

Cold war technology and atomic hysteria

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There were also many conspiracies thrown around due to the secretive nature of the governments at that time. Many people believe that the Cold War was a terrible time, whereas it was a time of technological and scientific advancement. Many great technological advancements were made during the Cold War. Rockets and nuclear energy are just a few of the radical inventions that were thought of at that time. There are some downfalls to nuclear energy though. The reactors are not fall-proof, with, " One possible type of reactor disaster is known as a meltdown.

In such an accident, the fission reaction goes out of control, leading to a nuclear explosion and the emission of great amounts of radiation" (CTD in Nuclear Energy). There have been two major catastrophes with reactor meltdowns: Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. The Three Mile Island incident happened on a small island in Pennsylvania where radiation leaked, though the problem was solved just minutes before a meltdown occurred.

Chernobyl was a town in Russia where a large amount of radiation escaped from a reactor. Hundreds of thousands of people were exposed to the leakage and dozens died within a few days.

Despite these major disasters, many people are still in favor of nuclear energy. It is much more clean and efficient than its counterparts. One ton of uranium produces more energy than is produced by several million tons of coal or several million barrels of oil. A well-maintained reactor does not produce as much pollutants as a coal burning power plant. The secretive nature of the governments in that era has caused many people to be wary and cautious of many governmental institutions. Many experiments were

being done in secret and still are today. The Manhattan Project is one of the more popular ones that people reference today.

Harold Agene, one of the head scientists who worked on the atomic bomb, was asked about the public opinion of nuclear weapons. He said in the interview, " I don't see why the public reaction was quite so strong, although the media has a tremendous effect on public reaction, depending on how it's couched. It was new and as a result there was a tremendous adverse effect, I think, on the whole program" (CTD In Agene). He goes on to argue that more people die in normal, everyday accidents than in that atomic bomb detonation that killed some innocent people on the sea.

He states that the public doesn't fully understand atomic energy, so they are scared to use it on anyone while it is okay to use hatchets or guns to kill someone. The Korean War is a time in which he was all in favor of using the atomic bomb. He states, " They were not used and then I felt they never never use one against somebody that's got one" (Agene). He also goes on to state that public opinion is one of the main factors why the United States did not use atomic weapons in the Korean War. The atomic bomb was a revolutionary weapon to be unleashed on anyone at the time.

It was capable of killing everyone in an entire region. The public was afraid of this power and because of that, they did not condone this action. The mindset of everyone at that time was negative towards atomic power. They thought that the exposure to the radiation was too inhumane to have anyone subjected to, although some people were secretly being tested with uranium in experiments sponsored by the government. The public was taken to be

the subjects in some of these secretive experiments. In SST. Louis, the government sprayed the poor, destitute areas with zinc cadmium sulfide with questionable radioactivity.

Documents released in the ass showed the Army placed sprayers in Forest Park. The Army always insisted that the chemical compound was safe, though others believe otherwise. A news station in SST. Louis, KIDS, " links the SST. Louis testing to a company called US Radium, a company notorious for lawsuits involving radioactive contamination of its workers" (CTD in KIDS). The sprayers were concentrated on the Pursuit-Ego Housing Complex, where 10, 000 low income people resided. An estimated seventy percent of that were children.

Another experiment was conducted by the military to try and treat cancer patients. This one was done on willing people though. The military chose relatively healthy cancer patients and introduced them to radiation of varying degrees to try and treat them in a process called Total Body Irradiation. Again, we see that these experiments were being done on minorities and low income families. However, research suggests that the military never told the subjects about the full effects of the radiation they were receiving, so many had side-effects they never thought they would get.

Another report suggests that the Army proposal made no mention of medical therapy or cancer research as a purpose of the study, so it was purely to test addition effects on the human body. Relatives of the subjects testified that their family members were in good condition before radiation but had substantially become worse since the treatments. In Canticle's, The Human

Radiation Experiments, he describes many experiments that the government performed on various different types of people in this era.

In one experiment, " 18 Americans secretly injected with plutonium, a key ingredient of the atomic bomb and one of the most toxic substances known to man. Some, but not all, of the patients were terminally ill" (Cantle). He goes on to list many more secretive experiments the government performed on the unsuspecting and uninformed. In a case of the uninformed, uranium mine workers in the Four Corners were never told the risks of extracting the uranium. There was a build-up of radon gas in the poorly ventilated chambers that could easily cause lung cancer in anyone who would breathe it.

The scientists and epidemiologists knew of this build-up, yet they did not tell the miners, who were predominately Native Americans. Many died of lung cancer as a result of the misinformation. Hippocratic Oath that says they will not harm patients. There are parameters set up just so this cannot happen, such as the Emerging Code of Justice developed after the Nazi war crimes of World War II. Many physicians seem to think that the Code is too extreme for clinical research. They say the stringency of the Code is too onerous.

But patients in medical experiments expect the experiment to help them in some way, not to harm them. Patients also are often inclined to totally trust their physicians to help them. Jay Katz, a writer for the American Medical Association, concludes that many doctors view the Code as a good code for barbarians but an unnecessary code for ordinary physicians. Despite all of the negative feedback people were giving to the government, the Cold War was

a time of radical political policies. Mikhail Gorbachev started to rule in the Soviet Union and had a radically new view on policies.

In Tallboy's book, *Reagan and Gorbachev: Shutting the Cold War Down*, he writes that Gorbachev, "was determined to take the Soviet Union in a radically different direction-? away from the Big Lie (through his policy of glasnost), away from a command economy (through perestroika) and away from zero-sum competition with the West" (CTD in Tallboy). Reagan saw that Gorbachev's views could benefit American interests and started to take advantage of that. He turned away from his usual hatred of the Soviet Union and tried to compromise with Gorbachev on similar issues that they both wanted.

Whilst Reagan was given the majority of the credit, he was not the only president to fight for peace between these two nations. President Jimmy Carter was the first to put human rights prominently on the agenda of American-Soviet relations. President George H. W. Bush was the one who finalized the end of the Cold War, "when the increasingly laagered Gorbachev brought the Soviet Union in for a relatively soft landing on the ash heap of history-? a major contribution to the end of the Cold War" (CTD in Tallboy).

The Cold War also filled the psyche of the American mind with paranoia and distrust. The Red Scare was in full effect in the United States during this time. The term McCarthy was being thrown around all over the place, describing a famous person who secretly favored communism over democracy. This threw everyone on the edge of paranoia and made them

more cautious to not say anything wrong around the wrong person. No one wanted to be labeled as a communist since communism was linked with the devil and sin. Some consequences of the Red Scare were more, " stringent.

Workers in all federal departments or agencies could be summarily dismissed if 'reasonable doubt' existed about their suitability for government employment" (CTD in Home Front). The air raid drills also pounded into our psyche that the enemy could attack at any moment. Fallout shelters were being built in every city in case of nuclear war between America and the Soviet Union. The Cold War was clouded in secrecy and devious officials. The public was used or experiments against their will. There was always the threat of an impending nuclear war.