

CIVIL DEFENSE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

26 February 1954

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Honorable Val Peterson, Administrator, Federal Civil Defense, was born in Oakland, Nebraska, 18 July 1903. He was graduated from Wayne State Teachers College, Nebraska, in 1927 and in 1931 received his M. A. (Political Science) from the University of Nebraska. He later served as superintendent of schools in Emlin, Nebraska, and taught government at the University of Nebraska. In 1941-42 he was secretary to the then Governor of Nebraska, and from 1936-46 published "The Emlin Review," a weekly newspaper. In World War II Governor Peterson served overseas in the Burma-India Theater of Operations with the Air Force. He was plans and operations officer in the Northern Air Service Command, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, and is presently a colonel in the Air Force Reserve. From 1947-53 he served as Governor of Nebraska, and in 1952 was chairman of the Governors' Conference and president of the Council of State Governments. Before his nomination as Federal Civil Defense Administrator, Governor Peterson had been serving as Administrative Assistant to the President. He is also a member of the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. On 4 March 1953 Governor Peterson was sworn in, in his present position by President Eisenhower. This is his first lecture at the Industrial College.

## CIVIL DEFENSE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

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COLONEL VAN WAY: Admiral Hague and fellow members of the Industrial College: We are indeed fortunate this morning to be able to get for a presentation of Federal civil defense in the national mobilization program the services of the Director of Federal Civil Defense, Governor Val Peterson.

He will talk to us, giving us the second of our lectures on civil defense, and will prepare for us the presentation to be given a little over a week from now by our selected panel of eight students. That in turn will lead us into our final problem, which as you know is fairly well slated to be a continuation of the problems presented in civil defense.

This morning is old home week. Our first speaker this morning, Captain Linaweaver, as you know, was a member of the Class of 1950. Our present speaker, as you perhaps know, is taking the correspondence course.

I take great pride and pleasure in presenting to you Governor Val Peterson, Director of Federal Civil Defense.

GOVERNOR PETERSON: Thank you very much, Colonel. Good morning gentlemen. I should like this morning to tell you a little something about the assumptions that we make in Civil Defense with respect to a possible attack upon the United States, and I appreciate that in that part of my discussion I am in your field. Then I should like to tell you what I think civil defense is to see whether we are in agreement about that; what it can do and what it cannot do, what our present state of readiness is and what we can do to improve it; and to analyze the attitude of the American people toward civil defense. In the process I may want to discuss some observations I made last September in Norway, Sweden, Germany, and England.

As the President said before the United Nations, we must assume that the Communists of Russia have the capability to strike the United States successfully today atomically and from the skies, and that that capability will increase with the passage of time. It will be greater six

months from now and a year from now than it is today. I don't know that there is any point in my discussing with you this morning the number of types of airplanes we think the Russians have or the number of atomic bombs we think are in their stockpile. I think it is sufficient for our purposes to say today that they do have enough to make a successful strike against the United States at this hour or at any hour of their choosing, and that this capability will increase with the passage of every single day.

I think I should tell you that the type of attack I envisage would be one of this nature: I think if they see fit to strike against the United States, in the first attack they will throw as many airplanes as their calculations would indicate they can afford to--and that would undoubtedly be in the hundreds--and that they would attempt to bomb 50, 65, or 100 American cities and a certain number of military installations, primarily, I would assume, strategic air command bases although there could well be some others.

If they strike 67 American cities--let us assume they would strike the largest cities--they strike 67 million Americans, because in our 67 largest cities live 67 million Americans. I don't know whether you agree with me, but it is my impression that the objective in military warfare today is not necessarily to hit in the first instance at the opposing military forces; it is to hit centers of population and centers of production--and it happens in the United States that our centers of production and population coincide; and if you hit one, you hit, fairly accurately, the other.

To stop such an attack upon the United States is the business of the military. It is not the business of Civil Defense, excepting as we are citizens and all of us happen to be, in one capacity or another, either formerly connected with the military or presently connected with the military. I know the military in the United States is doing all that it can and is working as carefully, sensibly, and diligently in the military protection of the United States as is possible; and I want you to know that I am for the strongest possible type of military defense. I want to see America maintain a strong Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps in all its aspects.

Where does Civil Defense come into the picture? It is Civil Defense's job to minimize the effects of an atomic attack upon the United States, or of any type attack on the United States. It is our job, as I see it, after an attack occurs to try to get America back upon its feet

and back into production; to maintain the will on the part of the American people to fight to win that war or any war that is thrown upon us.

