of the Republic committee that articulated the overall aims of the “Safety of the Republic” campaign.¹³²

The overall purpose is: ‘to make clear the magnitude of the effort required on the part of the United States and its allies’ (Jackson Committee Report, 8 July); to achieve ‘the closest possible partnership between the people and their government’ (FCDA proposal of 22 July); [and] ‘to give the public a true awareness of the basic facts concerning the world in which we live’ (White House/Advertising Council Memorandum of 8 July).¹³³

Taken together these aims suggest the underlying motivation of consensus building so zealously pursued by the President. The speech needed to persuade the people to voluntarily cooperate with the government. The President sought to co-opt the people into his ideological struggle against Communism. Moreover, after acquiring this partnership the administration could solicit the unequivocal support it believed cold war required. The final aim of the speech, formulated by the White House and the Advertising Council sought to frankly impart “the basic facts” of nuclear war on the American public. Yet the memo never spells out what the White House and Advertising Council meant by “the basic facts.” It would seem given the numerous drafts of speeches that the “basic facts” provided a degree of reassurance and familiarity, but not

¹³¹ James M. Lambie, Jr. Memo. 28 September 1953. Central Files: Confidential Files, Subject Series, Box 12, Folder labeled “Candor (8). For discussion of Lambie, see PDDE XVI: 1570, 1571. Eisenhower to Sherman Adams. 15 February 1955.

¹³² “Abbott Washburn, A U.S. Official, 88.” *The New York Times*. 20 December 2003. Pg. B. 22. 29 March 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/20/arts/abbott-washburn-a-us-official-88.html?n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/Subjects/P/Politics%20and%20Government&scp=1&sq=Abbott%20washburn%20obit&st=cse>

¹³³ Abbott Washburn Memo for C.D. Jackson. 10 September 1953. Central Files: Confidential Files, Subject Series. Box 12, Folder “Candor 8.”

understanding. The “basic facts” would not generate public debate, but rather build consensus by alleviating public anxieties. Ignorance created fear, whereas understanding and knowledge alleviated those fears, which constituted one of the basic assumptions of a “policy of candor.”¹³⁴

As a revised outline dated 9 September 1953 illustrates, the administration envisioned the “Safety of the Republic” campaign as a seven part integrated White House radio and television series in which high ranking administration officials would make speeches detailing government programs.¹³⁵ While the details of the proposed series remain unclear it appears that the administration, and specifically the Operations Coordinating Board headed by Robert Cutler, intended each program to include two or three presentations by Cabinet members, agency heads, and in one case a governor. The outline also specifies that Sherman Adams would “moderate” each presentation. This format advances several conclusions about the proposed “Safety of the Republic” campaign. By appealing to various sources of authority, the administration presumably sought to create public consensus by illustrating bureaucratic agreement. Presumably the presence of at least two officials meant to create the appearance of public debate. The program thus donned the nominal form if not the substance of democratic debate.

But while Lambie and others continued to work on developing the “Safety of the Republic” campaign throughout September, the 2 October 1953 C.D. Jackson memo to the President signaled the end of the proposed media campaign. The President presumably agreed with Jackson, who had written that “The speech should be televised, and the fact that you read it will add rather than detract from its importance and solemnity. Other personalities or the use of

¹³⁴ “Draft Presidential Speech on Atomic Energy.” 17 August 1953. Ann Whitman File: Administration Series. Box 9, Folder “Candor (2).” 3.

¹³⁵ “Revised—9-9-53 Safety of the Republic White House Radio –TV Series.” Central Files: Confidential Files, Subject Series. Box 12, Folder “Candor 8.”

props would distract.”¹³⁶ Eisenhower usually preferred and more effectively communicated informally, but he presumably saw the need for a formal address. While he preferred to avoid personally speaking, instead favoring to communicate through subordinates, he presumably recognized that he would personally need to deliver the “Atoms for Peace” speech and proposal. Delivery by the President would ensure the speech drew the largest audience and received the serious consideration necessary for it to effectively persuade international and domestic audiences.

The Irony of Candor

While C.D. Jackson and his associates continued work on Operation Candor over the summer of 1953, Eisenhower went on vacation to Denver Colorado from mid August through mid September. The President continued to attend to affairs of state from Lowry Air Force Base. Yet the direction of Operation Candor abruptly changed in mid August 1953. In the 14-15-16 August entry of C.D. Jackson’s personal log, he records, “Must see Lewis Strauss on some new information which may affect Candor.”¹³⁷ Strauss wanted to inform Jackson about the 12 August 1953 detonation of the first Soviet hydrogen bomb. Jackson met with Strauss and the President several days later on 19 August 1953 in New York City at the eighty-third birthday celebration of Bernard Baruch.¹³⁸ By that time the President had reviewed the most recent 17 August 1953 “Draft Presidential Speech on Atomic Energy.” Eisenhower’s editing reveals a man who wrote concisely, as he excised awkward constructions. The President also did not qualify his statements,

¹³⁶ C.D. Jackson Memo to the President. 2 October 1953. Ann Whitman File. Administrations Series. Box 9, Folder “Candor (1).”

¹³⁷ Jackson, C.D. Log 14-15-16 August 1953. *C.D. Jackson: Papers, 1931-67*. Box 68. Folder labeled “Log-1953 (3).”

¹³⁸ PDDE August 1953 Chronology. Eisenhower Memorial Commission. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/first-term/chronology/1953-10.htm>

as revealed in the opening sentence of his speech: “When this administration took office last January 25 we resolved to report to you from time to time as fully as possible about the problems confronting the nation and what we proposed to do about them.”¹³⁹ Eisenhower drew a line through “as fully as possible,” eliminating an awkward construction, a qualifying phrase, and ultimately acknowledgement of the restrictions on candor. By eliminating this acknowledgement, he might have intended to give the misimpression of complete disclosure. Any of these reasons might have motivated Eisenhower to delete this phrase. Yet the possibility that Eisenhower either did not intend to report to the American public “as fully as possible” or his unwillingness to state publicly that even candor has restrictions seems particularly important to consider.

As the text of the 17 August 1953 “Draft Presidential Speech on Atomic Energy” reveals, at this point the President presumed he would address an American audience in the first episode of a televised campaign that eventually became the “Safety of the Republic,” borrowed from one of the speeches capitalized key phrases. After editing the draft, a sentence revised by the President particularly highlights both the purpose and the irony of his candor. “It is time that the American public have the information required by it in formulating the decisions only the public can properly make. Undue secrecy must be thrown overboard, for in addition to fearing the known, it is unfair for the American public to be fearing unnecessarily the unknown.”¹⁴⁰ Edited mere days after the Soviet test of the hydrogen bomb, this draft evokes fear much more readily than later ones would. The President alludes here to a “decision,” that seems to hint at his contemplation of preventive war against the Soviet Union. The President’s appeal also uses

¹³⁹ “Draft Presidential Speech on Atomic Energy.” 17 August 1953. Ann Whitman File: Administration Series. Box 9, Folder “Candor (2).” 1.

¹⁴⁰ “Draft Presidential Speech on Atomic Energy.” 17 August 1953. Ann Whitman File: Administration Series. Box 9, Folder “Candor (2).” 3.

“candor” as a persuasive device, simultaneously evoking real fears while dissipating the fear of the unknown. By eliminating these unknown fears, Eisenhower sought to create the consensus necessary to generate either real support for an as yet undetermined disarmament proposal that would not seriously compromise American security. The Soviets, the President assumed, would probably reject this proposal. Therefore his speech would begin to mobilize support for nuclear war.

The 28 November 1953 “Draft of Presidential Speech Before the General Assembly of the United Nations” also appears to have received the President’s comments. “Pres. edit” appears scrawled on the first page of this draft.¹⁴¹ The comments on the draft certainly appear to bear characteristics of Eisenhower’s handwriting, although it also seems too neatly written for the President’s hand. By this point the President and his advisors had decided on both the audience as well as the venue, a significant decision that affected both the speeches form and tone. The resulting speech assumed a considerably tamer tone and approach than the earlier drafts. While earlier drafts had included a section touting American nuclear strength, these allusions to force had increasingly vanished. In his draft, the President revised passages so as to more concisely quantify for his audience the destructive powers of atomic weapons. Exemplary of this tendency is a passage that the President revised to state “Bombs in today’s stockpile are more than 30 times as destructive as were those of 1945.”¹⁴² Whereas before the sentence had compared the explosive power of the atomic bomb in terms of tons of dynamite, a familiar measure to most audiences, the President now adopted a proportion. This technique obscured the destructive

¹⁴¹ “Draft of Presidential Speech Before the General Assembly of the United Nations.” 28 November 1953. Subject Series, “Candor (5).” 1.

¹⁴² “Draft of Presidential Speech Before the General Assembly of the United Nations.” 28 November 1953. Subject Series, “Candor (5).” 5.

power of nuclear weapons by replacing a familiar measure with a proportion. The proportion conveyed increased yield in orders of magnitude that numbed audiences to the true destructive power of these weapons.

The President wanted the public to comprehend magnitude of the weapons in the nuclear arsenal, in keeping with the objectives outline in the aforementioned 10 September 1953 memo by the Abbott Washburn to C.D. Jackson that sought to “make clear the magnitude of the effort required on the part of the United States and its allies.”¹⁴³ To accurately grasp the magnitude of the effort, the President needed to inform the public of the magnitude of the weapons. As Eisenhower would also emphasize, “the knowledge now shared by four nations will soon be shared by others. Already two nations possess sufficient atomic resources so that either could inflict terrible damage upon any nation it might choose to attack.”¹⁴⁴ The President thus introduced the prospect of proliferation to cultivate the support of the international community for non-proliferation and disarmament, as one state would not want an aggressive neighbor to possess nuclear weapons. Statements like this coupled with an effective understanding of the magnitude of nuclear weapons would evoke public anxieties and build consensus for the President’s proposal for a international atomic stockpile dedicated to peaceful applications.

Atoms for Peace

Operation Candor culminated in the 8 December 1953 “Atoms for Peace” address before the General Assembly of the United Nations. The “Atoms for Peace” proposal according to

¹⁴³ Abbott Washburn Memo to C.D. Jackson. 10 September 1953. Central Files: Confidential Files, Subject Series. Box 12, Folder “Candor 8.”

¹⁴⁴ “Draft of Presidential Speech Before the General Assembly of the United Nations.” 28 November 1953. Subject Series, “Candor (5).” 7.

Eisenhower offered “at least one new avenue of peace which has not yet been well explored.”¹⁴⁵ Yet the Eisenhower administration did not at this juncture seriously consider nuclear disarmament or peace in the Cold War. The address instead represented an act of psychological warfare against the Soviets, as Robert Cutler revealed in a memorandum to Eisenhower.

The virtue of making the proposal lies not so much in the likelihood of their acceptability by the other side, but the opportunity provided to the U.S.—once the proposals have been made and not accepted—to put into effect a new and better (for the long run) basic policy than that we now have....Pursuit of our existing basic policy over a long period is likely to break down the free world’s economy, dislocate its individual liberties and free institutions, and provoke it through frustration into armed conflict. The new proposals offer the opportunity for a new road more safely to travel over many years to come.¹⁴⁶

If Eisenhower had only intended the “Atoms for Peace” proposal as a sincere effort to slow the arms race, then the proposal would have required the participation of the Soviet Union to succeed. Yet Cutler explicitly states that the success of the speech did not rest on the adoption of the proposal. In fact, Cutler assumed that the Soviets would “not accept” or reject the proposal.

Considering Eisenhower’s use of language, naturally certain statements acquire a special significance when included in successive drafts. The most notable of these implies the dramatic, if gradual, effect atomic weapons had on shaping Eisenhower’s rhetorical strategies. “I feel impelled to speak today in a language that in a sense is new—one which I, who have spent so

¹⁴⁵ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Atoms for Peace.” 8 December 1953. Address to the United Nations General Assembly. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19531208%20Atoms%20for%20Peace.htm>

¹⁴⁶ Cutler to Eisenhower. 19 October 1953. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954*, 2.2: 1233. Cited in Chernus, Ira. *Apocalypse Management: Eisenhower and the Discourse of National Insecurity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008. 70.

much of my life in the military profession, would have preferred never to use. The new language is the language of atomic warfare.”¹⁴⁷ Eisenhower clearly was not enamored with war. As this statement reveals, he only spoke about nuclear weapons with great reluctance, even when he felt forced to do so. But why in late 1953 did the President continue to refer to the language of atomic warfare as new? Atomic weapons had existed since 1945, eight years earlier. Yet the American public remained woefully uninformed about atomic weaponry.

The opinion polls collected by the Eisenhower administration during the formulation of Operation Candor support the argument that atomic and hydrogen weapons confused the American public. A 23 July 1953 letter from Claude Robinson, the President of Princeton’s Opinion Research Corporation, to James M. Lambie includes several released Gallup Poll questions asking the American public about nuclear weapons. In response to the question “Do you think Russia has been able to make a workable Atom Bomb, or not?” 69% of respondents answered yes, 14% replied no, while 17% had no opinion. When asked whether they had heard or read anything about the hydrogen bomb, 80% responded yes and 20% replied no. Finally when questioned about the comparable radius of destruction resulting from an atomic versus a hydrogen bomb detonation 5% claimed they had no idea versus 15% for the hydrogen bomb, 50% claimed from 1 to 7 miles versus 22% for the hydrogen bomb, 11% claimed 8 to 12 miles as the radius of destruction versus 14% for the hydrogen bomb, and finally 14% claimed 13 miles or greater for the atom bomb versus 29% for the hydrogen bomb.¹⁴⁸ These questions measured

¹⁴⁷ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Atoms for Peace.” 8 December 1953. Address to the United Nations General Assembly.

¹⁴⁸ Claude Robinson to James M. Lambie, Jr. 23 July 1953. Confidential File, Box 12, File Labeled “Candor and United Nations Speech 12/8/53 (1).” Researchers note: I had misidentified this document as belonging to the “Subject Series,” only to discover no such series exists. I had correctly transcribed the name of the folder and upon review of the Eisenhower Library finding guide located a folder with an identical heading. I had examined this Series and have complete confidence that the documented originated from the Confidential File. Yet I feel compelled to inform the reader of this discrepancy.

public knowledge as much as perceptions, by asking a graduated question that sought to gauge the perceived destructiveness of nuclear weaponry. While half the American public demonstrated a fairly accurate knowledge of atomic weapons, they were noticeably less informed about the radius of destruction caused by a hydrogen bomb. In most cases the public seemed confused about these weapons, as evidenced by the relatively equal distribution of opinion when asked about the radius of destruction produced by a hydrogen weapon.

The new language of atomic warfare also departed from earlier discussion of atomic warfare presumably because now the United States and Soviet Union had sufficient destructive capacity to wage nuclear war against each other. Whereas under Truman the United States maintained a relatively small arsenal of several dozen weapons, the size of the arsenal had dramatically expanded by the time Eisenhower assumed office. The Russian arsenal had also expanded dramatically. Thus talk of atomic warfare did introduce a new subject and style of speaking about atomic weapons into Eisenhower's public use of language.

Omissions from earlier drafts become equally important to understanding Eisenhower's rhetorical strategy. Earlier drafts of what became the "Atoms for Peace" address had contained references to an "age of peril." This phrase especially pleased Eisenhower, as he complemented its author, speechwriter Emmet Hughes, "This phrase of not an instant but an age of peril—I like that fine."¹⁴⁹ The phrase appeared in Eisenhower's 19 May 1953 Radio Address to the American People. As late as mid September 1953 speechwriters also included this phrase in drafts of the "Safety of the Republic" speech the President intended to give. Yet earlier references that appeared in Eisenhower's drafts to an "age of peril" do not appear in the "Atoms for Peace"

¹⁴⁹ Chernus, Ira. *Apocalypse Management: Eisenhower and the Discourse of National Insecurity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008. 55.

speech. While this omission at least partly stems from the fact that Eisenhower is not speaking to an exclusively domestic audiences, it also indicates the essentially optimistic purpose of “Atoms of Peace.” Moreover, it suggests Eisenhower did not want to evoke popular anxieties as readily after the Soviet test of a hydrogen device, nor did he want their lingering psychological fallout to cloud the public mind in the persistent insecurity suggested by the phrase “age of peril.”

