

This particular crisis is occurring, however, at a time when America faces a terrible threat from the greatest military power the world has ever known. Weakness now - military or economic or both - may prove fatal.

If this crash continues, many families will have fewer resources to use for self-help civil defense. Politicians will be less able to appropriate resources for national homeland defense. Organizations like **Fighting Chance** will have even more limited resources with which to work for homeland defense. The Soviets will be further emboldened by our economic weakness added to military weaknesses and a weakened will to resist.

Regardless of future events, this crash has made our job more difficult. We have, however, no choice other than to redouble our efforts and accomplish our goal of American security.

ON THE AGENDA

World War II put civil defense on the political agenda of that generation of Americans. The invention of nuclear weapons and their use in war placed civil defense high on the agenda of the 1950's. The emerging Soviet threat caused President Kennedy to put civil defense at the top of his political agenda early in his administration.

President Kennedy's successors were, however, very unwise in their policies toward American homeland defenses. Gradually, civil defense slipped off the agenda of most American political leaders.

Public opinion polls throughout the past 25 years have shown that homeland defense, especially civil defense, has remained a high priority for most Americans. Most of them think of their \$300 billion annual expenditure as a "defense" expenditure. They think that somehow they are being defended by all that money.

When the specific issue of civil defense is asked about today, over 80% of Americans are in favor of it. Many are shocked when they confront the fact that America lacks this type of protection.

As with all political issues, most people are passive. They expect the politicians to present them with an opportunity to vote on the relevant issues and then to carry out the mandate of the voters. This, of course, does not always happen.