What do I think civil defense is? I think that civil defense is simply the extension of already existing civic services to meet an unprecedented problem. In other words if there is an attack upon the United States, our first job will be to maintain law and order and some semblance of discipline in the United States; and that means that every great city police force must be augmented by hundreds and, in some instances, depending on the size, thousands of trained auxiliary policemen. I can tell you that some cities have already done that.

The second thing is, we should have hundreds and thousands of trained auxiliary firemen, because in the event of atomic attack, fire will be one of the difficult problems we will face. If we are to maintain some semblance of city life, we will have to be right on the job and put out those fires. That means equipment must be located at the edges of the target areas. Again, we must have these people trained. Every mayor and every city council has a fire department and a police department. Every governor has in his hands a safety patrol or State police force or National Guard. We are just talking about using things that we have and expanding them.

In addition to that we must have trained communications workers who have been organized in advance and we must make plans as to what they are going to do. We must have trained rescue teams. The experience of England and Germany was such that they found that if you don't train people in advance, the equipment and so on, rushing in may do more damage than good. We must have people trained in mass feeding and in that regard we have had the finest cooperation from the proper elements of the military in conducting schools for mass feeding.

We must have trained medical teams ready to respond at the moment of attack. We must have people trained in every one of these fields; I may not have mentioned all of them here. Transportation is another field that would be very important. We must have people trained and equipped in every one of these fields so that they can move in instantly to relieve the situation.

There is nothing new in civil defense at all as I see it, with two exceptions--possibly three. The first exception is a minor one. It is the idea of the block warden, taken from the English. He is the generalissimo of the neighborhood in which he lives. I don't believe that is too

important an innovation. All other innovations are important--first, the idea of mobile support units. If there is an atomic attack on Chicago, it will not be able to save itself. It will have to be helped by people 150, 200, 300, 400, or 500 miles away from Chicago. If Chicago is struck, as it undoubtedly will be in the event of another war, I would say 14 mobile units from my State of Nebraska which I do not believe will be bombed--unless Omaha is a problem primarily because General Le May's headquarters are there--will have to go to Chicago to help our neighbors. We may have to go as far away as Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, or even to the Seattle-Portland area.

Those mobile units consist of organized, disciplined, equipped teams of specialized rescue workers, doctors and nurses, people who are trained in mass feeding and mass sheltering problems and the other problems I have mentioned.

Another concept that is somewhat new in civil defense is the idea of fixed installations, fixed in advance, to which we will take the refugees from these cities for mass feeding and for sheltering and medication. In other words if there is an attack upon Cleveland, Ohio, which is one of the very lush targets in the United States industrially, the people in order to survive must have planned in advance the location of hospitals and places for feeding and sheltering, locations 75 to 100 miles in the country, where they can go after the attack occurs.

If we don't do these things in advance, we will have in the United States disorganized mobs of angry, unreasoning men and women who will plunder the countryside and their own neighbors and friends. That is one of the toughest problems we will have, the problem of panic and the actions of people under such a situation.

Is the civil defense concept sound? We have no basis in the United States upon which to make a judgment in that field. That is one reason I went overseas, as many others have done from this country. Colonel Pierce was a pioneer in that field with Hoffman and others. I went to England to talk to the English and to Germany to talk to the Germans. Those people know more about this business of modern warfare and the effects of bombing than anybody else in the world. I could find no evidence anywhere that civil defense was not a sound concept.

It can do a job. It can minimize the effects of an enemy attack. I would cite there no less an authority than General Le May who told me one night in his home a few months ago that he raided a certain area in

Japan one day and caught the enemy in the manner in which he wanted him and did a tremendous amount of damage, but did not quite complete the job in one bombing and had to go back. He could not go back for 10 days and in that time the Japanese had taken action to make his objective tough, an objective which he never did accomplish.

Those of you gentlemen who served in the European theater in World War II, and those of you who have studied the results of the bombing which took place in Germany, know that for a long time the Germans, by passive measures, were able to offset to a large enough extent the results of the bombings which went on there at the hands of the British and Americans to maintain their rate of productivity at a high point. It finally took saturation bombing in order to completely break down the productivity, the war production, of the people of Germany.

