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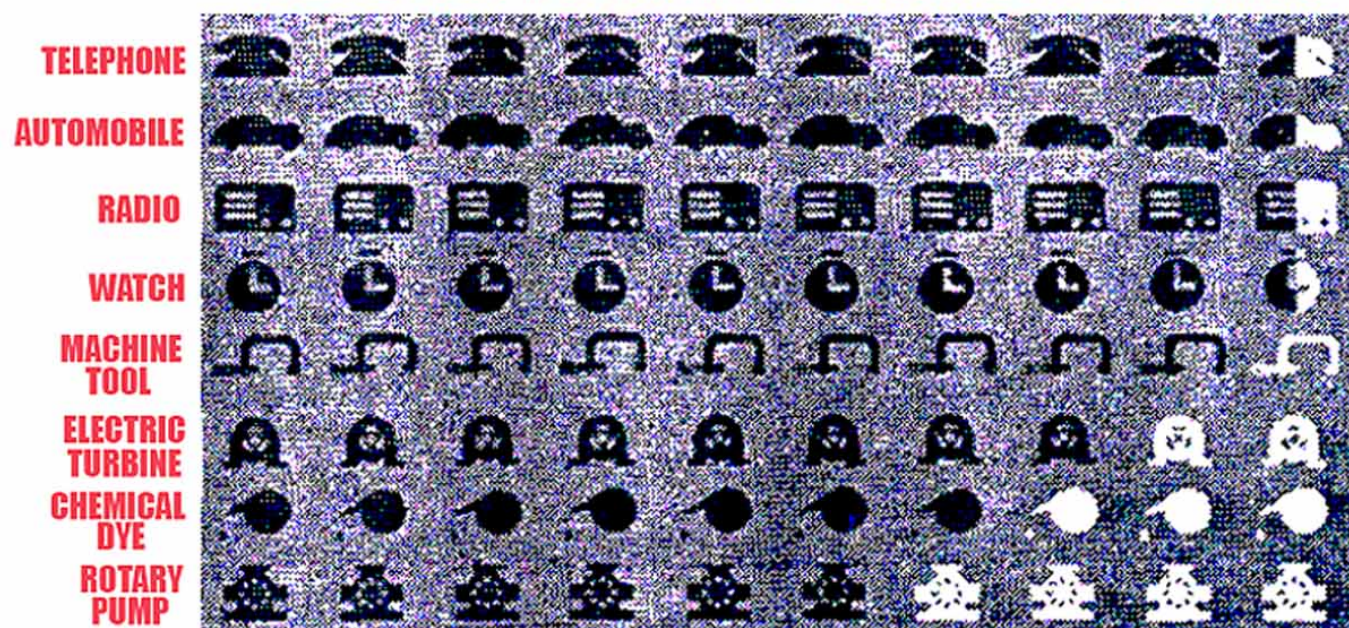
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● THE WEEK'S BIGGEST NEWS

The Atom: I—An Ultimatum to Russia?

Officially, the U. S. kept on as before after Pres. Truman made his most important strategic announcement since Hiroshima: "Within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred within the U.S.S.R." The President, the Secretary of State, the generals hastened to say that something like that had been expected, that no change of policy was necessary. Actually, Russia had caught the U. S. almost flatfooted. For the first time in history every American looked straight down the gun-barrel of foreign attack. Broad changes were called for, already were in the making.

RUSSIA IS WEAK IN KEY ATOMIC INDUSTRIES



The Symbols Represent Relative Productive Capacity
of the U.S. and Russia

White Symbols: U.S. Capacity

Dark Symbols: Russian Capacity

Inside Story (QUICK Washington report): "The Administration held the pose that nothing new need be done because it already had been planning with the idea that Russia eventually would have atom bombs. It emphasized that Russia lacked the industry to catch up with the U. S. bomb stockpile (chart, above). But several high-placed men, including influential Senators, took another view after a sleepless week end. Their conclusion (though they didn't want to be the first to suggest it publicly): the free world, led by the U. S., should go to Russia in the U.N. with an ultimatum: 'Either co-operate in effective international control and inspection of atomic weapons or in 60 days we will resort to atomic war to compel your co-operation.' To objections from equally high-placed men against the U. S. launching a preventive war, they answered: 'The alternative would be worse—an age of fear until Russia chose her own time to destroy millions.'"

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The Atom: II—How Good Is Russia's Bomb?

First reports comforted the U. S. because they didn't say Russia had atomic weapons—merely that an explosion had occurred. There was wishful speculation that it might have been an accident. Responsible scientists soon blasted that theory.

Inside Story (QUICK Washington report): "The best opinion is that the Russian explosion was caused by an atom bomb. It probably had the blast strength of 4,000 tons of TNT. This may be far inferior to our improved bombs, but it could cause havoc by radiation on the scale of the Hiroshima attack."

The Atom: III—Will Russia Use It?

Four Russians held the atom pistol at the head of the West. The four: 1) Stalin; 2) Physicist Peter Kapitza, who developed Russia's weapon; 3) secret police boss Lavrenti Beria, who guarded it; 4) air chief Konstantin Vershinin, who probably would deliver it. There were new pleas for agreement between Russia and the U. S., but the Kremlin made no real peace moves (see p. 7).

Outlook: Few in the West dispute the charge that Russia is out to conquer the world for Communism. Reports from Europe indicate a belief that Russia



KAPITZA



BERIA



VERSHININ

would use atom weapons in a "Pearl Harbor" attack if and as soon as Stalin thinks he can deliver a paralyzing blow. QUICK Washington report: "Russia already has the power to use its atom weapons on us—by air, by tramp steamer in any U. S. harbor, by smuggling in the parts and assembling them almost anywhere. Do they have as many bombs as we do? Of course not, but what of it? A weapon that can cause upwards of 100,000 casualties and knock out a vital spot isn't subject to old-fashioned considerations of running out of ammunition; a man who owns a gross of double-bitted axes can't strike back if someone cuts off his head with just one butcher knife."