

CHAPTER
18

GUIDED READING *Two Nations Live on the Edge*

Section 4

A. As you read this section, write your answers to the question in the appropriate boxes.

	How did the United States react, and why?
1. The Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb in 1949.	
2. In 1951, the Iranian prime minister placed the oil industry in Iran under the Iranian government's control.	
3. The Guatemalan head of government gave American-owned land in Guatemala to peasants.	
4. In 1956, Britain, France, and Israel invaded Egypt and occupied the Suez Canal.	
5. Soviet tanks invaded Hungary and fired on protesters in 1956.	
6. In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik.	
7. In 1960, the Soviet Union brought down an American U-2 piloted by Francis Gary Powers.	

B. On the back of this paper, explain the significance of each of the following terms and names:

H-bomb

brinkmanship

Nikita Khrushchev

Warsaw Pact

CIA

Eisenhower Doctrine

Dwight D. Eisenhower

John Foster Dulles

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Section 4

RETEACHING ACTIVITY *Two Nations Live
on the Edge*

Matching

A. Match the description in the second column with term or name in the first column. Write the appropriate letter next to the word.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Central Intelligence Agency | a. prompted conflict by seizing Suez Canal |
| _____ 2. Guatemala | b. world's first artificial satellite |
| _____ 3. Shah of Iran | c. engaged in covert operations abroad |
| _____ 4. <i>Sputnik</i> | d. alliance of Eastern European countries |
| _____ 5. Warsaw Pact | e. Middle East ally of the United States |
| _____ 6. Gamel Abdel Nassar | f. site of covert CIA activities |

Completion

B. Complete each sentence with the appropriate term or name.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Eisenhower Doctrine | brinkmanship |
| Spain | Hungary |
| space race | Truman Doctrine |
| Israel | Czechoslovakia |

1. In 1956, the Soviets brutally put down a pro-democracy rebellion in _____.
2. The _____ stated that the United States would defend the Middle East against the spread of communism.
3. The U.S.-Soviet competition for supremacy of the earth's orbit was known as the _____.
4. The three nations that confronted Egypt over its seizure of the Suez Canal were France, Great Britain, and _____.
5. The policy of going to the edge of all-out war is known as _____.

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PRIMARY SOURCE *from* Dwight D. Eisenhower's
Statement on the U-2 Incident

When Nikita Khrushchev announced that an American U-2 had been shot down over Soviet territory, U.S. officials at first denied that the U-2 was a spy plane. Then, President Dwight D. Eisenhower decided to tell the truth in a TV and radio broadcast. As you read this excerpt from his speech, keep in mind the reasons he gives for spying on the Soviets.

Our safety, and that of the free world, demand, of course, effective systems for gathering information about the military capabilities of other powerful nations, especially those that make a fetish of secrecy. This involves many techniques and methods. In these times of vast military machines and nuclear-tipped missiles, the ferreting out of this information is indispensable to free-world security. . . .

I take full responsibility for approving all the various programs undertaken by our government to secure and evaluate military intelligence.

It was in the prosecution of one of these intelligence programs that the widely publicized U-2 incident occurred.

Aerial photography has been one of many methods we have used to keep ourselves and the free world abreast of major Soviet military developments. The usefulness of this work has been well established through four years of effort. The Soviets were well aware of it. . . . Only last week, in his Paris press conference, Chairman Khrushchev confirmed that he knew of these flights when he visited the United States last September.

Incidentally, this raises the natural question—why all the furor concerning one particular flight? He did not, when in America last September, charge that these flights were any threat to Soviet safety. He did not then see any reason to refuse to confer with American representatives. This he did only about the flight that unfortunately failed, on May 1, far inside Russia.

Now, two questions have been raised about this particular flight: first, as to its timing, considering the imminence of the summit meeting; second, our initial statement when we learned the flight had failed.

As to the timing, the question was really whether to halt the program and thus forgo the gathering of

important information that was essential and that was likely to be unavailable at a later date. The decision was that the program should not be halted. The plain truth is this: When a nation needs intelligence activity, there is no time when vigilance can be relaxed. Incidentally, from Pearl Harbor we learned that even negotiation itself can be used to conceal preparations for a surprise attack.

Next, as to our government's initial statement about the flight, this was issued to protect the pilot, his mission, and our intelligence processes, at a time when the true facts were still undetermined.

Our first information about the failure of this mission did not disclose whether the pilot was still alive, was trying to escape, was avoiding interrogation, or whether both plane and pilot had been destroyed. Protection of our intelligence system and the pilot, and concealment of the plane's mission, seemed imperative. . . .

I then made two facts clear to the public: first, our program of aerial reconnaissance had been undertaken with my approval; second, this government is compelled to keep abreast, by one means or another, of military activities of the Soviets, just as their government has for years engaged in espionage activities in our country and throughout the world.

from *Department of State Bulletin*, June 6, 1960,
pp. 899–903

Discussion Questions

1. What reasons does Eisenhower give for gathering information about the Soviet military?
2. In your opinion, was the United States right to spy on the Soviets during the Cold War? Support your opinion with facts and reasons.