Mine is a rather sad job in several respects. I have to sit and think about what will happen to America the morning after an enemy attack. Let me tell you what kind of attack I think will come on the United States. I think we will not only have an attack from the skies. Let me make a positive statement and stick my neck out, for the purpose of the questions. Unless some anticlimax in a place such as Indochina should lead us into the war, I can't conceive of a third world war except as a surprise air attack on the United States. I don't think war will start with a strike against England or Germany or any other portion of the world. I think if the Russians are going to win this war they simply must try to attack the United States and catch us off guard if they can.

If that attack comes, I envisage it in this manner: They will throw all the airplanes and bombs against the United States that they can possibly afford to risk in that first strike and will attempt to catch our strategic air command on the ground at that time or such elements of the Air Force, Army, or Navy as would be desirable to catch in that first strike. In addition to that it seems to me they will use their submarine fleet, which is either the first or the second in the world--we hope ours is somewhat better. It seems to me they will use that submarine fleet to ring the United States with submarines. These will surface 50 or 100 miles out at sea and dump missiles with atomic warheads on our coastal cities.

If they want to get closer, there is no reason why they can't throw shells inland into the United States up to 200 miles. If they come into the Houston-Galveston area it is entirely possible that they may be able to shell Texas as far north as Dallas or Fort Worth. We will be attacked

from the air, and maybe the attack from the sea will be as positive as the one from the air; we will need all our present technological achievements to offset it.

In addition I am inclined to believe we will have the introduction of plant and animal diseases into rural America; our farmers will find strange things happening on the farms to the animals and crops. I think they will introduce bacterial warfare against the United States. I see no reason why they should not and every reason why they should, from their viewpoint. Certainly they will use their native trait if possible and come into the United States and carry on an active program of subversion and sabotage in our country. As you know, it is now possible that certain atomic devices can be carried in very small parcels and assembled in various places in the United States. They may be the source of a great deal of trouble. As far as I know we have no way of detecting this introduction of those devices into the United States at the present time.

In addition to that--and this could be one of the more important activities on their part--I think we will have psychological warfare employed against the United States at the time of the attack. We may have strange broadcasts from the United States or outside the United States. All types of rumors and lies will be spread around the country; every attempt will be made to goad us to internal fighting among ourselves and to destroy ourselves in panic and fear.

In other words I think we can be attacked on all fronts with lies, and the Russians certainly, I think we will have to admit, are far superior to us at the present time at least in this business of psychological warfare.

In addition, it seems to me, we can have the introduction of gas. I know in the last war we did not have the use of gas, but so far as I am personally concerned in dealing with the Communists of Russia, I don't think they would hesitate to use gas if they thought it would be advantageous to them.

There will be an all-out strike against our country. Can our country absorb it--can our country absorb an atomic attack and get back off the floor the next morning and fight? No one who has analyzed that question as carefully as it needs to be analyzed can come up with an absolute yes or no with respect to that question. If we have such an attack, I have seen estimates--and this is all a matter of calculation,

as you well know, on the number of planes, the number of bombs, and the size of bombs--of casualties running from about 9 million up to 22 million people. I don't think they are too meaningful at the present time, but suppose you had 22 million casualties, of which about 8 or 9 million people are dead and the others injured in various cities--how do you go about burying 8 or 9 million Americans? How do you go about giving medical treatment to 11 or 12 million Americans? After the strike against 67 American cities which are centers of banking and organization, what do you use for money the morning after the attack? What value will money have in the United States the next morning? What happens to the insurance companies then about paying off claims? What are you going to use in place of the food in the many warehouses in the target areas? It won't be there after the bombers go away.

What are you going to use for transportation? The harbors will be gone, ships will be gone, every port will be gone. Railroad communications will be destroyed, smashed. What are you going to use for newspapers in those cities? I think we can take care of that from cities outside the bombed cities. What are you going to do about telephone and radio communication? That problem is not as tough as some of the others I mentioned.

In our agency we have to sit around and think about problems of this kind. I think I know how we are going to bury the dead. It is going to be a rather crude but a rather practical arrangement, I think. I am certain people are going to be treated medically on the ground if it is summer, spring, or fall. We are not going to be in first-class hospital beds; some people are going to be treated on the floor. It is going to be a stark situation. You are not going to cook with electricity after a bombing goes on in one of these cities, nor with gas--not at all. You are going to be cooking in the empty gas drums and oil drums. You are not going to flush toilets the morning after an attack, for there won't be any. Life in America will rapidly become primitive and rude.