Eisenhower’s use of transitions in his “Atoms for Peace” speech illustrates how events like the Soviet hydrogen bomb test precipitated changes in his rhetorical strategy. While the overall hopeful tone of the speech sought to assuage public anxieties, Eisenhower’s short declarative statements at key transition moments could evoke and even accentuate public fears. Two such statements especially punctuated the hopeful tenor of Eisenhower’s speech. Transitioning from the American history with atomic bombs, Eisenhower states, “But the dread secret, and the fearful engines of atomic might, are not ours alone [.]” which he follows a few lines later with the dramatic declaration that “The secret is also known by the Soviet Union.”¹⁵⁰ Both of these passages combine to form two crucial transitions. The first statement uses particularly fear laden adjectives like “dread” and “fearful” to evoke public fears. Eisenhower deftly uses the prospect of the Soviet atomic bomb to raise public fears, upsetting the emotional equilibrium of the public by wrenching them out of their comfort zones before persuasively presenting his proposal as a solution to their anxiety, thereby soliciting the endorsement of the not just the American but international audience.

Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace” also sought to assuage the spiritual unrest that he evoked by appealing to American anxiety over Soviet acquisition of the hydrogen bomb. This

¹⁵⁰ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Atoms for Peace.” 8 December 1953. Address to the United Nations General Assembly.

desire to mitigate fear particularly resulted in the use of the religious imagery so prevalent in the speech. The national purpose of the United States, embodied in the President's proposal, promised to help lift the world "out of the dark chamber of horrors into the light." The President frankly admitted, "I know that in a world divided [...] salvation cannot be attained by one dramatic act." Eisenhower further spoke of carrying a "new conception" into diplomatic talks, pledging to "find the way by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life." This emotional appeal assuaged fears by employing religious imagery of rebirth and salvation. Timing might also have contributed to the prevalence of religious terms in the President's address. He delivered this speech in the midst of the Christmas season. Certainly Eisenhower could not have chosen a more appropriate season to address the fears of the public than one attributed to the "Prince of Peace." Americans would derive added reassurance from the presence of loved ones gathered to celebrate the holiday. Eisenhower cannot have meant this for a Communist audience with atheist convictions. Rather his remarks appealed to the American tradition of messianic nationalism founded on the John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity."¹⁵¹

The "Atoms for Peace" speech feigned action to assuage public fears of atomic weapons. The "Atoms for Peace" address gave the public an illusion of control, much like later efforts directed by the Federal Civil Defense Administration. The style employed by Eisenhower sought to assuage public fears, foster domestic support for his initiatives through his token support for disarmament, and finally build support as he rejected the prospect of imperfect peace for the arms race. Despite all the allusions to the messianic or redemptive powers of atomic energy, this

¹⁵¹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Atoms for Peace." 8 December 1953. Address to the United Nations General Assembly.

proposal more accurately represented an appeal to a fictional “middle way.” The outcome of the “Atoms for Peace” campaign did not make Americans safer; it only made them feel safer.

The President-Televised

When Dwight D. Eisenhower assumed the office of President in 1953, millions of Americans witnessed his inauguration from the comfort of their homes. Eisenhower’s presidency coincided with an important development in communications media: the growth of television. The election of 1952 was the first to include television ads. By 1953 over half of American families owned a television set.¹⁵² In 1952 only 30 percent of Americans owned a television set. By the time Eisenhower left office in 1961, 90 percent of Americans would own a television set.¹⁵³ Television was only a stage from which Eisenhower spoke. But this new visual venue favored Eisenhower, who ran his 1952 and 1956 campaigns on the image of his beaming smile. During the campaign, Edward Folliard of the Washington Post asked an older man at a campaign rally for his reaction to Eisenhower. “I’d like to have old Ike cook me a steak.”¹⁵⁴ Eisenhower related to people in a neighborly manner; he would fit in at a barbeque with the Jones’ next door. Television catered to Eisenhower because it focused more on visual communication and less on verbal communication. This greatly aided Eisenhower, who often spoke ungrammatically and whose argument could become incomprehensible as a result. For a man who built his political campaign on an image, television offered him access to a national audience of millions of voters. He would use television more frequently and effectively than his predecessor, Harry Truman.

¹⁵² Schwartz, Richard A. "Television During the Cold War." *Cold War Culture: Media and the Arts, 1945–1990*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2000. *American History Online*. Facts On File, Inc. 28 March 2009 <http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE52&iPin=CWC695&SingleRecord=True>

¹⁵³ Allen 7.

¹⁵⁴ Allen 17.

Truman had only appeared on television once every three or four months.¹⁵⁵ So Eisenhower's presidency would become the first to be televised in a meaningful way. For this reason, Eisenhower's use of television to address the public on the subject of nuclear weapons merits discussion.

The question of what role television would play in the Eisenhower administration emerge early in his presidency. At least initially Eisenhower expressed strong reservations about the new medium. A revised outline dated 9 September 1953 of the "Safety of the Republic" campaign reveals Eisenhower's initial relationship with television during his presidency. The "Safety of the Republic" campaign emerged from Operation Candor, a government campaign of disclosure intended to increase public awareness of and support for the efforts of the administration to expand the American nuclear arsenal. As such, the campaign constituted a precursor to the 8 December 1953 presidential address to the United Nations General Assembly, entitled "Atoms for Peace," that shared the goals of Operation Candor. Both Operation Candor and the evolution of the "Atoms for Peace" speech will receive in depth discussion later in this chapter. Yet these later media events merit introduction here because of the extensive television coverage they either proposed or would receive. The aforementioned 9 September 1953 outline began and terminated the proposed "Safety of the Republic" campaign with television appearances by the President. An unidentified author recorded in a handwritten comment that "the President shies away from T.V."¹⁵⁶ This outline appears to have circulated between high level administration officials, particularly the head of the Atomic Energy Commission Admiral Lewis Strauss, special assistant to the President for national security affairs Robert Cutler, presidential speechwriter

¹⁵⁵ Allen 22.

¹⁵⁶ "Revised--9-9-53 Safety of the Republic White House Radio—TV Series" Outline. 9 September 1953. Central Files: Confidential Files, Subject Series, Box 12, "Candor" 8.

Emmet Hughes, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Arthur Radford, and Assistant Secretary of Defense Frank Nash. Presumably one of these officials, probably Cutler or Hughes because of their roles in Eisenhower's presidential campaign, wrote the comment on the outline. This handwritten remark raises two important questions; did the President avoid television, and if so, then why?

The President's reservations about television might have emerged in the early days of his presidential primary campaign. Eisenhower, intent on announcing his presidential campaign from his hometown of Abilene, invited AT&T and CBS to cover his announcement, carrying it live. In a disastrous turn of events, weather complicated the start of Eisenhower's media campaign. As they still recount in Abilene, a rainstorm struck just prior to airtime, leaving Eisenhower's neighbors and supporters unsheltered.¹⁵⁷ This unfortunate series of events, historian Herbert Parmet argues, almost ended not only Eisenhower's presidential campaign but his political career.¹⁵⁸ This argument seems a little extreme. But this event certainly embarrassed Eisenhower. He learned a powerful lesson about the dangers of live television coverage. On live television he could not correct mistakes or control unpredictable conditions like the weather. In the future he would better control the circumstances under which he delivered all televised remarks, whether live or taped.

Eisenhower initially limited his television appearances as president, as much because of technical considerations as personal reasons. Early television cameras proved "bulky and unwieldy," further complicated by lights, cables, and other production equipment.¹⁵⁹ But

¹⁵⁷ Allen 24. Also, my thanks to John Zutavern who told me this anecdote during my time researching in Abilene.

¹⁵⁸ Cited in Allen 24.

¹⁵⁹ Allen 25.

gradually television would, over the course of Eisenhower's presidency, become an instrument of persuasion uniquely suited to his style of governing. In the 1952 campaign, Eisenhower's supporters had introduced the memorable and successful "Ike for President" television advertisement. The ad featured a line of cartoon citizens from all walks of life marching, carrying pickets with "Ike" written on them, and an elephant pulling a drum with a poster of Eisenhower's grinning face on its midsection at the head of the marchers. The marchers moving rank and file in the same direction perhaps unintentionally demonstrated Eisenhower's desire for consensus. Eisenhower would find television convenient because it would allow him, in the words of his personal economic advisor Gabriel Hauge, to connect more directly and personally with his audience. Television, Hauge explained in May and June 1953 letters to Sherman Adams, "is a medium that provides sight, sound, motion, immediate actions, and creates great intimacy."¹⁶⁰ Television particularly catered to Eisenhower's more informal style; a style of persuasion cultivated by years communicating with staffs, in conferences with military and political officials, and informally meeting with small groups of soldiers on tours of the frontlines.¹⁶¹ As numerous sources recount, Eisenhower communicated best in a more intimate setting that did not require the eloquence of a speech so much as personal appeal.¹⁶²

Yet to effectively use television, Eisenhower needed an advisor familiar with the medium. Actor, director, and producer Robert Montgomery assumed this new position as the President's advisor on radio and television appearances. Montgomery, the director and producer of NBC's television series "Robert Montgomery Presents," had worked with Eisenhower during the 1952

¹⁶⁰ Allen 21.

¹⁶¹ Allen 6.

¹⁶² Allen 11, 21-26. Also Ambrose Vol. II: 17-20, 53.

campaign, advising the candidate on his delivery of speeches.¹⁶³ In this capacity Montgomery enabled Eisenhower to overcome his reservations about television. Montgomery significantly contributed to how Eisenhower presented himself in televised messages, helping the President to more comfortably exercise his persuasive style through the new medium, and consulting with the President on media content. Eisenhower consulted Montgomery in several instances when he delivered public messages involving nuclear weapons, usually on issues of style but also on thematic content.

Montgomery helped Eisenhower produce a 5 April 1954 televised message on hydrogen weapons just days after AEC chairman Lewis Strauss commented at a 31 March 1954 press conference that the hydrogen bomb the United State had just detonated at Bikini atoll capable of destroying the metropolitan area of the city of New York.¹⁶⁴ Eisenhower had invited Strauss to speak after the contamination of a Japanese fishing boat, the Lucky Dragon No. 5, sparked worldwide concern about hydrogen weapons, hope that the AEC chairman would dispel the public anxiety. The 5 April broadcast meant to assuage public fears about hydrogen weapons testing by the Americans and Soviets. In the words of author Craig Allen, Montgomery suggested that Eisenhower, “ad-lib the entire speech and use not words but the force of his personality to wring the emotion out of the H-bomb issue. To enhance the effect, Montgomery directed Eisenhower to leave his chair, walk slowly toward the cameras, and sit casually on the front of his desk.”¹⁶⁵ The direction Montgomery provided conformed to Eisenhower’s persuasive style, presenting the President acting natural. Eisenhower’s natural actions and movements

¹⁶³ Barker, Jennifer M.. "Montgomery, Robert" *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. 26 March 2009 ; <http://www.anb.org/articles/18/18-02055.html>

¹⁶⁴ President’s News Conference. Transcript of Lewis L. Strauss remarks. 31 March 1953. Ann Whitman File, Press Conference Series. Box 2, Folder 31 March 1954.

¹⁶⁵ Allen 33.

acquired a mundane quality, as his body language captured a sense of candor. Montgomery presumably wanted Eisenhower standing to display his rigid military posture and the authority it commanded. As Eisenhower stood he leaned forward, thrusting his head towards the camera and narrowing his eyes: speaking with confidence directly to the viewer as if convincing them of a shared conviction. Eisenhower's brows never furrowed in an expression of anxiety. If anything the corners of his lips hinted at a smile, as he spoke like a military man out of the side of his mouth. As Eisenhower's contemporary, the *Los Angeles Times* reporter Holmes Alexander observed: "The thing that's noticed and remarked among reporters is the way he smiles, not ear to ear at all but out of the side of his mouth. A fellow reporter was telling me that all professional soldiers do that. They get used to bawling commands like 'Squads right!' over their shoulders."¹⁶⁶ Eisenhower's natural movements express in body language what the "candor" Eisenhower wanted to express when speaking to the public.

Montgomery put Eisenhower at ease, only minimally directing him to elicit the natural response so crucial to making Ike's appeal persuasive and convincing. After Montgomery had interviewed several White House personnel, he reached the conclusion that they wanted to evoke the informal style in the President's televised messages of Franklin Roosevelt's "fireside chats" from which a generation of American drew reassurance and comfort.¹⁶⁷ sMontgomery managed to make the President comfortable in front of the camera. Comfortable, Eisenhower could persuade the public without his body unintentionally betraying any misgivings. Eisenhower would later confirm this reaction when he commented, "Just let me get up and talk to the people.

¹⁶⁶ Alexander, Holmes. "The Smiles of Ike." *Los Angeles Times*. 27 March 1953. Pg. A5. ProQuest Historical Newspaper. 29 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=2&did=426311391&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238359770&clientId=17822>

¹⁶⁷ Allen 26, 27.

I can get through to them that way. I don't feel I do when I have to read a speech or use that damn teleprompter. It's not me and I feel uncomfortable."¹⁶⁸ Instead of a speech or a prepared remark, Eisenhower persuaded the public through his informal style that he lacked guile and spoke honestly. Montgomery's direction ensured that Eisenhower too stayed on message.

Montgomery did not intrude into matters of content, especially as evidenced in the 5 April 1954 message. But Montgomery continued to influence Eisenhower's style. An 18 August 1954 memo from Eisenhower to Montgomery reveals that the President had consulted with Montgomery prior to the release of the "documentary" film, "The Year of the Big Decision," whose content Eisenhower shaped. The classification of the film as a "documentary" illustrates that Eisenhower had learned at West Point and throughout the subsequent years the importance of controlling the facts. The President could exercise considerable editorial influence in this documentary, produced by, in his own exaggerated and politically neutral words, "the political movement" named "Citizens for Eisenhower." Eisenhower did not hesitate to use nuclear weapons as a persuasive device in the film. "We have already agreed," Eisenhower writes, "that (1) the war sequence should be cut down and that (2) the atomic bomb sequence should be used toward the end to illustrate and emphasize the need for looking ahead toward peace."¹⁶⁹ The President alludes to his prior consultation with Montgomery when he voices their mutual agreement on this matter of style.

Fallout

On 1 March 1954, the United States of American detonated a hydrogen bomb on tiny Bikini atoll in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The test, codenamed "Bravo," was part of the

¹⁶⁸ Allen 33.

¹⁶⁹ PDDE XV: 1252, 1253. Eisenhower Memo to Robert Montgomery. 18 August 1954.

Castle Series of nuclear tests scheduled throughout the spring and summer of that year.

Hydrogen weapons were still new in 1954. The United States had detonated its first hydrogen bomb in November 1952. The Soviet Union had followed almost a year later, detonating its first hydrogen bomb in August 1953. Neither scientists, government officials, nor the public had much experience with these new and devastating weapons at the time of the Castle series.

Scientists had intended to expand their knowledge of hydrogen weapons with the Castle series of nuclear tests: the first American hydrogen weapons tests since 1952. The “Bravo” test produced a fifteen megaton yield, larger than anticipated, forcing the United States to evacuate nearby islands. On 14 March a Japanese fishing boat, the Lucky Dragon No. 5, returned to port. It quickly became apparent that the fishermen on board had been contaminated along with their ship and cargo by radioactive fallout.

