

Mrs. Luce, Clare Boothe  
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Mrs. Luce Says  
**Our Films Back  
French View of  
Unreliable U. S.**



*"Dr. Strangelove" already is a steady diet for Americans. "Fail Safe" is on the way. Both are headed overseas.*

*By Clare Boothe Luce*

President Charles de Gaulle recently told the French that they must build their own nuclear force at whatever the cost or rely on "uncertain" United States protection. Pointing to the "ambition" of the U. S. S. R., which he said threatened the free world, he said that while this lasts France is "in danger of invasion and destruction without having the certainty that her American allies, themselves exposed to death, would be able to save France from invasion and destruction."

U. S. officials indignantly rejected the charge.

Is the French view of America as an unreliable ally right or wrong?

The part American motion pictures released abroad play in creating attitudes towards America is not scientifically measurable—but certainly it is great.

Two motion pictures, "Dr. Strangelove" (released this spring) and the picture based on the Wheeler-Burdick best seller, "Fail Safe" (to be released this fall), are bound to fortify de Gaulle's view of the unreliability of America as an ally in the minds of all Europeans who see them."

SIMILAR STORIES

The stories of "Fail Safe" and "Dr. Strangelove" are remarkably similar. In each story U. S. nuclear bombers, flying on the alert, receive false instructions to destroy Soviet Russia. In the Wheeler-Burdick story, the attack is launched by the accidental breakdown of the "fail safe" system. In "Dr. Strangelove," a kookie anti-Communist Air Force general deliberately launches the attack. And in both plots, when the President learns of the attack, he makes frantic—and futile—efforts to recall all the U. S. planes. When this fails, he gets the Russian leader on the "hot line"—revealing to him vital U. S. military secrets (getting none in return) and this enables the Soviets to destroy all but one of our own planes and their crews as they cross the Russian border.

Another similarity is that when it becomes clear that one U. S. bomber has eluded destruction and is on target, the President offers the Soviet ruler a death-swap of cities. In "Dr. Strangelove," the successful U. S. bomber hits a Russian defense complex housing the Soviet Doomsday Machine. This is then detonated and destroys the entire world. But in "Fail Safe" Moscow alone is destroyed by the U. S. plane that gets through, whereupon the President of the United States himself orders U. S. bombers to destroy New York City.

"Fail Safe" ends as the President "nobly" blows 14 million Americans to Kingdom Come, in order to convince the Soviet leader that the Moscow attack was purely accidental, whereupon the nuclear holocaust is called off by mutual consent. The President refers to this mass murder without warning of millions of his arbitrarily chosen fellow citizens as the "sacrifice of Abraham." (In both "Dr. Strangelove" and "Fail Safe" the U. S. President warns Russians to seek safety, but issues no similar warning to Americans. And in both stories all the U. S. scientists, military experts, and top brass who seek to deter the President from this course are shown as power and money-mad, mentally unstable, Fascist-minded monsters.

EFFECT ON EUROPE

Whatever the personal intents of the producers and authors of these two pictures, it was certainly not to make propaganda for Gen. de Gaulle's nuclear force. But by casting doubt on America's good faith as an ally, this will certainly be the effect on European movie-goers. "After all," they ask, "if the President of the U. S. A. is willing to knock his own bombers out of the sky and massacre 14 million Americans without warning to call off a Russo-American war, why should Americans even risk such a war to save Paris—or Rome—or West Berlin from invasion?"

Free speech, a precious ideal of American democracy, makes censorship abhorrent. But self-control and discretion, especially in questions as important as national security, are surely also an American ideal.

It is this ideal that the producers and authors of "Fail Safe" and "Dr. Strangelove" have betrayed for the gold—not of Moscow, but of their fellow citizens. All the cynical, money-mad characters on the American scene are not, it seems, in the government or the Pentagon.

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