I will say and I assume you gentlemen will agree with me that an atomic attack will be made upon Washington and no agency within the target area will be in existence after the attack is completed.

Here are one or two problems that I am seriously worried about, as I am sure every one in authority is, at all levels. I know of only one thing to do to be certain you are alive after an atomic explosion; that is, not to be where an explosion takes place. There are only two ways I know of by which you can be sure you are not there. One is to go underground. The other is to move out, literally, on the surface of the ground.

In that connection I think I should tell you a little about what they are doing in Norway and Sweden. The people in those countries live on great fields of granite and they are building tremendous bomb shelters in the granite. In Stockholm, Sweden, in September I was in a bomb shelter that will take 20,000 people, located right at the center of the town, on two levels. It will have elaborate air-conditioning systems in it with gas filters. The Swedish people think that in the event of a Russian attack they will be gassed, rather than bombed. In Sweden they are building in both directions. In my mind it makes sense for gas to be used against Sweden. The Russians can take the wealth of the country without the inconvenience of the use of the people. That may be a possible gain. If you recall medieval warfare, when cities were attacked it was the common practice to kill the men and take over the women, children, and the wealth of the community. This is a much more sensible way to fight a war, forgetting any humanitarian instincts, if there are any, considering that the sensible way is to take over the place with the least damage, and take over the property.

I will never forget the lesson we learned in Burma during World War II. Our 10th Air Force went down and bombed every bridge and every culvert in Burma. In two or three weeks we went in, and had to run the railroads. That's a nice job, to go in and run your own destruction. So gas makes sense from the standpoint of the enemy.

Now, going underground is a perfectly sensible procedure as a defense against an atomic attack. We have not proposed it to the people of America since I have been in this agency simply because the nature of our soil is such and the places in which our cities are located are such that we would have to go underground I would judge 40, 50, 60, or 70 feet and then build tremendous concrete catacombs reinforced with steel. Because of that aspect and the tremendous cost which I can only relate to you in terms of untold billions upon billions of dollars, I have never felt that I could recommend it to the people of the United States.

I think I should say to you in passing that the Scandinavians are able to create a cubic foot of space in the rock for just a little more than it costs to move their factories on the surface, and the maintenance cost, if you compare it with the actual cost every 50 years above the ground, would make it appear that it is cheaper to be underground than on top. I found at the Bofors factories that the employees would rather work underground than on top. The only reason I could find was because the air-conditioning system and the control of humidity made it more pleasant to work underground. They have to tell those Swedes who work

down there what the weather situation is on top of the earth. The man underground wants to know about the weather on top, whether it is snowing or sleeting, or what kind of weather his wife and children are having. They have electrically controlled gadgets that portray the weather from time to time during the day.

Now, the alternative to this possibility of going underground--we may eventually have to do it in the United States--in my judgment, is to evacuate our cities. Most of my people in general agree that we must disperse the population, do whatever we can to get the people out of the cities. As I say, after the H-bombs or A-bombs go off, the cities are destroyed. It seems to me our job is to get the people out of the cities; you can rebuild cities, but you cannot rebuild a generation of Americans or any other nationality, except in a long period and in ways which are time consuming and costly. People are more important than products, of course.

How are you going to get them out of the cities? Before you can get them out of the cities, somebody has to assure us of warning time. The business of giving warning to America at the time of impending attack is the business of the Air Force. What kind of warning can the Air Force people give America? It can't give us any warning time in some areas, and it can give us maybe 10 or 15 minutes in other areas.

What do we need to give us warning time? We must have a detection system extending all the way from, we will say, up over Alaska and in the northern part of Canada, and over Greenland and Iceland. It would be a detection system with an arm sticking down to the Air Force, with probably two layers of depth--a detection system made of the best radar we can get, and other detection systems that are sensitized with those in the military whose responsibility it is to question devices. I assume it will not be perfect, even though we build it in the best manner we can. There might be some way an enemy can get through.

Thinking of that kind of detection system, and judging distances with the present speed of airplanes, it would appear that we can have in the United States in practically every city, and in Canada's large cities as well, maybe an hour and one-half, starting at the north, and 12 to 6 hours' warning time at the southern part of the United States.

The military needs the warning, too, as well as the civil defense workers, and civilians need it. They need it to get the aircraft off the ground and the battlewagons out where they believe they are necessary--all that sort of thing. We all need the warning time. If we get that warning time, it would be my idea that the thing we must do is alert our people and move them out of the city. I have been saying we must move them on foot. Why? Because I am afraid if we try to move them by automobile, we will have the worst traffic snarl the world ever saw.