The story broke almost immediately, appearing on page 1 of *The New York Times* on 17 March.¹⁷⁰ Public interest mushroomed after the Lucky Dragon caught the attention of the American press, frequently appearing over the next week and a half after 17 March on page 1 of *The New York Times*. The contamination of the Japanese fishing boat implied that something different had occurred during the hydrogen bomb test. Press coverage created anxiety and prompted a public outcry for an explanation of what had gone wrong with the test. After all, the United States had conducted several nuclear tests, and of those tests only “Bravo” had created radioactive fallout that contaminated civilians. Questions about the 1 March 1954 test began to appear during the President’s press conferences. The Lucky Dragon incident raised important

¹⁷⁰ “Nuclear Downpour Hit Ship During Test at Bikini—U.S. Inquiry Asked; Radioactive Fish Sought in Japan.” *The New York Times*. 17 March 1954. Pg. 1. 29 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=92820914&SrchMode=1&sid=3&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=POD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1236137818&clientId=17822>

questions about nuclear weapons that impelled the Eisenhower administration to discuss nuclear weapons and address public concerns. This crisis, then, affords the opportunity to examine how Eisenhower discussed the sensitive subject of nuclear weapons and radiation with the American public.

The immediate reaction of some government officials reveals a great deal about how fears of espionage shaped unwillingness of the administration to speak about nuclear weapons. Initially several high ranking administration officials including AEC Chairman Lewis Strauss suspected that the Lucky Dragon was a “Red spy outfit.”¹⁷¹ Hagerty further cryptically records in his unedited and unpublished diary that neither he nor the President wanted to “say so publicly” because doing so “would tip our hand on other stuff we also know about.”¹⁷² Eisenhower generally refrained from commenting about nuclear weapons at least in part because he feared disclosing state secrets. But by 20 May 1954 it became evident to the United States Ambassador to Japan, John M. Allison, that “espionage or provocation by vessel or crew do not seem be in picture. No (repeat no) intelligence available our agencies has yet provided basis for initial US suspicion.”¹⁷³ Allison communicated his findings to the President that communist espionage had not contributed to the Lucky Dragon incident.

Trying to observe James Hagerty’s 23 March 1954 advice to “hold off on any discussion of bombs at press conference until Admiral Strauss returns from Pacific in week to ten days,”¹⁷⁴ the President initially tried to defer answering questions at his 24 March 1954 press conference

¹⁷¹ Ferrell, Robert H, ed. *The Diary of James C. Hagerty: Eisenhower Mid-Course, 1954-1955*. 40, 42.

¹⁷² Hagerty Diary. (unpublished). 2 April 1954. James C. Hagerty Papers, Box 1, Folder dated January 1-April 6, 1954.

¹⁷³ Ambassador Allison to John Foster Dulles. 20 May 1954. Ann Whitman File, Dulles-Herter Series, Box 3, Folders labeled “May 1954 (1) (2).”

¹⁷⁴ Ferrell 32,33.

until the Chairman returned. Yet Pat Monroe representing *Salt Lake City Deseret News* backhandedly criticized the President when remarking that “in your Operation Candid Speech, you said that the free people of the world must be armed with the significant facts, that is, atomic facts, of today’s existence, and yet a lot of us have found what has been called the uranium curtain of secrecy at the Atomic Energy Commission closing ever tighter.”¹⁷⁵ Apparently Monroe had observed the contradiction that while the administration had promised disclosure, it practiced secrecy. The President commiserated with Monroe and promised him that he would review upon Admiral Strauss’ return “the limits of the things of which I can talk about.”¹⁷⁶ Eisenhower may very well have had questions about the limits imposed by national security on what he could say about nuclear weapons. He need not have had only a single motivation for evading discussion of nuclear weapons.

Eisenhower’s style of replying to other questions during the course of the press conference reveals another motivation for evading questions about nuclear weapons. When in the course of the press conference George Herman of CBS radio specifically asked about the effects of the Lucky Dragon incident on anti-American propaganda in the Far East, Eisenhower did state that “this time something must have happened that we have never experienced before, and must have surprised and astonished the scientists.”¹⁷⁷ The President could not fully evade answering questions about the Lucky Dragon. So Eisenhower disclosed his estimation that something different had occurred during this nuclear test. Now Eisenhower presumably did not mean this “something” to infer danger and rouse public fears. He merely meant something new and unforeseen had occurred, not necessarily something dangerous. But the very admission of

¹⁷⁵ PPP 1954 342.

¹⁷⁶ PPP 1954 342.

¹⁷⁷ PPP 1954 346.

ignorance and uncertainty would naturally incite public anxieties because it implied a lack of control. But while this might have inflamed public anxieties further, the President further relayed that Strauss had informed him “that the reports were far more serious than the actual results justified.”¹⁷⁸ This statement reveals that the President tried his best to downplay the fear evoked by the Lucky Dragon incident in the American public.

Eisenhower successfully delayed an official response for a full month before holding a press conference on the nuclear tests. But he eventually kept his promise to Monroe and delivered additional information about the test to the press on 31 March 1954. The President would not himself speak about the Pacific tests but instead delegated this task to the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission Admiral Lewis L. Strauss. Strauss had by his own admission just returned after witnessing the 26 March shot in the Castle test series.¹⁷⁹ The President’s decision to delegate such the important responsibility of delivering the response of the administration raises an obvious question; why not deliver the response himself?

The Chairman accompanied Eisenhower to his 31 March 1954 press conference with a prepared statement for the reporters and would answer questions immediately after the President finished. This enabled Eisenhower to defer any questions he received from reporters about nuclear weapons to the Strauss’ conference to follow immediately thereafter. Presumably the President wanted Strauss’ message first transmitted verbatim because “Newsmen completely surprised when we walked into conference with Strauss [sic] –except the wire men who I had tipped on confidential basis 1 hour ahead to allow them to set up machinery for first coverage of

¹⁷⁸ PPP 1954 347.

¹⁷⁹ “Statement by Lewis L. Strauss, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.” 1. 31 March 1954. Ann Whitman File, Press Conference Series. Box 2, Folder 31 March 1954.

Strauss statement [sic].”¹⁸⁰ Hagerty tipped the wire men so they could provide instant coverage of Strauss’ prepared remarks without commentary, thereby ensuring the transmission of the Chairman’s message. Apparently Eisenhower also wanted to surprise the reporters. Surprise conferred Strauss and the President with the advantage of preparation while they would deprive the reporters of the opportunity of preparing difficult or incisive questions. Eisenhower planned to confer Strauss with every advantage he could when addressing reporters; a prepared statement, the element of surprise, and the immediate transmission of his prepared statement.

Strauss’ prepared statement framed the need for qualitatively greater nuclear weapons, revisiting the rationale for the development of the hydrogen bomb, further venturing that “There is good reason to believe that [the Soviets] had begun work on this weapon substantially before we did.”¹⁸¹ This statement meant to evoke fear that the Soviets would technologically surpass the United States in its means of destruction so as not to diminish American public support for nuclear testing. Eisenhower and Strauss both believed continued nuclear testing crucial to maintaining national security and the American lead in the arms race. So a desire to dissipate public anxiety about the tests motivated both men. Hagerty confirms that this desire motivated both men when the previous day he wrote as much in his diary. The President, Hagerty, and Strauss agreed that “Strauss [sic] would have proposed statement on Pacific tests, setting at ease fears that bomb had gotten out of control.”¹⁸² Eisenhower had ensured that Strauss had a prepared statement to distribute and read from so that the Chairman would not go off message. This statement disclosed that the hydrogen bomb had exceeded expectations. But these results

¹⁸⁰ Hagerty Diary (unpublished). Entry 31 March 1954. James C. Hagerty Papers, Box 1, Folder dated January 1-April 6, 1954.

¹⁸¹ “Statement by Lewis L. Strauss, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.” 1. 31 March 1954. Ann Whitman File, Press Conference Series. Box 2, Folder 31 March 1954.

¹⁸² Hagerty Diary (unpublished). Entry 30 March 1954. James C. Hagerty Papers, Box 1, Folder dated January 1-April 6, 1954.

were not cause for concern. The Chairman rejected what he referred to as exaggerations that the tests had been “devastating” or “out of control.”¹⁸³ Strauss offered the public this denial and his explanation as a means of restoring the perception of control. Denial alone could not have restored public faith in the ability of the Atomic Energy Commission to control nuclear tests. But an explanation demonstrated knowledge and certainty, and that confidence implied control. And to further ease public fears of fallout from nuclear tests, Strauss in his statement attributed the radioactive contamination to unanticipated wind conditions.

But while the administration sought to persuade the public and the press by circulating the Strauss statement among the assembled reporters, the success of this presentation hinged on the Chairman’s ability to answer the reporters’ questions. After he largely avoided disclosing any alarming information to reporters, he called on Richard Wilson of Cowles Publications. Wilson initially asked, “Admiral Strauss, can you go beyond this statement and describe the area of the blast, the effectiveness of the blast, and give a general description of what actually happened when the H-bomb went off?” Wilson asked for nothing less than complete disclosure of the destructive capacity of the “Bravo” hydrogen bomb. And just as Strauss began to answer, the President interrupted. “Why not depend on these pictures they are all going to see?”¹⁸⁴ Eisenhower referred to a film of the Mike shot from the November 1952 Ivy test: the first test of a hydrogen bomb. Strauss took the President’s hint, and stated that “The area, if I were to describe it specifically, would be translatable into the number of megatons involved, which is a

¹⁸³ “Statement by Lewis L. Strauss, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.” 2. 31 March 1954. Ann Whitman File, Press Conference Series. Box 2, Folder 31 March 1954.

¹⁸⁴ President’s News Conference. Transcript of Lewis L. Strauss remarks. 31 March 1953. Ann Whitman File, Press Conference Series. Box 2, Folder 31 March 1954. 37.

matter of military secrecy.”¹⁸⁵ Eisenhower presumably breathed a sigh of relief hearing this answer. Strauss had evaded the trap.

But then Strauss continued. “The effects, you said the effectiveness-I don’t know exactly what you meant by that, sir, so I don’t know how to answer it.” This statement tacitly invited Wilson to elaborate, which he did:

But many people in Congress, I think many elsewhere, have been reaching out and grasping for some information as to what happens when the H-bomb goes off, how big is the area of destruction in its various stages; and what I am asking you for now is some enlightenment on that subject.¹⁸⁶

Strauss had wisely read the President’s interruption before and evaded answering. He had a plausible reason to not answer the question; the question asked about sensitive information related to national security. Did the reporter really expect Strauss to answer his question?

Maybe a little overconfident, Admiral Strauss chose to reply to the Wilson’s question. “Well, the nature of an H-Bomb, Mr. Wilson, is that, in effect, it can be made to be as large as you wish, as large as the military requirement demands, that is to say, an H-bomb can be made as—large enough to take out a city.”¹⁸⁷ There followed after the Chairman’s disclosure, “(A chorus of ‘What?’).”¹⁸⁸ The reporters expressed their astonishment. Presumably Strauss mistook the reporters’ shock, and thinking they had not heard him, repeated himself. After repeating his answer, Strauss further elaborated that this meant “Any city.” Evidently still not comprehending

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid 37, 38.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid 38.

what he had just disclosed, Merriman Smith pressed Strauss further. “Any city, New York?” Admiral Strauss immediately replied, “The metropolitan area, yes.”¹⁸⁹ A reporter then asked Strauss how much damage a hydrogen bomb would do to Washington, D.C. Strauss claimed he could not comment at that time because they had not fully calibrated the measurements, but expressed a desire to comment further. The press conference ended shortly after Strauss made these comments.

The reporters’ astonished response raises an important question; how much did the American public know about the hydrogen bomb? Apparently Eisenhower wondered about this same question. He had personally requested and received the results of research surveys conducted across the country by the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain from its president Roy Howard in February 1954. The research indicated that “the people were baffled by such things as test-ban treaties and megatonnage; they seemed simply to want a president who could calm fears.”¹⁹⁰ Up to this point the public had remained largely uninformed as to the radius of destruction produced by a hydrogen bomb. Neither the President nor any other official had disclosed that hydrogen weapons could “be as large as you wish.” Gallup Poll results mentioned earlier in relation to Operation Candor further confirm these results. This research presumably confirmed to Eisenhower how he understood his role as president. He wanted to calm the fears of the public so that he could continue nuclear testing, which he deemed essential to winning the Cold War.

Despite his earlier claims of candor, Eisenhower, who had stuck around to listen to Strauss, commented, “Lewis, I wouldn’t have answered that one that way. I would have said:

¹⁸⁹ Ibid 39.

¹⁹⁰ Allen 39, 221 n. 39.

‘Wait for the movie.’ But other than that I thought you handled it very well.”¹⁹¹ After receiving this critique from Eisenhower, Strauss thought he had angered the President, a thought that Hagerty dismissed in his diary.¹⁹² “[The] President has [a] habit of reviewing actions with people and expressing what he would have done in [a] similar situation. Just like [a] postmortem on a bridge hand.”¹⁹³ Yet Hagerty’s claim lacks any corroborating support of similar reactions evidenced in the historical record. Regardless, Strauss had disregarded Eisenhower’s hint that the Admiral should evade Wilson’s question. Strauss had handled the last question admirably. His demonstration of sincerity would convince the public that the administration wanted to pursue a policy of candor, even when candor was not possible.

The 31 March 1954 press conference, then, reveals a great deal about Eisenhower spoke about nuclear weapons. Presumably Eisenhower wanted to avoid answering reporters’ questions about a sensitive topic like nuclear weapons. If he had to speak about nuclear weapons, then he intended to control the environment in which he delivered those remarks. He recognized that press conferences invited mistakes, like the one committed by Strauss. But unlike Strauss, Eisenhower could ill afford mistakes. If Strauss made a mistake, then it might hurt him individually. If Eisenhower made a mistake, then his mistake could potentially have detrimental effects on national security. So despite inclination to condemn Eisenhower for seemingly pawning his responsibilities off on others, it remains important to recognize that the President had a duty to perform. As a general, Eisenhower had ordered men to their deaths. Now he dispatched Strauss into a precarious situation.

¹⁹¹ Ferrell 36, Ambrose 169.

¹⁹² Ferrell 37.

¹⁹³ Ferrell 37.

The following morning the front page of *The New York Times* carried a map with the New York metropolitan area with a bulls-eye drawn over it, couching the city in the crosshairs and capturing the extent of destruction that would follow the detonation of a hydrogen bomb.¹⁹⁴ This headline stoked fears and captured the acute sense of public anxiety. Strauss' bungling of the press conference meant that now the President would need to deliver an address assuaging public fears of the hydrogen bomb. But Eisenhower would not try to assuage public fear by delivering his prepared remarks at a press conference. He knew that he might make a mistake at a press conference that would undermine his goal of allaying the fears of the public, like Strauss had. Instead, the President planned to speak on the hydrogen bomb in his 5 April 1954 radio and television address to the American public. The President had planned since at least 27 March 1954 to deliver what Hagerty referred to as the President's "fear speech," noting that the "President [is] quite excited about [this] deal."¹⁹⁵ In this speech, originally intended as a rebuke to Joseph McCarthy,¹⁹⁶ Eisenhower proposed to speak only from his notes for fifteen minutes about "fear." Yet the President spoke about fear not to evoke the emotion but out of a desire to assuage it. While after the 31 March 1954 press conference the President incorporated nuclear weapons into his speech, Eisenhower originally intended to speak about fear. Addressing the subject of fear, Eisenhower appealed to the reassuring memory of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's proclamation that the American public had "nothing left to fear but fear itself." In his 5 April 1954 address, Eisenhower sought to appeal to the memory of Roosevelt's speech as a means of immunizing the American public to fear. Importantly, the President's television advisor Robert

¹⁹⁴ Laurence, William L. "Vast Power Bared." *The New York Times*. 1 April 1954. Pg. 1. ProQuest Historical Library. 29 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=22&did=92824226&SrchMode=1&sid=9&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238391795&clientId=17822>

¹⁹⁵ Ferrell 35.

¹⁹⁶ Ferrell 31.

Montgomery, instructed Eisenhower who as of yet remained unaccustomed to reading off a teleprompter, to ad lib the entire address. Eisenhower spoke without prepared remarks, aided only by several oversized cue cards outlined with bullet point he wanted to make. The President's delivery therefore provides insight into how Eisenhower spoke about nuclear weapons.

