

A week-long course in nuclear horrors

By Richard Higgins
Globe Staff

The images seared the senses, deprived the mind of logic.

Bright flashes and firestorms, instant devastation and slow radiation deaths. Disease, contamination, disorder.

But for 300 people at a Harvard University forum yesterday who watched a grainy, 20-year-old British Broadcasting Corp. film simulating a nuclear crisis in England, the message was easy to grasp.

You can evacuate, but you can't hide.

The forum on civil defense and a sep-

arate lecture by economist John Kenneth Galbraith in a Cambridge church kicked off Ground Zero Week, a week of public education in Boston on the dangers of nuclear war.

Peace activists started lining the route of today's Boston Marathon with posters dramatizing the horrors of nuclear war, students rallied at UMass-Amherst and lectures, teach-ins and films on the nuclear arms race were held at campuses around New England.

Ground Zero Week is "a national effort to focus public attention on the devastation American society would suffer

in the event of a major nuclear war," according to local organizers.

After the film at Harvard's Science Center yesterday, authorities on nuclear war debated whether civil defense is a prudent plan for survival in a nuclear age - or a monstrous, and dangerous, illusion.

Douglas Forbes, director of the Massachusetts civil defense effort, stressed the "necessity for planning to alleviate the effects of the ultimate disaster, a nuclear war."

While acknowledging that an all-out nuclear attack launched without warning could kill more than half the nation's population, Forbes counseled against despair.

"There is something we can do," he said. Worried citizens should participate in civil defense plans to "increase survivability to whatever level we can."

To other speakers, the government's elaborate evacuation plans for the populace would result in what one termed "the last traffic jam."

Civilian defense against nuclear war is a "blatant irrationality" and "mass psychosis," argued Dr. John E. Mack, an author and Harvard professor of psychiatry who has been in the vanguard of the international physicians' movement against nuclear arms.

"Some people say that, ineffective as civil defense would be for a number of

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A week-long course opens on horrors of nuclear war

■ GROUND ZERO

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reasons, isn't something better than nothing?" said Mack. "The answer is no, it's worse. Civil defense plans lull us into a state of dangerous apathy."

Mack argued that by recognizing that fallout shelters will become little more than nuclear crematoriums, Americans can channel their concern into stopping the arms race.

If they do, the nuclear peril will not immediately lift, but another peril will subside. We would no longer, he said, employing a phrase from Jonathan Schell's "Fate of the Earth," be "drowsing toward oblivion."

At the First Parish Church in Cambridge, Galbraith, a Harvard economist and author, told an audience of about 200 that the public has finally seized the issue of the nuclear arms race from what he called the country's nuclear theologians.

"The current popular drive for a freeze on nuclear weaponry is one

of the great movements of our time," said Galbraith, a former ambassador to India and economic adviser to Democratic presidents.

Just two years ago, Galbraith said, a proposal for a nuclear arms freeze that he and others presented to the Democratic National Convention did not win enough support.

Today, he quipped, a similar proposal would stand a chance of passing on the floor of either a Democratic or a Republican national convention.

"There is a growing appreciation of what our enormous military budget is doing to our prestige as a country and industrial eminence, and to the capacity of our government for compassion," he said.

The "nuclear theologians" have monopolized debate over nuclear arms for decades by asserting to possess the knowledge to comprehend the issues of superiority and first strike, of stockpiles and delivery systems, he said.



JOHN MACK
Says stop the arms race

But with 50,000 nuclear weapons poised in both the United States and the Soviet Union, said Galbraith, arguing over superiority is like two boys in a garage arguing over who has the most matches to ignite a floor soaked with gasoline.

After the marathon today, tens of thousands of people are expected to attend a teach-in on Boston Common featuring music and talks by a number of speakers, including US Reps. James Shannon and Edward Markey, both Massachusetts Democrats.

Ground Zero opens its effort nationwide

From Wire Services

NEW YORK - Simulated nuclear bombs were ceremoniously "detonated" on the steps of the Texas capitol, a downtown Atlanta park and other city centers yesterday, as Ground Zero Week brought the specter of atomic destruction to dozens of America's hometowns.

The week opened nationwide with films, foot races, bicycle tours, concerts, lectures and debates designed to trigger discussions about the possibility of nuclear war and its effects.

This crash course in nuclear awareness has been planned for two years by Ground Zero, a non-partisan organization formed two years ago. Ground Zero estimates 10 million to 20 million people in 650 communities and on 350 college campuses will take part.

"I hope we come out of this week with people feeling freer to discuss the nuclear war issue and not tuck it away," said Beverly Peyser, New York coordinator for Ground Zero week. "We're rational people and

we have to deal with these things

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy yesterday on NBC's "Meet the Press" that a modest buildup of conventional forces should accompany his proposal to freeze nuclear weapons development.

Kennedy said President Ronald Reagan lacks "arms control sense" and urged support for his own resolution calling for an immediate nuclear weapons freeze followed by negotiations with the Kremlin to reduce nuclear forces.

President Ronald Reagan Saturday declared himself "wary" of those who protest against nuclear war. No one feels more than I the need for peace."

In a Ground Zero speech at the University of Arizona yesterday, Rep. Morris Udall (D-Ariz.) called for immediate US-Soviet talks aimed at a freezing the production and development of atomic weapons.

"Ground zero" is the term used to describe the point where a nuclear bomb detonates.