I have been suggesting that we walk at least the first hour, whatever number of miles is necessary, depending on the situation in any given community. We must walk to fixed points agreed on in advance, and from there maybe we will be able to move the population out by automobile, tramways, or train. I think it can be worked out.

When I first proposed this--I am certain there are people who thought of it before I did, but I have been doing the most talking--some people threw their hands up in holy horror. On the west coast the other day somebody said, "That's fine evidence of the thinking in Washington; it won't work." It will work. Because it is difficult does not mean it won't work. I know it will work. People are going to go out. They will go in orderly fashion or not. You are not going to pin people in cities in America if they know a bomb attack is impending. You are not going to stay, either.

I heard somebody--I don't know what his official position is--say, "Every citizen in America should be willing to bare his breast to an atomic attack." That's just nonsense.

Evacuation can be accomplished. As a matter of fact I would say in cities like Indianapolis and Columbus, and even Chicago, it can be done, not easily, but it can be done without too much difficulty, if well organized, and if test exercises are run in advance.

When you get to New York City--General Huebner was here and spoke to you about that--you have a problem. I don't see the answer to that. In New Orleans there is a tough problem, because of the river and the gulf. General Murray thinks he can do it. Seattle is a tough problem because of the water. San Francisco is tough. Some cities are fairly easy.

What are the alternatives? Either we get out of the cities or go underground or stay in the cities and die. That is not a very acceptable alternative, it seems to me. Now, as of today, we can't evacuate these cities, with the exception of some of the southern cities; we just can't do it; we don't have the warning in time. That attack might come this afternoon. Maybe the bombers are on the way already. One thing we can do is do what we have been preaching--duck and take cover; get into the best kind of shelter you can; throw yourself into a ditch; get down into the basement; throw yourself against the wall. That saved lives in Nagasaki and Hiroshima. I know, because of the things I experienced, that if you are down five feet, the tremendous effect of the A-bomb does not reach you. Despite the fact that the earth shakes when the bomb goes off, there is no trouble. At the next test our troops moved closer about a mile and one-half to the atomic bomb than they were when the first one went off. The bomb tested when I was there was equivalent to 15,000 tons of TNT. Now we have bombs that are equivalent to up to 500,000 tons or so of TNT. When you get into the hydrogen bomb, you get into millions of tons equivalent of TNT.

We in America are working as hard as we can on this business of improving the detection system. I am hopeful we will have it in about 18 months, plus or minus, at least in a degree that will give us an hour or two hours of warning time. As we improve it we will get a longer period of warning.

I said the time might come when we had no choice excepting to go underground. What I had in mind was in the event of intercontinental ballistics carrying atomic warheads. It is not my job to prophesy. I know they have them. I know our military people are working on them. The Russians probably are working on them. If they come at speeds of 3,000 to 6,000 or 7,000 miles an hour or more, you have eliminated the value of your detection system, eliminated your warning time. The bombs are on you in a very short period of time.

It looks to me as though America has four choices, as does the rest of the world. They are: Stay in our cities and die; abandon our cities; live underground; or have world peace, which of course would be the most sensible approach to the problem. As has always been the case throughout the history of mankind, it seems to be the most difficult solution for man to achieve. It takes two to make peace. We don't always have two in the same mood at the same time with respect to peace. We have to be prepared.

If I have missed some things that should have been said, perhaps they will come up in the questions.

Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Governor, I think most of us were quite impressed with General Huebner's outline of the State of New York's civil defense mobilization. He told us what has been planned so far. Would you give us a general impression of what the other 47 States have done?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I don't think I can in terms of percentage of readiness. I don't think we have any good yardstick to measure it. I noticed one of my people the other day attempting to do that; but all I can say is that we are inadequately prepared for the problem that we face. I do want to say just one thing in connection with that. I don't want to make a speech in answering the questions or we won't get questions. You must measure civil defense in a perspective, and I suggest that you do it in this perspective, which I think is the right one--that may start an argument--that the atomic weapon is only a little more than eight years old, and the idea of intercontinental bombing has completely revolutionized military strategic concepts. I suggest that you measure civil defense against that background--not in what we did or what we need to do. The main thing is that we have done as well as we can.