Instead of delivering a speech that exclusively dealt with nuclear weapons, Eisenhower addressed the topic of fear in his 5 April speech. The President did not want to speak about nuclear weapons or weapons testing because he did not want to exacerbate public fears. A presidential speech dealing exclusively with nuclear weapons and delivered to assuage fears could instead evoke them through extensive discussion. Strauss had discussed nuclear weapons at the 31 March press conference. He had disclosed details about nuclear weapons the public had not previously known. Eisenhower wanted to avoid attracting public attention to the nuclear weapons program lest he intensify public fears or worse inspire public debate. So he only briefly touched on nuclear weapons, and mostly evaded discussion of them in his 5 April speech. In his remarks to the American public, Eisenhower claimed that the hydrogen bomb did not present a greater threat than other technological innovations of the recent past. "They rather indicate how far the advances in of science have outraced our social consciousness, how much more we have developed scientifically than we are capable of handling emotionally and intellectually. So that is one of the reasons that we have this great concern of which the hydrogen bomb is merely a dramatic symbol."¹⁹⁷ Rather than a weapon that threatened the existence of the United States, and eventually the world, the hydrogen bomb merely represented the dramatic technological

¹⁹⁷ "Text of Ike's TV and Radio Talk to the Nation." Chicano Daily Tribune. 6 April 1954. 29 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=506375222&SrchMode=1&sid=11&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&ROT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238392004&clientId=17822>

advances of a generation. Hydrogen weapons were “indicative of things that happened to us,” a passive construction, rather than devices of warfare actively sought by men like Eisenhower who had lobbied for the development of the hydrogen bomb. Instead of speaking with candor, Eisenhower artfully evaded confronting the topic of hydrogen weapons testing. He also avoided discussing the morality of hydrogen weapons. The President merely reaffirmed his belief that nuclear weapons were morally ambiguous.

At Eisenhower’s next press conference on 7 April 1954, Merriman Smith posed the first question of the day to the President. Not surprisingly Smith asked about the subject on everyone’s mind: nuclear weapons. Would the United States “continue to make bigger and bigger H-Bombs,” Smith asked, and were American scientists learning anything applicable to the peaceful uses of atomic energy?

The President. No, we have no intention of going into a program of seeing how big these can be made. I don’t know whether the scientists would place any limit; and, therefore, you hear these remarks about “blow-out,” which, I think, is even blowing a hole through the entire atmosphere [...] We know of no military requirement that could lead us into the production of a bigger bomb than has already been produced [...] at the moment I know of no direct connection or direct application of the hydrogen bomb principle to peacetime power.¹⁹⁸

In his answer, the President assuaged fears by emphasizing a stipulation that Strauss had made during the 31 March conference: that military requirements would govern the size of hydrogen bombs. The President elaborated that he did not know of any military requirement that would

¹⁹⁸ PPP 1954 381.

necessitate larger nuclear weapons, thereby limiting the possibilities opened by Strauss. Eisenhower also sought to limit future Soviet efforts at developing larger hydrogen bombs when he alluded to the concept of “blow-out.” Why would the President, who usually did not introduce new concepts like “blow-out” that might evoke fear, nevertheless disclose this particular item when trying to assuage public fears elicited by the 1 March 1954 test? The President very likely did not see a need for a larger bomb; he may even have developed second thoughts about the hydrogen bomb after the 12 August 1953 Soviet test. Instead of pursuing larger bombs, Eisenhower presumably wanted to introduce the concept of “blow-out” to limit future testing of larger nuclear devices by the United States and the Soviet Union.

Formosa

Throughout the early months of 1955 tensions between the United States and the People’s Republic of China escalated amidst Communist shelling of the Tachen Islands, especially Quemoy and Matsu, in the Formosa Straits. The Tachen Islands belonged to the Chinese Nationalist forces concentrated on the island of Formosa. In response to the mounting tension, President Eisenhower issued on 24 January 1955 a “Special Message to the Congress Regarding the United States Policy for the Defense of Formosa.”¹⁹⁹ In this message the President announced that the situation in the Formosa Straits “seriously imperils the peace and our security.”²⁰⁰ Eisenhower sought the support of Congress to commit the United States to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores Islands in the event of a Chinese Communist invasion. By doing this, the President hoped to bolster the morale of the Chinese Nationalists, which had just suffered a major setback days earlier when Chinese Communist troops conquered the tiny

¹⁹⁹ PPP 1955 207.

²⁰⁰ PPP 1955 207.

Tachen island of Ichiang. The President sought expanded executive authority to conduct military operations against the Chinese Communists if they attempted further aggressive gestures. Notably, Eisenhower did not have to appeal to the Congress for this expanded authority. Eisenhower recognized that “Authority for some of the actions which might be required would be inherent in the authority of the Commander-in-Chief. Until Congress can act I would not hesitate, so far as my Constitutional powers extend, to take whatever emergency action might be forced upon us in order to protect the rights and security of the United States.”²⁰¹ Yet Eisenhower had witnessed firsthand Harry Truman’s political support dissipate as a result of the costly American intervention in Korea. Harry Truman had not sought congressional approval to engage American forces in Korea. Korea, not Eisenhower, had forced Truman to forego a second term. But Eisenhower had profited from Truman’s mistakes; first when campaigning on a vague pledge that “I will go to Korea,”²⁰² and second by recognizing that he would need to cultivate widespread support for any politically compromising military action.

As the crisis worsened through February into March, questions about nuclear weapons appeared with increasing frequency. At press conferences on 9 February, 23 February, 2 March, 16 March, and 23 March reporters posed questions about nuclear weapons. The 16 March 1955 press conference particularly drew public attention. Charles S. von Fremd representing CBS News inquired whether the President Eisenhower agreed with his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles who had the day prior claimed that the United States would use tactical atomic weapons in the event of general war in the Far East. Importantly, the reporter framed the question in the context of general war, not a police action. Earlier that year, during a 12 January press

²⁰¹ PPP 1955 209.

²⁰² Ambrose Vol. II 14, 15.

conference, Eisenhower had rejected the use of atomic weapons in a police action. The President claimed that he saw no reason to not use atomic weapons in a general war against strictly military targets “as you would use a bullet or anything else.”²⁰³ Dulles had cleared his earlier comment to this effect with the President. Moreover the President seems to have tacitly agreed with Lewis Strauss, who told Press Secretary James Hagerty that he “wanted to show our enemies that we now deal with A-bombs as conventional weapons.”²⁰⁴ The President, Secretary Dulles, and Chairman Strauss all sought to impress upon “our enemies” the willingness of the United States to use atomic weapons.

Scholars have frequently speculated on whether Eisenhower would have resorted to nuclear war to defend the Formosa Straits, focusing on his private meetings and correspondences with members of the National Security Council. These discussions have revealed that Eisenhower considered using nuclear weapons in the Formosa Straits. Yet he had already suggested as much to the reporters at the 16 March 1955 press conference. How then can a greater understanding of his public remarks about nuclear weapons influence this discussion? The President almost always evaded speaking about nuclear weapons. Usually he would have delegated the responsibility of threatening to use nuclear weapons against the Chinese Communists to Dulles or another administration official, so as not to intensify the fears of the American public. The fact that the President personally issued the threat reveals just how seriously he took the aggressive actions of the Chinese. He would not have roused public fears unless he believed the Chinese actions posed a serious threat to national security. And while not by any stretch of the imagination an ultimatum, he effectively signaled to the Chinese

²⁰³ PPP 1955 332.

²⁰⁴ Ferrell 211.

Communists that he would use nuclear weapons if provoked. This study, then, demonstrates the importance of Eisenhower's expressed willingness to use atomic bombs as conventional weapons. It reveals just how seriously Eisenhower took the Chinese threat to the Formosa Straits.

The Campaign

Late in September 1955 President Eisenhower experienced a heart attack while on vacation in Colorado. While not fatal, the heart attack raised concerns about the President's reelection campaign and prevented Eisenhower from speaking about nuclear weapons for several months. Even after his recovery, Eisenhower limited his public engagements and adopted a less strenuous schedule.²⁰⁵ Rather than becoming mired in election year politics, Eisenhower adjusted to his newfound health concerns by increasingly relying on television to deliver speeches and appear in ads. Fairly early in 1956 Eisenhower recognized that nuclear testing might become a political issue. The President sought to discourage this prospect. Presumably it was Andrew J. Goodpaster, a military officer and the President's most trusted aide, who record a 25 April 1956 phone call between the President and John Foster Dulles. "[The] President called the Under Secretary of State and told him to get military security concurrence of Chief of Staff on this business of atomic bomb tests, because he finds that some of the so-called politicians are making an issue of matter."²⁰⁶

Eisenhower began his reelection campaign with a Radio and Television Address on 19 September 1956. The speech emphasized that during his presidency Eisenhower had kept the peace in international affairs. The President reviewed the many crises that had dominated his

²⁰⁵ Ambrose II 347.

²⁰⁶ Lester, Robert, ed. *The Diaries of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-1969*. Microform. Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1986. Entry 25 April 1956. Reel 8, File 0574, Slide 0579. Microform. Unidentified author.

presidency and revisited the language of his “Chance for Peace” speech when he stated that these crises “testify to our greater goal: to ease, for all men everywhere, the burden of arms and of fears which they have suffered so long.”²⁰⁷ By focusing on foreign policy issues, Eisenhower framed the political campaign that followed. After further reviewing the world situation and foreign affairs, Eisenhower implicitly rebuked his opponent Adlai Stevenson for seeking to ban nuclear tests.

We cannot prove wise and strong by any such simple device as suspending, unilaterally, our H-bomb tests. Our atomic knowledge and power have forged the saving shield of freedom. And the future use and control of atomic power can be assured, not by any theatrical national gesture-but only by explicit and supervised international agreements.²⁰⁸

For the President, testing nuclear weapons represented a means of demonstrating strength, hence Eisenhower’s use of the word “prove.” Any attempt to ban nuclear weapons would publicly demonstrate fear, thereby signaling a lack of “spiritual strength” by the American public. The President could have chosen to attack Stevenson on any number of potential campaign issues. But Eisenhower chose to speak about nuclear testing: to defend political consensus on the one issue where he had most sought it. The President labeled Stevenson’s proposal a “theatrical national gesture,” suggesting that, although dramatic the proposal lacked substance. While Eisenhower did not identify his political opponent, the press and by extension the American public knew who the President meant. As historian Stephen Ambrose recounts, “Insofar as there

²⁰⁷ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Radio and Television Address Opening the President’s Campaign for Re-election.” 19 September 1956. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19560919%20Radio%20and%20Television%20Address%20Opening%20the%20Presidents%20Campaign%20for%20Re-election.htm>

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

was an issue that got [Eisenhower] going, it was Stevenson's call for a test ban.²⁰⁹ Eisenhower would not allow a challenge to the political consensus he sought to create surrounding nuclear weapons to succeed.

Yet the presidential campaign of 1956 would undermine the consensus surrounding nuclear testing that Eisenhower had sought to craft. Eisenhower had managed to mostly stifle discussion of nuclear weapons, particularly their development and how they might be used, throughout much of his first term. An anonymous column in *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, a forerunner of the newspaper *The Washington Post*, reveals a great deal about how Eisenhower had spoken about nuclear weapons throughout his first term.

President Eisenhower's answer to Adlai Stevenson on tests of large nuclear weapons has the virtue of being the first thoughtful statement by the Administration on the subject. For this it is necessary to thank him and to thank Mr. Stevenson as well, for the Democratic nominee has made a moratorium on such tests a major point in his campaign. The statement was long overdue [...] Mr. Eisenhower resorts to 'obvious security reasons' to say that the subject is not suitable for detailed public discussion [...] But is not the relative emphasis of development efforts-[...] a proper subject for discussion?²¹⁰

The column reveals Stevenson's role in shattering the consensus Eisenhower had cultivated around nuclear weapons. Whereas Eisenhower frequently deferred discussing nuclear weapons, pleading security concerns, Stevenson forced the President to debate a nuclear issue. While most reporters continued to sympathize with the President, Stevenson strengthened the voices of

²⁰⁹ Ambrose II 348.

²¹⁰ "H-Bomb in Politics" *The Washington Post and Times Herald*. 7 October 1956. E4. 8 March 2009
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=15&did=121046614&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1236544199&clientId=17822>

dissent. Before Stevenson fear had silenced or discredited public challenges to nuclear policies. Many of Stevenson's advisers tried to discourage their candidate from making nuclear testing a campaign issue. Yet Stevenson must have recognized the tremendous political opportunity specifically offered by nuclear testing, presumably after the Lucky Dragon incident evoked public anxieties.

Stevenson had challenged the political consensus built by Eisenhower by making nuclear testing a campaign issue. As Eisenhower would later write in his first-term memoir, *Mandate for Change*, he did not believe in politicizing nuclear issues. "Domestic misgivings were stirred further when, in the 1956 political contest, our nuclear test policy became a campaign issue. As I have said, I did not believe that such a question could be debated intelligently in public on a partisan basis."²¹¹ Importantly, Eisenhower doubted that nuclear weapons "could" be intelligently debated in public. This explains Eisenhower's intermittent reluctance to speak publicly about nuclear weapons. Eisenhower would explain or speak about nuclear weapons, but he would not debate them. Unintelligent debate might elicit emotions that unless properly controlled might provoke a hysterical response from the American public. Debate might also encourage foreign manipulation of the internal politics of the United States. This last fear proved well founded when Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin released an open letter to President Eisenhower effectively endorsing Adlai Stevenson's ban on hydrogen bomb tests in the midst of the American election. This letter by the Soviet Premier elicited a tersely worded reply from Eisenhower where the President condemned the Soviet interference in the American election.²¹²

²¹¹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*. Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1963. 474-475.

²¹² PPP 1956 983.

But by drawing the “uranium curtain” closed, the President sacrificed the substance of democratic debate.

In response to these developments, speechwriters drafted a prepared statement, “For possible use in future speech – re H-bomb tests.” Eisenhower played a visible role in editing the statement, making substantive changes in the content of the remarks culminating in a final draft prepared on 15 October 1956. In this statement, the President would have disclosed that the government had reoriented the American testing program away from larger and more destructive devices towards developing smaller and cleaner nuclear weapons.²¹³ The draft then indicates that the President would reiterate a point he had made earlier in the campaign, also captured in the aforementioned 7 October 1956 *The Washington Post and Times Herald* article, that “such tests are always, and necessarily, proceeded by many months of preparatory work.”²¹⁴ If the United States did not continue testing, the President suggested, the Soviets might surpass the United States in the technological advances of the arms race. In this instance the President used fear as a means of persuading the public of the need for additional nuclear testing. Eisenhower also considered revealing that some of “the H-bomb development going on is for the purpose of protection of our own cities.”²¹⁵ But this statement, designed for use in the campaign, also indicates Eisenhower’s reservations about publicly debating nuclear weapons related issues. Eisenhower opened this statement by expressing these reservations. “Certain matters bearing directly on our peace efforts have recently become prominent in public discussion. I had not intended again to mention them in this campaign. I shall not dwell on them lengthily tonight.”²¹⁶

²¹³ “For possible use in future speech—re H-bomb tests.” 2. 15 October 1956. Ann Whitman File: Speech Series, Box 17, Folder Labeled “H-bomb Statement.”

²¹⁴ Ibid 3. 15 October 1956.

²¹⁵ Ibid 3. 15 October 1956.

²¹⁶ Ibid 1. 15 October 1956.

Eisenhower particularly contributed the substance of the second and third sentences of this quotation. Yet the President ultimately did not have to deliver this statement as the events of the Suez Crisis and the uprising in Hungary overshadowed the campaign.

