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## Terror and Talks

Through the course of the ugly developments during the past few weeks, the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C., has continued to keep its front lawn properly watered. Had the lawn been allowed to lapse into the condition of the desert across the street fronting the National Geographic Society, there would be even greater cause for concern over Soviet policy. We can expect Soviet representatives to remain in Washington for a while. We can expect talks about talks, and even talks.

There is other evidence besides the Embassy lawn that one aim of the resumption by the Soviet Union of atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons is to promote, albeit in a special way, East-West negotiations. In fact, from the very beginning, Khrushchev has made no secret of this aim. In an interview with two members of the British Labor Party shortly after the announcement that there would be renewed testing, Khrushchev said that he hopes, by developing a superbomb with a force of 100,000,000 tons of TNT, to shock the Western powers into negotiations on general disarmament and Berlin. Consider also Khrushchev's 13-page reply to the West's reiteration of its proposal for a treaty banning atmospheric testing. True, after referring to his government's "aching heart" over resuming testing, Khrushchev rejects the proposal, but a man does not bother to reject at such length unless he wishes to give his opponent something more to talk about.

Negotiations based on shock, to be sure, would be on terms more congenial to the Soviet Union than negotiations conducted without shock, such as might otherwise have taken place. As for neutral nations, because of the Soviet move they might now see more clearly than ever before that the Soviet Union is the country threatening world peace. But the gamble, already paying off, is that renewed testing will cause neutral nations to bring pressure on the West to meet Soviet demands, just because world peace is so seriously threatened.

The absence of a great outcry by neutral nations against the Soviet Union has been a source of surprise and chagrin in this country. We continue to learn that judgments rendered by neutral nations upon us and upon the Soviet Union are characterized by a certain lack of symmetry. Nevertheless, our decision to keep postponing the resumption of underground testing, even in the face of the Soviet's blatant renegeing on gains that had been achieved at the Geneva talks, still appears to have been exactly right. We are now in an incomparably better position regarding world opinion, even given this lack of symmetry, and regarding our opinion of ourselves, than we would be in if we had announced new underground explosions and the Soviets had immediately responded, as we now see they were prepared to do, with their present testing program.

If one aim of the Soviet resumption of atmospheric testing is to terrorize the rest of the world, then one aim of Kennedy's announcement, after the third Soviet bomb went off, that we would resume testing underground, is to show firmness in the face of this attempt. Here, as in all dealings with Russia, American strategy for minimizing the likelihood of war is to avoid the extremes that characterize Soviet maneuvers. We cannot afford to appear threatening, for that might invite the Soviet Union to strike us out of fear that we are planning a first strike ourselves. At the same time, we cannot afford to appear conciliatory, for that would invite miscalculation of the extent of aggression we can permit.—J.T.