QUESTION: I had reference to the scheme, the pattern. Is that fairly standard?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: Yes, the pattern is well established in the 48 States and five territories, and procedures and techniques are well known. I think I must confess that the implementation and the operational readiness in some places would be considered very low.

One of the hopeful things I see in civil defense is that in 45 States, by action of the legislature, civil defense is responsible for the relief in natural disasters. At the Federal level, by Presidential Executive order, I am responsible to the agency which I head for coordinating all Federal Government relief activities. As we realize the victims of a flood in the situation created by a flood, earthquake, tornado, or fire with civil defense forces, they are getting exactly the kind of training they need to handle an atomic disaster. I think one way to keep civil defense alive in America in time of peace will be by emphasis on peacetime utilization.

I was talking the other day with General Hershey about the civil defense problem. He pointed out that at one time between World Wars I and II the military was cut down to 112,000 people. If you can't keep the military on a better basis than that after its history in America over 160-some years, then I am not kidding myself that you can take a squalling infant of about three years old and keep it too lusty in that period. It is going to be tough to keep the concept alive. My interest is on the cadre principle, on the most solid cadres we can get equipped. We can expand them in time of emergency.

**QUESTION:** Governor, following up those remarks, the American apathy toward civil defense is pretty well known. General Huebner told us of the New York law which allows peacetime conscription of defense workers. Have you had experience with that? Can it be made to work? Has it been tried?

**GOVERNOR PETERSON:** The law in New York is very strong. It was passed at a time when it looked as though the Russian attack might come at any moment. I don't know whether you can get that kind of law passed in the other States today.

I have thought a good deal about whether civil defense should be on a voluntary or a conscription basis. In Norway and Denmark they conscript their civil defense workers. Every boy has to serve a period of a year either in military service or in civil defense. I don't particularly like that. It opens up avenues of attempting to escape military service by getting into civil defense. There's already too much of that escapism going around the world. I don't know if you can in fact solve the civil defense problem we will face on anything but a voluntary basis. You certainly could not train all the manpower of America in civil defense, in my judgment, unless we completely change our attitudes toward life. I watched those trained people in some of those foreign countries and I got a little bit the impression that they were pretty well trained mechanically, but I don't know whether they would react any better in an emergency than our Americans would.

If we have this cadre system I am talking about, it is going to be tremendous and it will be ready at the places where the bombs fall in the cities. I don't think you can handle it on any but a voluntary basis. I have been tormented by this business for a long time, not only in public debates but privately, personally.

QUESTION: I would like to get this casualty business in perspective. You mentioned a figure of 9 to 22 million. As of what date do you think that would be? What is it going to be like in the future if the picture is changing from day to day?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I am hoping that we get the detection system and the warning so that we can evacuate, and we can get that casualty aspect down to a low figure. If we don't get the detection system and the warning time, and if we don't evacuate or go underground, I think by the time the attack comes that figure could well be much higher. It is such an indefinite thing--you have to sit down and make certain calculations of your own. Yours will be as good as anybody's. How many bombers are they going to send against us? What percentage of them will get through? What size bombs are they going to drop? Where are they going to hit? You can make calculations and come up with a corresponding figure.

I am hoping we can get out of the business of mass casualties by evacuating. The dirtiest trick the Russians could pull on us if they attack is to bomb us on a night when a good part of America is 20 below zero and when the wind is blowing and it's snowing. Then we are going to get casualties whether we get them out or not. I thought about that, too. I imagine it would still be better to walk out, to get out, rather than stay and die.

QUESTION: If I were in the Soviet General Staff, I would not put my bombs on the United States until I was sure I could knock the States out. The decision as to whether you have knocked them out apparently rests on the will of the people to bounce back. What is your assessment of the will of the people? Is there a breaking point of which you might have made an assessment?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I have thought about that problem. If you have an attack on 67 cities--I forget whether it is 67 or 100--you have an attack on only 3 percent of the real estate of America, geographically speaking, the services of America. There is still a tremendous amount of America left. However, you have spilled the industrial fortitude of America right on the ground. Very frankly, I am not certain in my own mind as of this moment whether we can get back off the ground. I just don't know. I don't think anybody else does. I could make a Fourth of July speech on the performance of Americans without too much advance notice, but that still is not going to answer the problem, is it? I don't know whether we can get off the ground. That's one

reason I am still thinking in my own mind--I guess that's not against the law or subject to criminal prosecution--about this business of retaliation which opens up so many other avenues. What kind of situation do you think of if you have two great giants lying prostrate on the ground after two successful atomic attacks? Where do you go?