Chapter 3: The Second Term, 1957-1961

After the 1956 presidential campaign, Eisenhower largely refrained from speaking on the subject of nuclear weapons throughout his second term. This silence would partly result from coincidence as events that might compel the President to speak about nuclear weapons would not materialize in the second term. Yet Eisenhower also consciously limited his remarks on nuclear weapons so as not to invite further criticism and debate, either of which would require him to further speak about nuclear arms. Eisenhower moved to repair the damaged political consensus upset by Adlai Stevenson's campaigning for a nuclear test ban. The President had cultivated this consensus regarding nuclear weapons throughout his first term by means of his rhetorical strategy of the "middle way." Now the President and National Security Council, in order to reestablish consensus, began to explore a nuclear test ban with the Soviet Union as a means of reassuring the public.

While Eisenhower limited his remarks on nuclear weapons during his second term, the President still could not entirely avoid speaking about nuclear weapons to the public. Certain events required the President to speak about nuclear weapons, especially international crises that touched upon national security. The reliance that Eisenhower had placed on nuclear weapons in his New Look defense policies meant that he would at the very least need to answer press conference questions involving nuclear weapons, if not reassure the American public with a presidential address or two in the event of an international crisis.

The Test Ban

The President only periodically broached the subject of nuclear weapons during his second term in either his speeches or press conferences. Eisenhower would not speak about nuclear weapons unless asked. The President barely referenced nuclear weapons at all in the first five months of 1957. Only reporters at White House press conferences could induce Eisenhower to speak about nuclear weapons. Public interest dictated the subject of the reporters' questions. Most of these reporters seldom posed questions about nuclear weapons that might annoy Eisenhower. Even if the press corps did not know about his aversion to speaking about nuclear weapons, the journalists had little reason to ask Eisenhower about a subject not of immediate interest to their readers. Few events during Eisenhower's second term obliged him to speak about nuclear weapons.

Among those events, few excited the public interest like nuclear testing. The nuclear test ban controversy conceived in the presidential campaign of 1956 would not completely abate with the 6 November 1956 election. Public support for a nuclear test ban would swell in the month preceding each new series of nuclear tests. Because of widespread public interest, if not concern, reporters would ask questions about nuclear weapons and testing at press conferences that they would not ordinarily pose. Nuclear tests represented one of the few events certain to elicit press conference questions from reporters about nuclear weapons and testing. The substance of these remarks then becomes crucial to understanding how Eisenhower spoke about nuclear weapons in his second term.

The first series of nuclear tests during the second term, codenamed Operation Plumbbob, occurred from May through August 1957 at the Nevada Test Site.²¹⁷ Launched in mid-May 1957, Operation Plumbbob not only attracted public attention to the issue of nuclear testing, but also provoked the first anti-nuclear protests and non-violent demonstrations led by radical pacifist and Quaker Lawrence Scott. Scott's group, Nonviolent Action against Nuclear Weapons, staged its first protests at the Nevada Test Site on 6 August 1957 on the twelve year anniversary of Hiroshima.²¹⁸ After this series of tests, the Eisenhower administration realized that continued nuclear testing in the United States at the Nevada test site would be politically unwise. Instead, the administration planned to conduct the 1958 nuclear tests offshore at the Eniwetok testing site. For the remainder of Eisenhower's term in office, the government would not perform another atmospheric test at the Nevada test site.

Even before these demonstrations the anticipation of nuclear tests inspired a battery of questions posed to Eisenhower by reporters in his press conferences from 8 May through 7 August 1957. The first press conference at which the President needed to substantively speak about nuclear weapons came on 22 May 1957, when Spencer Davis of the Associated Press questioned the President about his public reassurances that the administration would work for an end to nuclear tests if the nuclear powers reached an acceptable agreement. "At the same time there are reports that the United States is now actively preparing for H-bomb tests in the Pacific next year. Could you say if that is true?"²¹⁹ Eisenhower replied, "Well, I think the next series of

²¹⁷ "Operation Plumbbob." The Nuclear Weapon Archive. 12 July 2003. 29 March 2009 <http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/Usa/Tests/Plumbbob.html>

²¹⁸ Carlisle, Rodney P. "Committee for Nonviolent Action (CNVA)." *Encyclopedia of the Atomic Age*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2001. *American History Online*. Facts On File, Inc. <http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE52&iPin=atomic00104&SingleRecord=True> (accessed March 12, 2009).

²¹⁹ PPP 1957 403.

tests that are coming off are all in Nevada, and I don't know of any beyond that."²²⁰ In this case the President's reply does not disclose anything revealing about nuclear weapons or future testing plans. Eisenhower maintained the political position he had assumed during the 1956 campaign that argued a test ban should result from a reciprocal agreement between the Soviet Union and United States. This reply suggests the President had reserved judgment on nuclear testing until a later date, presumably after the Plumbbob test series yielded its data.

5 June 1957

The President would certainly not fare as well at avoiding discussion of nuclear weapons testing during his next press conference on 5 June 1957. The previous day a panel of geneticists had delivered testimony on the effects of nuclear weapons to the Joint Atomic Energy Subcommittee in the Old Supreme Court Chamber of the Capitol Building. *The Washington Post and Times Herald* staff reporter Warren Unna covered the geneticists' testimony. According to Unna, the scientists unanimously testified that "radiation, no matter how small the dose, endangers future generations of mankind."²²¹ The geneticists recited shortened life expectancy, increasing deformities, and reduced or impaired fertility as potential effects of exposure to radiation before an audience that included elementary school children studying atomic energy.²²² The testimony presumably displeased Eisenhower, who had to confront reporters the following day and wanted to avoid speaking about nuclear weapons.

²²⁰ PPP 1957 403.

²²¹ Unna, Warren. "Fallout Produced Now Will Shorten Lives in Future, Unanimous View." *The Washington Post and Times Herald*. 5 June 1957. Pg. A1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 22 March 2009. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=160434432&SrchMode=1&sid=3&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237762688&clientId=17822>

²²² Ibid.

So the first question posed by Marvin L. Arrowsmith of the *Associated Press* must have mildly annoyed Eisenhower. Arrowsmith asked the President to comment on recent testimony given by geneticists and other scientists to the effect that radiation from fallout would result in physical deformities and shortened life spans. The President tried to smother the reporters' inquiry about the human effects of radiation with a cascade of information that contradicted the scientists' testimony. The President's reply to this question framed the rest of the press conference.

Well, first of all, last October we published a very long report from the National Academy of Sciences which gave a very full discussion of this whole matter, bringing up the amount you get from natural sources, the sun and X-ray pictures and all the rest of it—I believe down even to include phosphorous on the dial of your watch, and things of that kind. [...] Now, on the other hand, here is a field where scientists disagree. Incidentally, I noticed that [in] many instances—scientists that seem to be out of their own field of competence are getting into this argument, and it looks like almost an organized affair [...] Our tests in recent years, the last couple of years, have been largely in the defensive type of armament to defend against attack from the air and, particularly, to make bombs cleaner so there isn't so much fallout. We have reduced the fallout from bombs by nine-tenths. So that our tests of the smaller weapons have been in that direction, to see how clean we can make them.²²³

The President's ungrammatical reply suggests his frustration at having to address the geneticists' testimony. Eisenhower's response overwhelmed the press corps with a volume of information.

²²³ PPP 1957 429.

He obscured the real danger of nuclear weapons in euphemisms and comparisons that misrepresented the threat posed by radiation. Eisenhower tried to put the risk posed by small doses of radiation in perspective while refuting the alarmist position posed by the scientists and the press. He tried to accomplish this goal by illustrating natural, everyday sources of radiation that patently did not jeopardize mankind. The President trusted the common sense of the public and reporters to recognize as ridiculous the notion that the sun, X-rays, or a phosphorous wristwatch would jeopardize the future of mankind.

After refuting the substance of the scientists' claims, Eisenhower next questioned the geneticists' professional qualifications to discredit their testimony. The scientists' testimony would create public anxiety and resistance to future nuclear testing, which Eisenhower wanted to avoid. Yet the President unintentionally insinuated something far more sinister when he described the scientists as an "organized affair." This, in the context, implied that the scientists had communist affiliations. "Organization" had become a code word and synonym for "communist" during the 1950s. Communists subordinated the individual to the organization. The President's reply perplexed reporters, who sought further elaboration on what Eisenhower meant by an "organization." After Eisenhower answered the next question, Merriman Smith returned to the subject of the geneticists' testimony. A veteran White House correspondent, Smith had covered both the Roosevelt and Truman administrations for United Press International, and had a fairly congenial relationship with Eisenhower. Trying to resolve the confusion created by Eisenhower's answer, Smith asked the President for clarification.

Q. Merriman Smith, United Press: Mr. President, could you elaborate a little for us, sir, on your saying that among the disagreeing scientists on the question of fallout that some

of them are out of their field of competence, and it looks like an organized affair? Why do you say that, sir? Who is organizing it, in your opinion?

The President. I don't know. I haven't any idea, but I just say it seems to come up in so many places and so many different speeches, and you find scientists of various kinds other than geneticists and physicists in this particular field that have something to say about it.²²⁴

Eisenhower could not specify who he thought organized the scientists. The question might even have perplexed him. The thrust of the President's comment had tried to smother discussion of the effects of radiation by highlighting natural sources. He had claimed the scientists appeared to be an "organized affair" as an afterthought. His observation meant to emphasize the considerable diversity of opinions in ongoing scientific debate and highlight as suspect the unanimous quality of the scientists' testimony.

Still later in the press conference, when questioned by James B. Reston representing *The New York Times*, Eisenhower realized the interpretation his words invited. Revisiting Eisenhower's earlier remarks, Reston began to ask the President about the scientists' testimony. "Mr. President, the comments here this morning, sir, about the fallout are, I think, open to the inference that this is just an organized campaign, and that the scientists who are—" at which point Eisenhower interjected "Oh, no." Before Reston could even complete the inference, Eisenhower interrupted. "Oh, no; I didn't say that at all. I said there does seem to be some organization behind it. I didn't say a wicked organization."²²⁵ This statement reveals that Eisenhower finally recognized that his use of the word "organization" insinuated communism: an insinuation he

²²⁴ PPP 1957 431.

²²⁵ PPP 1957 434.

refuted. Reston pressed the President to further clarify what he meant, lest his words invite misinterpretation.

Well, I don't mean that at all. There are so many of these people just as honest as they can be, there is no question about that. But as I say when they begin to talk a little bit out of their fields, well then I would rather go myself to the Academy of Sciences, which has no axe to grind of any kind, is not looking for publicity, and say, 'Now, what do you people think?'²²⁶

The President's statement continued to discredit the scientists' testimony by questioning their competence in nuclear science. He emphasized the need to consult an impartial institution, which could arbitrate between various independent views and present the most comprehensive picture. Moreover, he describes the Academy of Sciences as having no axe to grind. This statement draws attention not only to the scientists' motivations, but also hints at the significance of the forum of their discussion: a congressional subcommittee. Eisenhower refrained from openly criticizing Congress, a body composed of politicians seeking publicity. The politicians presumably framed the discussion of the effects of radiation by calling witnesses that supported their position.

Eisenhower only discussed the human effects of radiation because the public worried about the radiation produced by nuclear tests. The President wanted to continue nuclear testing. In order to continue testing, he needed to stifle public criticism of nuclear testing by calming public concern over radiation. As a means of stifling public criticism, the President introduced a new purpose for nuclear testing in his initial reply to Arrowsmith. He assuaged public fears over

²²⁶ PPP 1957 434, 435.

nuclear testing by assuring the public that future tests would progressively eliminate fallout. The United States would “make bombs cleaner” by eliminating fallout. Already the United States had reduced fallout by “nine-tenths.”²²⁷ Eisenhower wanted to use this statistic in a predetermined manner to endorse a concept he had already developed, as evidenced by a 17 July 1957 pre-press conference briefing with Hagerty. “The President was reminded of a question he had at this point and called Admiral Strauss to clear matter up (that when scientists speak of a 96% clean bomb, they are comparing percentage to yield).”²²⁸ The President called Strauss because “of a question he had,” not a question asked of him. The President presumably wanted the public to assume from the statistic that nuclear testing represented a diminishing danger.

Eisenhower provided the context for this and subsequent proportions when he described these new nuclear weapons as “clean.” Reducing the fallout, or “cleaning” nuclear weapons, became the new purpose for nuclear testing. The word “cleaning” held mundane connotations for domestic audiences, like tidying up around the house or washing the car. The word presented radiation as a nuisance that the government would clean up. Using a euphemism like “cleaning” gave the American public the impression of control. Eisenhower’s word choice captures his style of describing nuclear weapons testing as a manageable part of everyday life to his domestic audience.

This new use of the term “clean” impressed former Vermont Governor Sherman Adams. Adams had played a crucial role in securing the 1952 Republican nomination and served as the

²²⁷ PPP 1957 429, 430.

²²⁸ Pre-press conference briefing. 1. 17 July 1957. Ann Whitman File, Press Conference Series, Box 6, Folder dated 1/17/57.

President's de facto chief of staff in the White House from 1953 until September 1958.²²⁹

Adams' reaction, captured by Hagerty in his diary, illustrates the readiness with which the public embraced this euphemistic new term. "Governor Adams commented on how amazing it was that the public was so quick to adopt a new idea—i.e., the 'clean' bomb."²³⁰ This phrase first appeared in the aforementioned 15 October 1956 draft statement "For possible use in future speech—re H-bomb tests." In a handwritten comment apparently authored by Eisenhower, the President edited a sentence to read "Our purpose (in the development of small, clean H-bombs) is to defend our country against the possibility of long-range hydrogen bomb missiles directed against our cities."²³¹ Presumably Eisenhower later recognized that the use of the word "clean" would provide a context for the "nine-tenths" reduction in fallout. He had already seized its significance during the 1956 presidential campaign during which he crafted the above statement. The President actively framed or contextualized threats as manageable for the American public. In this case the President pursued the rhetorical strategy of the "the middle way" by disclosing seemingly reassuring information and contextualizing it by using carefully crafted wordage.

The President introduced this new way of describing nuclear weapons as "clean" as a means of continuing nuclear testing. This new language of "clean" weapons allowed him to separate the issue of nuclear weapons testing from fallout. Large amounts of radioactive fallout would not necessarily follow from a nuclear test. An exchange in the 5 June press conference

²²⁹ Michael J. Birkner. "Adams, Sherman Llewelyn"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/07/07-00418.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. Access Date: Mon Mar 23 2009

²³⁰ Pre-press conference briefing. 1. 17 July 1957. Ann Whitman File, Press Conference Series, Box 6, Folder dated 1/17/57.

²³¹ "For possible use in future speech—re H-bomb tests." 15 October 1956. Ann Whitman File: Speech Series, Box 17, Folder Labeled "H-bomb Statement." Material within parenthesis the additions Eisenhower made using an editing caret.

between the President and reporter Richard L. Wilson of Cowles Publications reveals how Eisenhower managed to separate hydrogen bombs from fallout.

Wilson: Mr. President, it seems to me that the discussion on testing of H-bombs has left a lot of vacant spaces that we don't completely understand, at least I don't completely understand. You have said that our tests are going toward the point of testing clean weapons at the present time [...] Does this mean that we will not test any more H-bombs which create a great fallout?

The President. Well, as a matter of fact, I don't think your statement is correct. I think we have found that the H-bomb in proportion to its size is probably one of the cleanest. I don't think your statement is correct.²³²

Although queried about future nuclear tests, not clean weapons, Eisenhower initially dodged Wilson's question. Eisenhower reoriented the question toward the subject of "clean" weapons by focusing on the details, in this case the type of bomb. He described the hydrogen bomb as "one of the cleanest" weapons, thereby ensuring the future ability to conduct hydrogen weapons tests. Wilson, not quite satisfied with Eisenhower evasive answer, further pressed the President. He rephrased his question to make it more explicit. "Will there be any more tests of H-bombs similar to the large one in the Pacific which caused such a wide fallout?"²³³ Wilson referred to the 1 March 1954 Bravo test that famously contaminated the Japanese fishing boat Lucky Dragon No. 5 and provoked the first public anxieties over nuclear testing. The President answered, "I would doubt that anything like that would ever be repeated."²³⁴ This reply

²³² PPP 1957 443.

