

SECRET 1957 STUDY RELEASED BY U.S.

Security Agency Overruled
on Nuclear-Attack Report

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 19—An Administration review board has overruled the National Security Council and made public a 15-year old "top secret," highly controversial report that warned the Eisenhower Administration that it was not doing enough to protect the United States against possible Soviet nuclear attack.

The Gaither report, as it was known in 1957, recommended to President Eisenhower that the United States spend \$19-billion more on weaponry and \$25-billion on civil defense programs over the next five years, to deter the Russians.

Reflecting the concern of many experts then that the Soviet Union's successful launching of the first Sputnik satellite in October, 1957, had put the Russians ahead in weapons technology, the report said that all evidence "clearly indicates an increasing threat which may become critical in 1959 or early 1960."

Main Points Known Before

The main points of the report became known to the press at the time, but both President Eisenhower and his successor, John F. Kennedy, refused to make the full 40-page report public.

The New York Times sought its release under the Administration's new classification system put into effect last June. The National Security Council turned down the request in a letter dated Oct. 13, 1972.

But, as a result of an appeal by The Times, John S. D. Eisenhower, son of the late President and chairman of the Interagency Classification Review Committee, told The Times in a letter dated Jan. 10 that the review group had decided to declassify the report.

This was the first time that the review committee had overruled a Government agency's decision to withhold a document.

'Deterrence and Survival'

The full name of the report was "Deterrence and Survival in the Nuclear Age." It was compiled by the security resources panel of the Science Advisory Committee of the Office of Defense Mobilization. It became known as the Gaither

report for the study group's chairman, H. Rowan Gaither Jr., chairman of the board of the Ford Foundation. He died in 1961.

The panel was assigned to study the ability of the civil population to survive a nuclear attack, but widened its mandate into a study of the relative weapons systems of both countries.

It said, "We have found no evidence in Russian foreign and military policy since 1945 to refute the conclusion that U.S.S.R. intentions are expansionist, and that her great efforts to build military power go beyond any concepts of Soviet defense."

It concluded that the 1957 civil defense programs in the United States "will not give adequate assurance of protection to the civil population."

It then said that American protection depended on the

Strategic Air Command's bomber force, and said:

"The current vulnerability of SAC to surprise attack during a period of lessened world tension (i.e., a time when SAC is not on a SAC 'alert' status), and the threat posed to SAC by the prospects of an early Russian ICBM [intercontinental ballistic missile] capability, call for prompt remedial action."

Despite the controversy created by the press disclosures at the time, President Eisenhower maintained that the conclusions of the Gaither panel were no more important than recommendations made by other study groups, in and out of the Government.

The concern for American security expressed by the Gaither report, however, contributed to the impression by the time of the 1960 election

that there was a missile "gap" between Russia and the United States. This was one of the issues used by Mr. Kennedy in defeating Vice President Nixon for the Presidency.