I read something the other day about this idea: Suppose you attack Russian and Chinese cities successfully and have millions of Chinese and Russians swarming all over the countryside in undisciplined mobs? Who is going to handle the situation? Perhaps you are thinking about coming back and using your groundlings, which we thought were pass'e. We might still have to use the infantry. Horrible thought, isn't it, for an Air Force man?

QUESTION: Governor, what do you think the possibility will be once this idea that you have expressed sinks home to the American people of what their possibilities are of survival? What probability will there be, in your opinion, of their asking that you bring this thing off first?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I don't believe I can offer anything that would be of any value in response to that question. I have some ideas of my own, but they are only one man's ideas. I know that the American people as of this hour are not well enough informed in this whole field. We are having a tough time to put across a civil defense concept. Maybe it is important that I say why I think that. I can name five reasons which may answer some questions on why civil defense is not clicking: The first is because in this field, like everything else, we procrastinate. We don't do today what we should do to get ready for tomorrow.

Second, we are hoping and praying there won't be a third world war. Some people aren't only hoping and praying; they are wishing so hard that it becomes a fact in their own minds, and they shut their minds off. That is dangerous.

Third, the atomic war will be so horrible you can't do anything about it anyway. That has an element of truth, but it is unrealistic and defeatist. Maybe I am already using the Fourth of July technique on America. There are many things we can do about it.

Here's the most important reason: The Gallup poll, the last time they surveyed this field, three or four months ago, found that 75 percent of the American people believed, in the event of a Russian atomic attack over the United States, that our military can stop the bombers from flying

over the United States, which would be a very fine arrangement, if it were true. It is not. I never heard anybody in the military in any capacity, from waterboy on up, ever suggest that bombers could be stopped from flying over the United States. The fact of the matter is that the Air Force offensive is ahead of the Air Force defensive. If you don't believe that, talk to General Chidlaw, who is responsible for trying to stop them. It doesn't matter whether 10 or 6 bombers get through. If you have enough left to absorb the bombers and bombs, you put the attack on anyway.

The last reason is, Americans don't know anything about modern warfare, with the exception of those American troops who happened to serve in areas of combat where bombing was carried on. We have not been bombed in the United States. We don't know anything about an invasion in the United States. We haven't been invaded since 1815 when Andrew Jackson ran the British out of New Orleans.

I want to illustrate. I was on a program in Kansas City on television. They put on a series of five programs and I was on the last one. In the first one they showed a map of the world which showed that Kansas City is 3500 miles from a Russian air base. One boy said to me: "You don't have to convince me that Kansas City could be bombed. I was in London in the last war when a block buster hit. I was in bed and I landed out in the street, bed and all. But I can't convince the woman I married that it can happen in Kansas City." Here's an Air Force man who can't even convince his wife. I will grant that it is pretty hard to convince a wife on some occasions, as most men have found.

You add all that up and this becomes the toughest market to sell that I have experienced, and I have been selling for a long time. It is a tough place to sell; people don't think it is going to happen. People don't want to think about it; they want to evade it.

QUESTION: Governor, I am interested as to why, in this area of intercontinental ballistic guided missiles on the horizon, you excluded the alternative of striking first as a preventive war. I won't go into that, but you did mention several times that the intercontinental strategic determination has revolutionized strategic concepts. I find even right in this group that there is a great number of people who hold differently. You deal at great length with civilian components in this area. I wonder if you have felt any resistance to the chance of that concept that you mention.

GOVERNOR PETERSON: In the areas in which I deal, I don't doubt that there may be people who question that and maybe to the degree that the full implication of it is proper. Of course there should be some questioning of that, but I think it is pretty generally agreed that what I have said and that what you have indicated there is true.

When it comes to this business of preventive war, we get into the field of political considerations and the feeling that our country simply does not start wars; I think that is true. I don't know of any war that we started. We did begin to pick on Mexico a couple of times, I remember, and we did send the Marines into Nicaragua once or twice. We may not be 100 percent pure but our record is as good as any place in the world about not going out and picking fights.

Unless it is a new theory of political and maybe of good public and international relations, we are not going to say to anybody that we are going to start any preventive war. It seems to me somebody gave an opinion on that down at Maxwell Field one time. I have my own ideas, certainly. I will be willing to discuss them with you privately. Even in these sacred portals I don't think I will get into that.