²³³ PPP 1957 444.

²³⁴ PPP 1957 444.

demonstrates that like any president, Eisenhower was unwilling to commit without reservation to a policy that would limit his freedom of action. Clearly he had no intentions of performing another test like Bravo unless required, but he also recognized the need to preserve his ability to do so.

The subject of disarmament also received growing discussion in presidential press conferences. Yet as with most other nuclear issues, the President avoided discussion of his disarmament proposals, especially evading press conference questions on the subject of disarmament. The President had willingly delivered prepared disarmament proposals in the past, such as his 1953 “Atoms for Peace” proposal and his 1955 “Open Skies” proposal. The President avoided talking about disarmament because most of his proposals doubled as psychological warfare initiatives.²³⁵ Moreover, Eisenhower believed public discussion of disarmament might compromise the American negotiating position. This second reason provided Eisenhower with a means of evading public discussion of disarmament talks.

Disarmament assumed a prominent position because of its connection with nuclear testing. Official White House policy had not yet divorced the issue of nuclear testing from disarmament. In fact, the London Disarmament talks coincided with the start of the American Plumbbob nuclear tests.²³⁶ Presumably the administration recognized that the disarmament talks could lessen the intensity of public criticism of nuclear testing. The administration could simultaneously pursue nuclear testing while demonstrating its intention of banning future tests, thereby dissipating the criticism of those who wanted to ban nuclear tests. And while the

²³⁵ Hogan, Michael J. “Eisenhower and Open Skies: A Case Study in ‘Psychological Warfare.’” in Medhurt, Martin J. *Eisenhower’s War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*. Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994. Also see earlier discussion of “Chance for Peace” and “Atoms for Peace” speeches.

²³⁶ Ambrose Vol. II 401.

administration may not have exercised control over the negotiated date of the disarmament conference, they at least could control the date of the start of nuclear testing. The notion that the tests and disarmament talks just happened to coincide seems improbable. The President's answer to Richard L. Wilson's question at the 5 June 1957 press conference evidences this connection between nuclear testing and disarmament. After answering Wilson's question about nuclear testing, the President continued by discussing the relationship between disarmament and disclosure.

And if I have not been as frank in this one subject [disarmament] as you people think I should, remember this: if I say something that Britain or France or some other great ally, or Canada, cannot accept, and they get irritated or embarrassed by it, then our whole program of trying to achieve real disarmament and real cessation in all these fields is hurt. So I have told you what I think is public property and what I think is proper to say.²³⁷

Disarmament presented a decidedly less sensitive topic than nuclear weapons, so reporters routinely asked the President about progress in disarmament talks. Yet the President consistently declined to comment on the status of disarmament talks, only ever announcing minor progress while habitually voicing his hope for greater progress in negotiations. Eisenhower argued that the reporters should recognize that he could not disclose more information without potentially compromising diplomatic negotiations. In short, Eisenhower demanded that the reporters recognize how diplomacy limited what he could say. The President could reasonably decline to comment on disarmament talks, which included nuclear disarmament, by pleading that in discussing disarmament he might undermine the talks. As long as the test ban remained a

²³⁷ PPP 1957 444.

disarmament issue, Eisenhower could refuse to answer questions about banning nuclear tests by citing diplomatic considerations.

Yet at his next press conference on 19 June 1957, Eisenhower deviated from this earlier strategy of treating nuclear testing as an disarmament issue. The Soviet negotiator, Valerin Zorin, precipitated this departure. Five days prior, Zorin had conceded the Soviet demand for a complete test ban and announced the willingness of the Soviet Union to agree to a “two- or three-year moratorium.”²³⁸ The President voiced his approval of a temporary suspension of nuclear tests when he replied to a question posed by Robert E. Clark of the International News Service. “I would be perfectly delighted to make some satisfactory arrangement for temporary suspension of tests while we could determine whether we couldn’t make some agreement that would allow it to be a permanent agreement.”²³⁹ This statement effectively severed nuclear testing from disarmament. Yet within a week Eisenhower reversed this policy by instructing Dulles to tell a 25 June 1957 press conference that the United States would only accept a moratorium on nuclear testing on the condition that the Soviets accept a future halt to nuclear weapons production.²⁴⁰ Once again the Eisenhower directed Dulles to announce a controversial policy decision that would attract a great deal of criticism. Yet the President’s delegation of this onerous responsibility to Dulles also indicates that at the very least Zorin forced Eisenhower to sever nuclear testing from disarmament in his public remarks: a change in the President’s style not as easily reversed.

²³⁸ Ambrose Vol. II 403.

²³⁹ PPP 1957 476.

²⁴⁰ Ambrose Vol. II 404.

The following spring the United States initiated another series of nuclear tests, this time codenamed Hardtack. In anticipation of what seemed like an imminent nuclear test ban, the Hardtack series included 35 nuclear tests: the greatest number of any series.²⁴¹ Between 26 March and 30 April 1958, reporters subjected Eisenhower to questions about nuclear weapons at every one of his six press conferences. At the 26 March 1958 press conference, Eisenhower issued a statement before answering questions.

In line with what I said to the press on July 3, 1957, the United States will demonstrate the progress our scientists are achieving in reducing radio-active fallout from nuclear explosions. To this end, for the first time at any test, we are planning to invite the United Nations to select a group of qualified scientific observers to witness at the Pacific Proving Ground this summer a large nuclear explosion in which radio-active fallout will be drastically reduced. We will also invite—as we have on occasions in the past—a representative group of United States and foreign news media correspondents [...] The United States has always publicly announced in advance its nuclear testing programs.²⁴²

While the United States always forewarned the press and the public of nuclear tests, Eisenhower seldom personally delivered these announcements. This statement by the President raises an important question, considering that Eisenhower only rarely and reluctantly spoke about nuclear weapons, especially at press conferences. Why would the President choose to personally notify the press of the impending tests, potentially exposing himself to reporters' questions?

²⁴¹ "Operation Hardtack I." The Nuclear Weapon Archive. 30 November 2001. 29 March 2009 <http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/Usa/Tests/Hardtack1.html>

²⁴² PPP 1958 232, 233.

Eisenhower chose to speak for three reasons; he could speak from prepared remarks, he wanted to take credit for the tests, and his statement shielded him from reporters' questions about nuclear weapons. Prepared remarks allowed the President to control the content and the context of his comments, ensuring that he would not unintentionally disclose sensitive information or go off message. He also read prepared remarks because that took time away from answering questions, which he wanted to avoid insofar as possible. Moreover, prepared remarks would limit reporters' questions about nuclear testing because Eisenhower had already commented on the subject. The President also personally announced the tests because he wanted to take credit for them. He had arranged the tests as a demonstration of "clean" nuclear weapons during a press conference on 3 July 1957, and wanted to take credit for reducing the fallout produced by nuclear tests. Finally, Eisenhower used this announcement to control the press. He ultimately controlled access to the nuclear tests and could exercise his discretion in inviting members of the press to attend. The nuclear test then motivated the reporters to temper their questions lest they incur the President's displeasure and forfeit the opportunity of witnessing the tests.

Five days later, just before the start of the American Hardtack series, Nikita Khrushchev declared a unilateral cessation of testing immediately after the conclusion of a Soviet nuclear test series. Many, if not most, Americans recognized the cessation of Soviet nuclear tests as a shrewd act. But this realization intensified the reporters' scrutiny of the Eisenhower administration. The Soviet cessation raised serious doubts within the American press and public about national security. Inevitably, in reply reporters queried Eisenhower at his 2 April 1958 press conference. The President treated Khrushchev's gesture as insignificant. "The testing thing of which you speak, I think is just a side issue, I think it is a gimmick, and I don't think it is to be taken seriously; and I believe anyone that studies this matter thoroughly will see that is not any harsh

opinion on the matter.”²⁴³ Answering a follow up question posed by Donald J. Gonzales of United Press, the President disclosed that the administration had suspected the Soviets would announce a unilateral test moratorium “for a long time.”²⁴⁴ This admission by the President invited the press to criticize Eisenhower’s decision-making in not preempting the Soviet declaration. American Broadcasting Company correspondent Edward P. Morgan questioned Eisenhower about the decision, suggesting that the United States might have “announced previously that it had considered but rejected as phony a unilateral test suspension[.]”²⁴⁵ The President replied that “It might have been a better propaganda move and because of that reason I thought that it would be better to say nothing at the moment. It could have been a mistake. I don’t say that it wasn’t.”²⁴⁶ The President truthfully admitted that he decided against preempting the Soviet moratorium. He did not try to obscure his role in the decision, because he recognized that such an action would create the misimpression that he could not control his administration. Yet such an announcement before the Soviet moratorium would likely have provoked controversy and prompted the White House reporters to question the President about nuclear testing, a subject that Eisenhower generally preferred to avoid. Eisenhower would rather expose himself to criticism than have reporters ask him about the sensitive subject of nuclear weapons testing.

After the 2 April 1958 press conference, press attention on nuclear testing ebbed even before the start of Operation Hardtack. Posed a question by Richard L. Wilson of Cowles Publications at the 9 April 1958 press conference about a test moratorium, Eisenhower implied

²⁴³ PPP 1958 264.

²⁴⁴ PPP 1958 261.

²⁴⁵ PPP 1958 265.

²⁴⁶ PPP 1958 265.

that he would consider discontinuing nuclear testing after the conclusion of the Hardtack series if “current conditions” persisted.²⁴⁷ Yet Eisenhower’s noncommittal response emphasized that his decision would rest on conditions. Only one other reporter, Arthur B. Dunbar of *Newark News*, asked Eisenhower a question about nuclear testing at the 9 April 1958 press conference. Dunbar asked the President to comment on a suggestion made by Republican Senator Clifford Philip Case of New Jersey that the United States would only test clean, defensive nuclear weapons.²⁴⁸ Eisenhower explained that “We must understand one thing, in all honesty. We call them clean weapons. There is still a percentage of what you would call a dirty residual, and that has some effect.”²⁴⁹ The President disclosed that the administration only called them “clean” weapons. But he subsequently diminished the gravity of the fallout the weapons produced, thereby staying on message. No one could subsequently reproach the President because he gave an honest answer, even though he continued to obscure the real threat posed by radioactive fallout.

The President continued answering occasional questions about nuclear weapons and testing at his 16 April and 23 April 1958 press conferences. Yet no new techniques or insights into the President’s rhetorical style emerged from his marginal remarks at these conferences. The next press conference at which Eisenhower would address a question about nuclear testing occurred on 30 April 1958.

Early in the conference Edward P. Morgan of the American Broadcasting Company, asked Eisenhower if the United States could sell a policy of clean bombs unless it dismantled all dirty bombs and whether it would exclusively stockpile clean bombs in the future. The President

²⁴⁷ PPP 1958 298.

²⁴⁸ PPP 1958 302, 303. Also Mark I. Gelfand. "**Case, Clifford Philip**"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/07/07-00427.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. Access Date: Fri Mar 20 2009

²⁴⁹ PPP1958 302.

evaded directly answering the first part of the question. Instead he answered that the administration would pursue a policy built on clean weapons and ignored the question about existing dirty bombs. Moreover, Eisenhower used his aim of producing clean nuclear weapons as a means of endorsing additional nuclear testing. “[T]hese tests that we have are to see how far we can go with this problem, at least I was told by the Chairman of the AEC that at least 40 percent of these tests have their principle purpose to get cleaner bombs.”²⁵⁰ The President emphasized that the Atomic Energy Commission would conduct 40 percent of these tests for the sole purpose of creating clean nuclear weapons. Using this expansive notion of “cleaning” nuclear weapons, Eisenhower managed to extend the protection afforded by this concept to almost all the remaining nuclear tests in the Hardtack series. The use of clean weapons as a persuasive concept enabled Eisenhower to avert major criticism for his decision to continue nuclear testing.

By 22 August 1958, Eisenhower had decided to engage in test ban negotiations with the Soviet Union. In anticipation of an impending moratorium on nuclear testing that Eisenhower publicly announced in a 25 October 1958 statement,²⁵¹ the United States accelerated nuclear testing.²⁵² Eisenhower declared a suspension of additional American nuclear tests on 31 October 1958, provided the Soviets also refrained from testing, even though the Hardtack II nuclear test series then in progress had not concluded.²⁵³ After the declaration of a moratorium on future nuclear tests that would stay in effect until 1961, Eisenhower eliminated one of the few situations that would require he speak about nuclear weapons.

²⁵⁰ PPP 1958 353.

²⁵¹ PPP 1958 796, 797.

²⁵² Ambrose Vol. II 479, 480.

²⁵³ PPP 1958 839.

Sputnik

Approximately a month after the conclusion of Operation Plumbbob series of nuclear tests, the Soviet Union astonished the world by launching the first manmade satellite. The relevance of Sputnik to this study may initially seem suspect. Sputnik does not obviously or directly relate to nuclear weapons. But to say Sputnik has nothing to do with nuclear weapons would misrepresent how Americans perceived the threat posed by the tiny satellite. Sputnik generated public concern not because it directly threatened the United States, but because it implied Soviet superiority in the field of rocketry and missiles, and missiles were a means of delivering nuclear weapons. Possession of missile technology without nuclear warheads would be roughly analogous to possessing a sling without a stone. Of course the Germans had used missiles with conventional ordinance to great effect against Britain during the Second World War. But as Eisenhower noted when asked about a crash program in missiles at his 9 October 1957 press conference, “until there were very great developments in the atomic bomb, it did not look profitable and economical to pursue [aerodynamic missiles].”²⁵⁴ The size of early atomic bombs had prohibited their use as missile ordinance. But now the Russians had successfully launched a satellite into space. Moreover, the Soviets had claimed only days prior to have fired an intercontinental ballistic missile.²⁵⁵ These developments understandably concerned the American public as intercontinental ballistic missiles, hereafter ICBMs, redefined the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

The 4 October 1957 Soviet launch of the first manmade satellite, Sputnik, triggered a crisis of confidence in the American public. Historian Stephen Ambrose described a “near-

²⁵⁴ PPP 1957 723.

²⁵⁵ PPP 1957 719.

hysterical reaction of the American press, politicians, and public to Sputnik.”²⁵⁶ Yet hysteria implies a degree of panic not evidenced by the historical record. A survey of the headlines of newspapers stories that ran in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *The Washington Post and Times Herald* (1954-1959), *Chicago Daily Tribune*, *Atlanta Daily World*, *The Manchester Guardian*, and the short lived *Daily Defender* (1956-1960) instead reveals understandable public concern, but not panic.²⁵⁷ The public remained calm while mulling over this Soviet challenge to American technical superiority. Eisenhower would later record in his memoir of the second term, *Waging Peace: 1956-1961*, his impression that “the Russians could no longer be regarded as ‘backward,’ and had even ‘beaten’ the United States in a spectacular scientific competition.”²⁵⁸ Whereas earlier moments like the Soviet 1949 atomic and 1953 hydrogen weapons tests had alarmed the public, these events had never seriously challenged the American lead in the arms race or perceptions of technological superiority. Yet suddenly the Soviet Union had technologically eclipsed the American space program with the successful launch of Sputnik. While not directly related to how Eisenhower spoke about nuclear weapons, this crisis of confidence compelled Eisenhower to at least peripherally speak about nuclear weapons as a means of restoring the faith of the public in his government.

The first opportunity for Eisenhower to speak about Sputnik to the American press emerged several days later at the President’s 9 October 1957 press conference. A couple of days later on 11 October 1957 Alistair Cooke, a prominent journalist and early television personality

²⁵⁶ Ambrose Vol. II 424.