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LITERATURE SELECTION *from The Nuclear Age*
by Tim O'Brien

The main character of this novel, 49-year-old William Cowling, grew up under the dark cloud of anxiety that loomed during the height of the Cold War. In this excerpt, Cowling recalls how he reacted to the threat of nuclear attack when he was a teenager in the 1950s. As you read, think about the steps Cowling takes to protect himself. Do you think his plan could help him survive a nuclear war?

When I was a kid, I converted my Ping-Pong table into a fallout shelter. Funny? Poignant? A nifty comment on the modern age? Well, let me tell you something. The year was 1958, and I was scared. Who knows how it started? Maybe it was all that CONELRAD stuff on the radio, tests of the Emergency Broadcast System, pictures of H-bombs in *Life* magazine, strontium 90 in the milk, the times in school when we'd crawl under our desks and cover our heads in practice for the real thing. Or maybe it was rooted deep inside me. In my own inherited fears, in the genes, in a coded conviction that the world wasn't safe for human life.

Really, who knows?

Whatever the sources, I was a frightened child. At night I'd toss around in bed for hours, battling the snagged sheets, and then when sleep finally came, sometimes close to dawn, my dreams would be clotted with sirens and melting ice caps and radioactive gleamings and ICBMs whining in the dark.

I was a witness. I saw it happen. In dreams, in imagination, I watched the world end. . . .

Even as a kid, maybe because I was a kid, I understood that there was nothing make-believe about doomsday. No hocus-pocus. No midnight fantasy. I knew better. It was real, like physics, like the laws of combustion and gravity. I could truly see it: a sleek nose cone, the wiring and dials and tangled circuitry. Real firepower, real danger. I was normal, yes, stable and levelheaded, but I was also willing to face the truth.

Anyway, I didn't have much choice. The nightmares had been squeezing my sleep for months, and finally, on a night in early May, a very quiet night, I woke up dizzy. My eyeballs ached. Things were so utterly silent I feared I'd gone deaf. Absolute silence. I sat up and wiped my face and waited for the world to rebalance itself. I'd been dreaming of

war—whole continents on fire, oceans boiling, cities in ash—and now, with that dreadful silence, it seemed that the universe had died in its sleep.

I was a child. There were few options.

I scrambled out of bed, put on my slippers, and ran for the basement. No real decision, I just did it. Basement, I thought.

I went straight for the Ping-Pong table.

Shivering, wide awake, I began piling scraps of lumber and bricks and old rugs onto the table, making a thick roof, shingling it with a layer of charcoal briquettes to soak up the deadly radiation. I fashioned walls out of cardboard boxes filled with newspapers and two-by-fours and whatever basement junk I could find. I built a ventilation shaft out of cardboard tubing. I stocked the shelter with rations from the kitchen pantry, laid in a supply of bottled water, set up a dispensary of Band-Aids and iodine, designed my own little fallout mask.

When all this was finished, near dawn, I crawled under the

table and lay there faceup, safe, arms folded across my chest.

And, yes, I slept. No dreams.

My father found me down there. Still half asleep, I heard him calling out my name in a voice so distant, so muffled and hollow, that it might've come from another planet.

I didn't answer.

A door opened, lights clicked on. I watched my father's slippers glide across the concrete floor.

"William?" he said.

I sank deeper into my shelter.

"Hey, cowboy," my father said. "Out."

His voice had a stern, echoing sound. It made me coil up.

"Out," he repeated.

I could see the blue veins in his ankles. "Okay, in a minute," I told him. "I'm sort of busy right now."

I was a child. There were few options.

My father stood still for a moment, then shuffled to the far end of the table. His slippers made a whish-whish noise. “Listen here,” he said, “it’s a swell little fort, a dandy, but you can’t—”

“It’s not a fort,” I said.
“No?”

And so I explained it to him. How, in times like these, we needed certain safeguards. A line of defense against the man-made elements. A fallout shelter.

My father sneezed.

He cleared his throat and muttered something. Then, suddenly, in one deft motion, he bent down and grabbed me by the ankles and yanked me out from under the table.

Oddly, he was smiling.

“William,” he murmured. “What’s this?”

“What?”

“This. Right here.”

Learning forward, still smiling, he jabbed a finger at my nose. At first I didn’t understand.

“Oh, yeah,” I said. “It’s a fallout mask.”

Actually, of course, it was just a paper bag filled with sawdust and charcoal briquettes. The bag had ventilation holes in it, and the

whole contraption was attached to my face by strings and elastic bands. I grinned and started to show him how it worked, but my father raised his arm in a quick jerky movement, like a traffic cop, as if to warn me about something, then he squeezed my shoulder.

“Upstairs,” he said. “On the double. Right now.”

He seemed upset.

He pulled the mask off and marched me up the stairs, coming on strong with all that fatherly stuff about how I could’ve caught pneumonia, how he had enough to worry about without finding his kid asleep under a Ping-Pong table. All the while he kept glancing at me with those sharp blue eyes, half apprehensive and half amused, measuring.

