

# CIVIL DEFENSE: IN THE EVENT OF AN ACTUAL EMERGENCY

In an age of terror alerts, suicide bombings and threats of extermination by psychopathic Islamo-fascists, it is easy for one to yearn for those simpler times when the only thing you had to worry about was annihilation by the communist menace.

After victory in World War II via the atomic bomb, the expansionist evil empire of the Soviet Union figured out how to make its own atomic bomb, threatening the United States and democracies around the world, thus triggering what came to be known as the Cold War.

With the Soviet threat, and U.S. troops battling communists in Korea in the early 1950s, there was serious worry that the Cold War could turn red hot and that U.S. cities could be the target of nuclear attack by the Soviet Union. With the lives of millions of U.S. civilians at risk, legislation creating the Federal Civil Defense Administration was signed by President Harry S. Truman and enacted on January 12, 1951.

The government wanted Americans, who had lived through two world wars without ever seeing a direct attack on the homeland, to know that this threat was damn serious. Air and missile bases would be likely targets of an atomic bomb, as would major cities. The blast, heat and radiation would kill millions of Americans at or near ground zero of such an attack. Millions more would be injured or killed by radioactive dust — fallout — kicked up by the blast and blown to all parts of the land by wind, so no one was safe. A plan needed to be put in place, and a citizenry needed to be informed on how to handle such a dire situation.

Through the Civil Defense Administration, regional offices were set up, civil defense directors were appointed in communities across the land, informational booklets and posters were published, films were produced, and civil defense experts appeared on radio and television programs, to let John Q. Public, his wife and his children know how serious the threat was and what they can do to protect themselves.

Boy Scouts were recruited to distribute large packets, marked “THIS ENVELOPE CONTAINS INFORMATION FOR YOUR SURVIVAL,” courtesy of local Civil Defense offices, to households throughout the communities served by the Scouts. They were filled with pamphlets and booklets with titles such as “Facts About Fallout,” “Emergency Action to Save Lives,” “Between You and DISASTER,” along with instructions and blueprints on how to build “The Family Fallout Shelter.”

These government publications avoided mentioning communism or engaging in any blatant political propaganda, but did refer to “the enemy,” without specifying who that enemy was. “We do not want a war,” one 1959 publication stated. “We do not know if there will be a war. But we know that forces hostile to us possess weapons that could destroy us if we are unready. These weapons create a new threat—radioactive fallout that can spread death anywhere...No matter where you live a fallout shelter is necessary insurance. It will not be needed except in emergency. But in emergency it will be priceless—as priceless as your life.”

## Attack Alert!

In the seemingly real possibility of nuclear