²⁵⁷ Proquest Historical Newspapers. Surveyed Dates 4 October 1957 to 30 October 1957.
<http://proquest.umi.com/login?COPT=REJTPTU4ZGQRnjlhNiszYjA0KzU4ZGMrMzZmYis1OGRhKzU4ZGlrM2M1YSs2MjliKzFhY2QrMWFjYsyNjhhJklOVD0wJlZFUj0y&clientId=17822>

²⁵⁸ Eisenhower, Dwight David. *Waging Peace: 1956-1961*. Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1965. 205.

writing in the *Manchester Guardian*,²⁵⁹ managed to document the critical press Eisenhower received immediately after Sputnik. Cooke began by declaring that “No President in living memory has been so gently handled by the press as President Eisenhower.”²⁶⁰ Partly out of their respect for him, the reporters had not seriously challenged or criticized Eisenhower. Cooke’s article captures Eisenhower’s woeful unpreparedness to speak about Sputnik. James Hagerty had circulated a prepared statement to the reporters at the start of the 9 October 1957 press conference as a means of framing their questions for the President.²⁶¹ Unlike prepared statements on sensitive topics in the past which the President occasionally read to shorten the time allotted for questions, Eisenhower failed to use this statement to kill time. He immediately went to questions. Almost every question asked the President at his 9 October 1957 press conference dealt either directly or indirectly with Sputnik and ICBMs. No other press conference in the whole of Eisenhower’s presidency focused so exclusively on a single topic. This singular fascination of the reporters with the Soviet satellite was evidently inspired by concern.

The press coverage to emerge from the 9 October 1957 conference appeared distinctly unfavorable to Eisenhower. Alistair Cooke cites a reporter for the *New York Post* who described Eisenhower’s 9 October 1957 press conference as “perhaps his worst press conference performance in five years of office.”²⁶² This reaction, although it may seem a little exaggerated,

²⁵⁹ Prial, Frank J. “Alistair Cooke, British Eye on the American Scene, Dies at 95.” *The New York Times*. 30 March 2004. 18 March 2009 <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/30/arts/television/30CND-COOK.html?pagewanted=2&ei=5070&en=b0262b89c4d42358&ex=1237521600>

²⁶⁰ Cooke, Alistair. “U.S. Press Attacks President: Refusal to be lulled by excuses on satellites.” *The Manchester Guardian*. 11 October 1957. Pg. 9. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 18 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=61&did=1135988062&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237396291&clientId=17822>

²⁶¹ PPP 1957 719.

²⁶² Cooke, Alistair. “U.S. Press Attacks President: Refusal to be lulled by excuses on satellites.” *The Manchester Guardian*. 11 October 1957. Pg. 9. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 18 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=61&did=1135988062&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237396291&clientId=17822>

appears representative of the unfavorable response Eisenhower received in the general press. The reactions of various papers presented by Cooke illustrates where Eisenhower went wrong. “The leader in the Scripps-Howard press takes a dim view of the President’s comforting remark that the Soviet satellite ‘does not raise my apprehensions one iota.’”²⁶³ The President’s attempt to diminish the significance of the Soviet achievement failed to impress members of the press. As historian David L. Snead observes, this attempt instead “inflated fears, as many Americans assumed he was trying to conceal U.S. military weaknesses.”²⁶⁴ Yet Cooke’s description of Eisenhower’s remark as “comforting” demonstrates the President’s style. The President intended to “comfort” the public by diminishing the “apprehensions” the Soviet satellite might elicit. Alistair Cooke’s compilation of press reactions to Eisenhower’s press conference further cited a response voiced in the *New York World-Telegram*. “The President has misjudged matters. There is no panic. But there is genuine concern among Americans and our allies about increasing evidence that the United States is lagging behind the Soviets in the missile-satellite field...this is the time for plain talk.”²⁶⁵ This reaction captures everything that the public found unsatisfying with Eisenhower’s reaction to the Soviet satellite. He tried to use words to allay public fears, instead of reassuring the public through action. The emphasis on “plain talk” demonstrates that the anonymous reporter interpreted Eisenhower’s remarks as less than frank. Certainly Eisenhower underestimated public interest in Sputnik, as he later acknowledged in his memoir of the second term, *Waging Peace*. “Most surprising of all, however, was the intensity of the public concern.”²⁶⁶ The President had expected panic; a disorderly response based on instinctual fear

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Snead, David L. *The Gaither Committee, Eisenhower, and the Cold War*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999. 1.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Eisenhower, Dwight David. *Waging Peace: 1956-1961*. 206.

that he could dispel or manage with language. But Eisenhower instead encountered the far more concerted challenge of a concerned, calm, and attentive public: a public decidedly less easily manipulated through appeals to emotion.

The President confronted the larger public concerns for national security raised by Sputnik a month later in his 7 November 1957 “Radio and Television Address to the American People on Science in National Security.” A short note from Anne Wheaton, who served as Associate Press Secretary in 1957, to the Eisenhower’s personal secretary, Ann Whitman, reveals the size of the audience the President’s speech reached. “Frank Stanton, head of CBS, said that there were 19 million families (which means 45 million viewers) watching the President’s speech over television last night. Mr. Stanton’s estimate does not include the four national radio networks.”²⁶⁷ The President’s remarks therefore reached a significant number of American viewers, maybe even a majority if including other media. In this address, the President revisited the language of candor he introduced in the first term and answered his critics in the “plain talk” reporters demanded of him. “I am going to lay the facts before you—the rough with the smooth. Some of these security facts are reassuring; others are not—they are sternly demanding.”²⁶⁸ In this passage, the President promised to disclose the “rough” and “smooth” facts of national security, particularly those involving nuclear weapons. The President’s language lacks the soaring rhetoric of hope prevalent in earlier addresses, like the 1953 “Chance for Peace” or “Atoms for Peace” speeches. The President instead grounded his language in the concrete terms defense programs and delivery systems. In an unprecedented step, the President

²⁶⁷ 8 November 1957. Note to Ann Whitman from Anne Wheaton. Ann Whitman File, Speech series, Box 23. Folder “Science in Nat’l Security 11/7/57.”

²⁶⁸ Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Radio and Television Address to the American People on Science in National Security.” 7 November 1957. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19571107%20Radio%20and%20Television%20Address%20on%20Science%20in%20National%20Security.htm>

reviewed the atomic weapons program and delivery systems of the United States in depth with the public. Yet Eisenhower had largely rejected specifying nuclear weapons programs, because he saw no point in boastful recitations of American nuclear strength. That Eisenhower resorted to what constituted little more than a boastful recitation of American nuclear prowess shows how deeply Sputnik roused public concern for national security. The adoption of this technique by Eisenhower might also indicate his personal doubts in his ability to assuage these concerns by other means.

In his 7 November 1957 speech, the President also provided an apolitical course of action as a means of alleviating the concerns raised by Sputnik. Recognizing the significance of these public concerns, Eisenhower tried to remove national security as a source of political controversy. In reviewing weapons development, Eisenhower had specifically wanted to highlight his accomplishments in missile development, partly to alleviate public concern but mostly for political purposes.²⁶⁹ Immediately following the President's abovementioned statement employing the language of candor, Eisenhower moved to keep national security from becoming a potentially volatile political issue. "After putting these facts and requirements before you, I shall propose a program of action—a program that will demand the energetic support of not just the government but every American, if we are to make it successful."²⁷⁰ For the presidential address to accomplish the purpose of easing public concerns for the national security, Eisenhower needed to visibly lead by proposing a concrete program. The American public would not accept inaction in responding to the new threat posed by the Soviet space and missile programs.

²⁶⁹ Draft dated 7 November 1957. "Science in National Security." Ann Whitman File, Speech series, Box 23. Folder "Science in Nat'l Security 11/7/57." A short note on a page between pages 2 and 3.

²⁷⁰ Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Radio and Television Address to the American People on Science in National Security." 7 November 1957.

Yet Eisenhower recognized that his program might have to compete with alternative proposals made by his political competition: the Democrats. So Eisenhower sought to render moot national security as a political issue by labeling it a bipartisan issue, requiring the support of “not just the government but every American.”

[I]t is entirely possible that in the years ahead we could fall behind. I repeat: we could fall behind—unless we now face up to certain pressing requirements and set out to meet them at once. I address myself to this problem knowing that for every American it surmounts any division among us of whatever kind. It reminds us once again that we are not partisans of any kind, we are Americans! We will close ranks as Americans, and get on with the job to be done.²⁷¹

The newly enacted twenty-second amendment to the United States Constitution had relieved Eisenhower of the need to worry about the prospect of another reelection campaign. Instead, Eisenhower appealed to bipartisanship as a means of mustering support for his policies and ensuring the continued success of his party. Eisenhower’s appeal to bipartisanship in reality served to advance the interests of his administration and party, by neutralizing political controversy in defense policy that Democrats could potentially exploit in the future.

Eisenhower’s address on “Science in National Security” arguably contained a more thorough public review and discussion of nuclear weapons programs than most of its predecessors, including the President’s first term “Atoms for Peace” speech. Yet the return to a policy of candor was short lived. When Eisenhower next addressed the nation by radio and television from Oklahoma on 13 November 1957 in a speech entitled “Our Future Security,” he

²⁷¹ Ibid.

discussed nuclear weapons in passing and in far less detail than in his previous “Science in National Security” address. Rather than the multi-purpose weapon Eisenhower described them as in “Science in National Security,” the primary purpose of nuclear weapons in “Our Future Security” remained retaliation. “As a primary deterrent to war, maintain a strong retaliatory power. The Soviets must be convinced that any attack on us and our Allies would result, regardless of damage to us, in their own national destruction.”²⁷² Nuclear weapons had become a deterrent to war with the Soviet Union. Except for Eisenhower’s speech on “Science in National Security” made in response to public concerns over the Soviet launch of Sputnik, the President made no substantial speech on nuclear weapons during 1957.

The Gaither Report

Meanwhile, a committee, nominally led by Horace Rowan Gaither, Jr., appointed to examine issues of civil defense and the vulnerability of American strategic nuclear forces delivered its report to President Eisenhower in November 1957.²⁷³ A lawyer by training, Gaither served as the chairman of the board of trustees for the RAND Corporation, a non-profit defense think tank. But Gaither could not substantially contribute to the work of the panel because he was diagnosed with cancer immediately after his appointment as co-chair of the committee.²⁷⁴ The National Security Council outlined the scope of the committee’s mandate when on 4 April 1957 it directed the creation of four studies. These four studies would consider whether to and how best to provide fallout shelters to the civil population. Of these four studies, the Science

²⁷² Eisenhower, Dwight D. “Radio and Television Address to the American People on ‘Our Future Security.’” 13 November 1957. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: Directory of Speeches. 29 March 2009 <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/speeches/19571113%20Radio%20and%20Television%20Address%20on%20Our%20Future%20Security.htm>

²⁷³ Snead1, 2.

²⁷⁴ Francis X. Sutton, . "**Gaither, Horace Rowan, Jr.**"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00250.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. Access Date: Fri Mar 20 2009

Advisory or Gaither Committee received the most broadly worded mandate. “A study by the Science Advisory Committee of the ODM of active and passive defense measures for the protection of the civil population.”²⁷⁵ In short, Eisenhower charged the committee with reviewing the civil defense programs of the United States government. But whereas the other three studies explicitly mentioned shelters as the objects of study, the Gaither Committee received a broader mandate. The Gaither panel also expanded the scope of its study to include a review of the entire national defense program, thereby exceeding its original mandate.

The report of the Gaither Committee in its final form emphasized the extent of American vulnerability to a Soviet surprise attack and proposed a number of both passive and active measures intended to improve national security. The committee recommended that the Eisenhower administration reduce the vulnerability of the Strategic Air Command, or SAC, by improving air defenses around bases and dispersing the bombers.²⁷⁶ As the branch of the air force specially organized to deliver the “massive retaliation” promised by the Eisenhower administration, SAC represented a crucial offensive component of the national defense. The committee proposed an expansion in the ability of the military to conduct a limited war and in the number of intermediate range ballistic missiles, or IRBMs, and ICBMs.²⁷⁷ Finally, the committee advised that the United States initiate a \$25 billion program to facilitate the construction of fallout shelters and civil defense planning.²⁷⁸ The combined recommendations of

²⁷⁵ Snead 47.

²⁷⁶ Snead 122.

²⁷⁷ Snead 122.

²⁷⁸ Snead 123.

the program would cost \$44 billion over five years,²⁷⁹ a virtually unthinkable sum for the fiscally conservative Eisenhower.

Introducing the seemingly alarmist conclusions of this controversial report into the tense political atmosphere following the Soviet launch of Sputnik threatened to politicize Eisenhower's "New Look" defense policies. After receiving the report of the Gaither panel, Eisenhower needed to decide what to do with the study. The President recognized that eventually someone within the administration or the panel would leak details of the panel's conclusions to the press. In, *Waging Peace*, Eisenhower unintentionally reveals that he initially had little desire to publicly disclose the panel's findings. "When my associates and I considered and discussed the report, I remarked, 'It will be interesting to find out how long it can be kept secret.'"²⁸⁰ Conjecturing how long the administration could keep the report secret implies that the President had no immediate plans to disclose the Gaither panel's conclusions to the public. The existence of the Gaither panel first received national media attention in Arthur Krock's 5 November 1957 column in *The New York Times*²⁸¹ and in an anonymous 9 November 1957 article exclusive to the New York Times, entitled "U.S. in Secret Study of Defense Policies."²⁸² However the substance of the panel's conclusions only emerged a couple of weeks later when on 23 November 1957 both the New York Times and Chicago Daily Tribune revealed that the panel

²⁷⁹ Snead 124.

²⁸⁰ Eisenhower, Dwight David. *Waging Peace, 1956-1961*. 221.

²⁸¹ Krock, Arthur. "In the Nation: Origins and Developments of the Missile Program: II." *New York Times*. 5 November 1957. Pg. 30. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 20 March 2009.
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=4&did=90849550&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237567013&clientId=17822>

²⁸²"U.S. in Secret Study of Defense Policies." *New York Times*. 9 November 1957. Pg. 11. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 20 March 2009.
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=10&did=90850710&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237567046&clientId=17822>

had recommended a \$20 billion fall-out shelter program.²⁸³ The full contents of the report materialized in a 20 December 1957 *Washington Post* article by reporter Chalmers Roberts.²⁸⁴ As historian David L. Snead reveals, Roberts conducted no less than twenty interviews and Eisenhower's special assistant for science and technology James Killian recalled that Roberts had obtained a draft of the report. Roberts' article claimed the report described the United States as in "the gravest danger in its history," thereby increasing popular demand for the release of the report.²⁸⁵

This confronted Eisenhower with the dilemma of whether to release the contents of the report with classified information deleted or keep the reports contents confidential. This dilemma precipitated a debate within the National Security Council which Eisenhower would recall in *Waging Peace*.

In a subsequent meeting, those who supported publication argued that the rumor respecting the report was painting a much worse picture than the report itself justified; its release, they argued, would therefore have a calming effect. Moreover, as Vice President

²⁸³ "U.S. Report Urges Atomic Shelters at 20 Billion Cost; Study Group Would Build Fall-out Protection, Not Blast-Proof Devices." *New York Times*. 23 November 1957. Pg. 1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 20 March 2009. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=28&did=90856438&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237568139&clientId=17822> and "Urges Vast A-Shelter Network." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. 23 November 1957. Pg. 3. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 20 March 2009. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=25&did=565917412&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237568139&clientId=17822>

²⁸⁴ Roberts, Chalmers. "Enormous Arms Outlay is Held Vital to Survival." *The Washington Post*. 20 December 1957. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 24 March 2009. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=5&did=160871642&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237943936&clientId=17822> Also see Snead, David L. 139.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Nixon observed, “Most of the recommendations are already in the papers anyway.