When we got up to the kitchen, he showed my mother the mask. “Go ahead,” he said, “guess what it is.” But he didn’t give her a chance. “A fallout mask. See there? Regulation fallout mask.”

My mother smiled.

“Lovely,” she said.

Then my father told her about the Ping-Pong table. He didn’t openly mock me; he was subtle

about it—a certain change of tone, raising his eyebrows when he thought I wasn’t looking. But I was looking. And it made me wince. “The Ping-Pong table,” he said slowly, “it’s now a fallout shelter. Get it? A fallout shelter.” He stretched the words out like rubber bands, letting them snap back hard:

“Fallout shelter. Ping-Pong.”

“It’s sweet,” my mother said, and her eyes did a funny rolling trick, then she laughed.

“Fallout,” my father kept saying.

Again, they didn’t mean to be cruel. But even after they’d scooted me in for a hot bath, I could hear them hooting it up, making jokes, finally tiptoeing down to the basement for a peek at my handiwork. I didn’t see the humor in it.

Over breakfast, I tried to explain that radiation could actually kill you. Pure poison, I told them.

Or it could turn you into a mutant or a dwarf or something. “I mean, cripes,” I said, “don’t you guys even think about it, don’t you worry?” I was confused. I couldn’t understand those sly smiles. Didn’t they read the newspapers? Hadn’t they seen pictures of people who’d been exposed to radioactivity—

hair burned off, bleeding tongues, teeth falling out, skin curled up like charred paper? Where was the joke in all that?

Somehow, though, I started feeling defensive, almost guilty, so finally I shut up and finished my pancakes and hustled off to school. God, I thought, am I crazy?

But that didn’t end it.

All day long I kept thinking about the shelter, figuring ways to improve on it, drawing diagrams, calculating, imagining how I’d transform that plywood table into a real bastion against total war. In art class, I drew up elaborate renovation blueprints; in study hall, I devised a makeshift system for the decontamination of water supplies; during noon recess, while the rest of the kids screwed around, I began compiling a detailed list of items essential to human survival.

No question, it was nuke fever. But I wasn’t wacko. In fact, I felt fully sane—tingling, in control.

In a way, I suppose, I was pushed on by the memory of that snug, dreamless sleep in my shelter. Cozy and walled in and secure. Like the feeling you

*Over breakfast,
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get in a tree house, or in a snow fort, or huddled around a fire at night. I'll even admit that my motives may have been anchored in some ancestral craving for refuge, the lion's instinct for the den, the impulse that first drove our species into caves. Safety, it's normal. The mole in his hole. The turtle in his shell. Look at history: the Alamo, castles on the Rhine, moated villages, turrets, frontier stockades, storm cellars, foxholes, barbed wire, an attic in Amsterdam, a cave along the Dead Sea. Besides, you can't ignore the realities. You can't use psychology to explain away the bomb.

I didn't need a shrink. I needed sanctuary.

And that's when the Pencil Theory hit me. I was sitting at my desk during the final hour of classes that day, daydreaming, doodling, and then bang, the answer was there like a gift from God. For a second I sat there frozen. I held the solution in my hand—a plain yellow pencil.

"Pencils," I said.

I must've said it in a loud voice, too loud, because the teacher suddenly jerked her head and gave me a long stare. I just smiled.

The rest was simple.

When the final bell rang, I trotted down to the school supply room, opened up my book bag, stuffed it full of No. 2 soft-lead pencils, zipped the bag shut, and hightailed it for home. Nothing to it. I didn't like the idea of thievery, but this wasn't a time for splitting moral hairs. It was a matter of live or die.

That evening, while my mom and dad were watching *I've Got a Secret*, I slipped down into the basement and quietly went to work reinforcing my shelter.

The theory was simple: Pencils contain lead; lead acts as an effective barrier against radiation.

It made perfect sense. Logical, scientific, practical.

Quickly, I stripped the table of everything I'd piled on it the night before, and then, very carefully, I began spreading out the pencils in neat rows, taking pains not to leave any cracks or spaces. Wizard, I thought. I replaced the lumber and bricks and rugs, added a double layer of charcoal briquettes, and then crowned it off with an old mattress. All told, my shelter's new roof was maybe three feet

thick. More important, though, it now included that final defensive shield of solid lead.

No question, it was nuke fever. But I wasn't wacko. In fact, I felt fully sane—tingling, in control.

Research Options

1. William builds a fallout shelter so that he'll be safe in the event of nuclear war. What are the pros and cons of his design? First, research the effects of nuclear war in the 1950s. Then determine whether William's fallout shelter would protect him from those effects. Share your conclusions with classmates.
2. As you learned in Chapter 18, some Americans did build backyard fallout shelters during the Cold War. Find different pictures—photographs, diagrams, advertisements—that illustrate what these fallout shelters looked like. To locate pictures, you might use resources such as history books about the Cold War in the 1950s and early 1960s, magazine articles from the time, or print or on-line encyclopedia articles. With your classmates, create a bulletin board display of fallout shelters and explain it to your classmates. Then, as a class, compare the real fallout shelters with William's.