Making the document public should give us no great problem.”²⁸⁶

Abating rumor certainly represented an excellent reason for disclosing the contents of the report, especially considering that the press already had most of the contents of the report. Failure to disclose the contents of the report would perpetuate uncertainty, depriving the public of the ability to distinguish between credible and incredible accounts of American vulnerability. As Eisenhower records in *Waging Peace*, the decision over whether to disclose or keep secret the panel’s conclusions required almost no hesitation. “In spite of all the fury and conflicting advice, the decision on releasing the text was quite easy to make. The answer was ‘no.’”²⁸⁷ The President refused to disclose the contents of the Gaither panel findings. The President had only introduced the issue into debate within the National Security Council as a formality. Eisenhower had never doubted the prudence of his initial inclination to keep the panel’s findings secret. Because if the President evaded public discussion of nuclear weapons, he almost avoided speaking about civil defense altogether.

Long before the report of the Gaither Committee, the “New Look” policy adopted by the Eisenhower administration had neglected civil defense measures like fallout shelters, instead relying on the threat of “massive retaliation” to deter Soviet aggression and achieve national security. The President agreed with his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who Eisenhower wrote, “felt that if the United States should embark on a massive shelter program to protect itself, despite the fact that our allies could not afford such protection, we could ‘just write off our

²⁸⁶ Eisenhower, Dwight David. *Waging Peace: 1956-1961*. 221.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid* 222.

friends in Europe.”²⁸⁸ Eisenhower wanted the public kept unaware of the considerable vulnerability to which he and his administration exposed them. The President recognized that the public would not willingly expose itself to the threat of extermination. No matter the expense, if the government could provide security from the threat of nuclear annihilation the public would pay, thereby adding another dimension to the arms race. So Eisenhower would not acknowledge the vulnerability to which he exposed the American public. Instead Eisenhower referred to counterbalancing forces, both psychological and material, that rendered nuclear war not unthinkable but undesirable for either the United States or the Soviet Union. The vulnerability of the civil population to nuclear war, then, comprised a topic Eisenhower would not willingly discuss.

Farewell to Arms

While over the course of 1959 and 1960 reporters would occasionally ask Eisenhower about nuclear weapons at press conferences, most discussion revolved not around crises or events but disarmament and test ban negotiations in Geneva. Moreover, Eisenhower traveled a great deal and delivered no speeches extensively mentioning nuclear weapons during 1959. The absence of significant crises from 1959 through 1960, with the exception of the 11 May 1960 U-2 incident in which Russians shot down a CIA spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers, represents a remarkable achievement. Yet the absence of crises meant that few events required Eisenhower to speak about nuclear weapons. Disarmament talks remained the only continuous topic involving nuclear weapons of sufficient public interest to merit questions from reporters. Yet Eisenhower strictly adhered to his policy of not discussing ongoing diplomatic negotiations,

²⁸⁸ Eisenhower, Dwight David. *Waging Peace: 1956-1961*. 222.

only occasionally disclosing his continuing and growing optimism that these negotiations would succeed. With the possible exception of the 11 February 1960 press conference, Eisenhower would not speak about the disarmament talks in any great detail. At the start of the 11 February 1960 conference Eisenhower delivered a prepared statement on the Geneva negotiations, revealing the proposals the United States would present that day for negotiations. This statement effectively restrained the reporters from posing additional questions because Eisenhower could refer them to his prepared remarks.

Eisenhower concluded his second term with one of the most extraordinary speeches given by an American president. The 17 January 1961 Farewell Address, also known as the “Military-Industrial Complex” speech, never once mentions nuclear weapons. Yet the speech abounds with allusions to Eisenhower’s experiences dealing with nuclear weapons and the rhetorical strategy of the “middle way.” For instance, Eisenhower used the word “balance” throughout his Farewell Address to pursue his “middle way” strategy. He alludes to the idea that the United States would have to prepare to wage cold war across the “long haul,” confronting the innumerable crises of an “Age of Peril,” which represented core tenets of his “New Look” policy.

“Crises there will continue to be. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties. A huge increase in newer elements of our defense [...] may be suggested as the only way to the road we wish to travel.”²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ PPP 1960-61 1037.

Experiences like the leak of the Gaither Committee report encouraged Eisenhower to issue this warning. Inspired by approximately half a century of service and interactions with the United States Army, the Farewell Address condemned the bureaucratic politics pursued by the military. In the most famous and oft quoted passage of the speech, Eisenhower warned that “we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.”²⁹⁰ Few men other than Eisenhower could have delivered this warning. Coming only months after the 1960 election, this warning might represent an act of political retribution against those involved in selling the American public a largely fictional “missile gap.” Even if political retribution partially motivated him, this speech remains a poignant illustration of Eisenhower’s genuine candor. In a final sense, the Farewell Address sought to allay the public fears generated by Sputnik and the report of the Gaither Committee. But he could only manage to allay public anxieties by redirecting their fears onto the “military-industrial complex.”

²⁹⁰ PPP 1960-61 1038.

Conclusion: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Over the grainy background noise of the recording equipment, the distinctive syllabic enunciation of President John F. Kennedy mingles with the staccato speech pattern of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The conversation began after the operator connected President Kennedy's call from the White House to former President Eisenhower, who received the call in his Gettysburg residence at approximately 10:45 am on 22 October 1962.²⁹¹ Six days before Kennedy had received the news that the Soviet Union had stationed nuclear missiles in Cuba.²⁹² John McCone, a lifelong Republican and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency under Kennedy, had called Eisenhower on 20 October to request a meeting with the former President to discuss the crisis in Cuba the following morning in Washington, D.C.²⁹³ Eisenhower agreed. After McCone called, Eisenhower immediately appealed to Republican candidates to refrain from exploiting Cuba as a campaign issue.²⁹⁴ At their meeting, McCone outlined the three proposals then under consideration by the Kennedy administration: destruction of the sites with conventional bombing; bombing conducted simultaneously with an amphibious invasion of the

²⁹¹ "Presidential Recordings." *Historical Resources: Audiovisual Archives*. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. 21 March 2009. Papers of John F. Kennedy. President's Office Files. Current Status of Telephone Recordings. <http://www.jfklibrary.org/NR/rdonlyres/50EB8FF1-558A-45D9-B168-C2B0A3C11F53/21429/presidentialrecordingsdictabelts.html#addendum>

²⁹² Walton, Jennifer. "Cuban Missile Crisis." In Winkler, Allan M., Susan V. Spellman, and Gary B. Nash, eds. *Encyclopedia of American History: Postwar United States, 1946 to 1968*, vol. 9. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2003. *American History Online*. Facts On File, Inc. <http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE52&iPin=EAHIX058&SingleRecord=True> (accessed March 21, 2009).

²⁹³ 22 October 1962. DDE Memo. Convenience File "Atom Bomb." McCone File Memo. Also see Ambrose, 641.

²⁹⁴ "Eisenhower Bars Any Crisis Abroad as Election Issue." *New York Times*. 22 October 1962. Pg. 1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 23 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=11&did=90538097&SrchMode=1&sid=3&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&ROT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237858437&clientId=17822>

island; and blockade of the island together with plans to ensure the evacuation of the island by the Russians.²⁹⁵

The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred at an inauspicious moment for Kennedy. The failed CIA backed invasion of the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 virtually guaranteed that Republicans would make Cuba a campaign issue in 1962 midterm election then in progress. David Lawrence²⁹⁶ reported in a 1 October 1962 article for the *Los Angeles Times* that Kennedy had claimed in his speeches to have “inherited” the problem of Cuba from Eisenhower.²⁹⁷ Kennedy presumably voiced this claim in anticipation of criticism from Republican campaigns during the congressional election. Former President Eisenhower, still the most influential figure in the Republican Party, had begun hammering Kennedy’s foreign policy in 16 October 1962, especially criticizing Kennedy’s relations with Cuba. Robert Hartmann, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, recorded the substance of Eisenhower’s 16 October remarks in Boston, Massachusetts.²⁹⁸ “‘I have been careful in all my speeches to keep current foreign policy out of partisan debate.’ But he said that when a charge is made by ‘the President himself’ for purely political purposes, he questions the advisability of continued silence.”²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ 22 October 1962. DDE Memo. Convenience File “Atom Bomb.” McCone File Memo.

²⁹⁶ Ronald S. Marmarelli. “**Lawrence, David**”; <http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-02778.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. Access Date: Fri Mar 27 2009

²⁹⁷ Lawrence, David. “Full Story Told of How and Why the Cuban Invasion Went Wrong.” *Los Angeles Times*. 1 Oct. 1962. Pg. A6. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 27 March 2009.

<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=7&did=454219102&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238175392&clientId=17822>

²⁹⁸ Hevesi, Dennis. “Robert Hartmann, 91, Dies; Wrote Ford’s Noted Talk.” *New York Times*. 19 April 2008. 27 March 2009 <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/19/us/politics/19hartmann.html>. Hartmann would later write President Ford’s famous remark, “My fellow Americans, our long national nightmare is over.”

²⁹⁹ Hartmann, Robert. “Eisenhower Hits Record of Kennedy.” *Los Angeles Times*. 16 October 1962. Pg. 1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 27 March 2009.

<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=344&did=454274432&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238176960&clientId=17822>

Returning to conversation between Eisenhower and Kennedy raises the question of why Kennedy taped his 22 October 1962 telephone call with Eisenhower. Kennedy's motives remain the subject of speculation. The fact that Kennedy recorded not only his telephone calls with Eisenhower, but with Truman and Hoover as well suggests he routinely taped his conversations with prominent figures. Philip Zelikow and Ernest May suggest that Kennedy made the tapes for a planned memoir, a not unlikely hypothesis.³⁰⁰

In the 22 October 1962 telephone conversation, the President and Eisenhower discussed the situation in Cuba, particularly the three proposals then under consideration.³⁰¹ Eisenhower informed the President that he had already concluded that he believed the first plan detrimental to American interests, and claimed not to possess sufficient knowledge of the problem to choose between the second and third proposals.³⁰² Kennedy, of course, wanted Eisenhower's endorsement so that he could take decisive action without fear of political recriminations. The loose talk produced by debate could invite war or undermine the administration position. After this exchange Eisenhower gave Kennedy precisely what he had sought: an unequivocal endorsement of any action the President might take.³⁰³ Eisenhower knew politics well enough to surmise what motivated Kennedy's phone call.

Kennedy implicitly acknowledged Eisenhower's considerable and continuing popularity as a political figure by calling to solicit the General's opinion. Kennedy refers to Eisenhower as "General" not merely in an official but also familiar capacity, illustrating the congenial

³⁰⁰ Zelikow, Philip and Ernest May. "Preface." *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy*. Kennedy Tapes Overview. Presidential Recording Programs: White House Tapes. Miller Center of Public Affairs: University of Virginia. <http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/tapes/kennedy/overview>

³⁰¹ 22 October 1962. DDE Memo. Convenience File "Atom Bomb." McCone File Memo.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

relationship between the two men: a relationship that differed markedly from that between Truman and Eisenhower. Kennedy dominated the conversation, doing most of the talking. He outlined the proposals under consideration by the administration, citing various conditions influencing his thinking. Kennedy patiently listened to Eisenhower's explanation, but repeatedly and insistently interjected various considerations into the conversation. Yet the interjections disguised the dismissive manner in which Kennedy made his inquiries. The frequent verbal pauses and one instance of laughter betray the distracted and half-hearted manner in which Kennedy conducted the conversation. The tape reveals that Kennedy listened to Eisenhower's opinions out of political necessity; in the midst of the midterm elections the President could ill afford Republican leaders second guessing his every decision.

Following Kennedy's 7 pm address to the nation that evening, former Presidents Hoover and Truman both pledged their support to the President. Eisenhower withheld issuing a statement.³⁰⁴ Eisenhower waited until the evening of 23 October to urge Republicans to support Kennedy during the crisis.³⁰⁵ Why had Eisenhower delayed supporting the President? Eisenhower believed he had already made a statement by encouraging Republican candidates not to campaign on Cuba.

Kennedy only humored Eisenhower to gain his political support for the action taken against Cuba. It no longer mattered what Eisenhower thought about nuclear weapons after his

³⁰⁴ "Two Former Presidents Back Stand." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. 23 October 1962. Pg. 8. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 27 March 2009. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=186&did=577058722&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238172404&clientId=17822>

³⁰⁵ "Back Kennedy in Crisis, Ike Urges People." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. 24 October 1962. Pg. A2. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 27 March 2009. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=205&did=577066362&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238172587&clientId=17822>

exit from public office. Eisenhower no longer had cause to speak about nuclear weapons upon his exit from the presidency. But the manner in which Eisenhower spoke about nuclear weapons continued to matter, even after his departure from office. On 27 January 1953 Harry S. Truman had expressed the belief that he doubted a nation as backwards and devastated after the Second World War as Soviet Union possessed a “workable” atomic bomb.³⁰⁶ This contradicted three earlier statements issued by the Truman administration announcing Russian atomic tests on 23 September 1949, 3 October 1951, and 22 October 1951.³⁰⁷ Truman’s remark precipitated a storm of criticism from Congress and the White House, especially from Republicans.³⁰⁸ This mistake thoroughly embarrassed Truman, and encouraged him not to comment further on nuclear weapons, except to dismiss the criticism, stating that “nobody knows anything about it.”³⁰⁹ The embarrassment Truman experienced only encouraged Eisenhower’s disinclination to speak about nuclear weapons after his departure from the presidency. Eisenhower’s conversation with Kennedy during which the younger laughed only reinforced this aversion.

This final silence reflects a great deal about how the 34th President of the United States spoke about nuclear weapons. This study began with a quotation by Carter speechwriter Hendrik Hertzberg that suggested a politician’s identity becomes inseparable from the words he or she uses. What then has this study revealed about Eisenhower? A committed fiscal conservative,

³⁰⁶ “Truman Doubts Reds Have A-Bomb; Statement of Ex-President Stirs Capital Critics; White House Announcements Cited.” *Los Angeles Times*. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 28 January 1953. Pg. 6. 29 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=90&did=426097131&SrchMode=1&sid=8&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=POD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238383257&clientId=17822>

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Walz, Jay. “Truman Scored for Doubting Russian Have Atomic Bomb.” *The New York Times*. 28 January 1953. Pg. 1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 29 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=93&did=84387366&SrchMode=1&sid=8&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=POD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1238383257&clientId=17822>

³⁰⁹ Johnston, Richard J.H. “Truman Stands Pat; Refuses Comment on Criticism of Statement About Bomb.” *The New York Times*. 28 Jan. 1953. Page 14. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. 21 March 2009 <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=84387431&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=POD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1237678971&clientId=17822>

Eisenhower valued the efficiency of American business and economic strength of the United States. He sought to maintain this economic strength by cutting defense spending and balancing the budget, which required he rely upon nuclear weapons. This reliance on nuclear weapons compelled him to discuss them. But he only spoke about nuclear weapons when he felt impelled to do so. Even then, he spoke with great reluctance, knowing that undiplomatic language or “loose talk” could commit the nation to a policy detrimental to national security or even provoke war. He tried to evade speaking about nuclear weapons at press conferences for this reason, recognizing the considerable danger inherent to unprepared remarks. The use of subordinates to talk about nuclear weapons provided a safeguard: he could rectify mistakes at press conferences, as he did after the Lucky Dragon incident. He also delegated the task of speaking about nuclear weapons to subordinates, so as not to evoke fear from domestic audiences. He warned the public in his “Farewell Address” that over the “long haul” unmanaged fear would drive the United States to spend ever greater sums on “miraculous solutions.” This spending, Eisenhower believed, would gradually erode democratic freedoms. Fear could also drive the nation to war. Eisenhower confronted this prospect when he considered preventive war. He abhorred war. He only ever considered preventive war in 1953 because he believed the arms race would eventually result in war or erode democracy in the United States.

Faced with the dilemma of speaking about nuclear weapons, Eisenhower chose to pursue a rhetorical strategy based on the concept of the “middle way.” He sought to reassure the American public of their national security. He managed the public fear of nuclear weapons with speeches like “Chance for Peace,” “Atoms for Peace,” and even his “Farewell Address.” And so from these addresses and other public remarks about nuclear weapons, the identity of Eisenhower the politician emerges. He was finally a man firmly committed to peace.

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