I might make one remark that might challenge some of you men. I think the United States will be immobilized. I am talking to you fellows. I think you will be down after the attack, with the possible exception of the Air arm and elements of the Navy. The ground forces aren't going anywhere after this attack. Bear in mind your ports are gone. Millions of Americans will be injured; entire cities will be demolished; families will be scattered; pandemonium will be in existence. Even with the best defense we are not going to be loading armies and shipping them any place for months after an atomic attack.

Once in a while I hear somebody say the National Guard will be marching off to war after the attack. They won't step out of their position of protecting us within our own boundaries.

How are you going to move anything in the Army the morning after the attack, or for months after the attack. I think the American Army will be immobilized. This is just personal conjecture--I think it will be desirable for all of us in all branches of the Government to join with the civilians and try to mop it up, to put it back together. That will be the job of all of us in or out of uniform. Then we can maintain our will to fight and then start to fight on all levels, in all branches of service.

QUESTION: Governor Peterson, I would like to come back to the dollar sign presently. General Huebner talked about the program in New York State. How much money are we talking about in the program New York State is doing, or any other State?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: Civil defense is the responsibility of various levels of government, National, State, and local--that is, city and country. I don't have the figures. We haven't spent so much. Quite a sizable amount of money has been spent on civil defense, quite a percentage by the local branches of the Government. In the last budget we got 46 million dollars, which is not very much in terms of the military budget of 46 billion--not quite--last time. This time we are asking for about 86 million dollars.

If we can get the detection system, warning time, and evacuation, we won't need as much money as we have been thinking of. We can cut down our medical stockpile. We hope to stockpile 450 million dollars' worth of medical goods to take care of 5 million people three weeks. Let me point something out while I have my mind on it. Do you know where the principal Navy medical supplies are in the United States--or where they were six months ago? Right down in the harbor areas where the bombs are going to go off. I am not charging the Navy with negligence. That was the logical place to put them when they put them there. Military hospitals are right in the target areas. One is going up in San Francisco right now.

The best study in civil defense was made in the name of the project called Prejudice River, headed by Major General Richard Otto Nelson. This group of people decided three things are necessary to make civil defense work: (1) Knock down your enemy bombers--we can't let seven get through as General Vandenburg said; (2) have warning time; and (3) we must disperse American industry and quit this business of promoting industrial expansion on certain pieces of land in the United States.

Our great petroleum supplies, our food supplies, and many other things are right down where they are going to be blown to bits. I have said right along that this does not make sense, for the Federal Government in any project, military or otherwise, to go in and violate the principle of dispersion by permitting this building in the target areas. The Secretary of Defense said he would see that that sort of business from now on would be stopped, and anything else that is done in this field he will be interested in stopping, too. So we are going to build another great big veterans' hospital in Washington--it certainly would not pay to put it in the target area--we should get it out of the way.

QUESTION: Governor, you spoke of the apathy presently existing on the part of the American people and the big job of educating them to the real significance of this problem. Is it possible that once you have succeeded in educating them to the problem you will have a voluntary exodus from the States to the point that might endanger the production which is presently concentrated in those 67 cities?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I suppose there could be a possibility. As a matter of fact I am personally inclined to tell anyone who does not have to live in dangerous places to leave now, for several reasons, including the possibility of atomic attack.

I like the way you phrased the question. You are talking about pre-evacuation to get away from this threat. I haven't heard anybody talk much about that. Lots of people have assumed we have to stay in the cities and keep the machines going in spite of the bombs falling. That's all right if you are dealing with block busters. That concept is no good if you are dealing with atomic bombs, as I am sure you will grant.

I am glad you raised the question. It is a little different from any I had called to my attention.

QUESTION: Governor, what would such a move cost? We don't know when such an attack is going to come and we can't move industry out of the cities. What are they going to do if we expect people to move, in fact to move far away from the areas? We don't have enough people to man these cities.

GOVERNOR PETERSON: First, this has not been done, to the best of my knowledge. Second, I would say the best way to handle that situation is to see that we get the detection system and the warning time so that we can be sure that people will be alerted in plenty of time to get out of the city. I think the American people will accept that, if they feel the Government is doing everything it can to see that they get that type of warning in time.

We have to speed up this business of continental defense. It is my personal conviction that we have been somewhat negligent as a nation--I am not ascribing this to any party, man, or branch. We seem to be negligent in that field. We have a tendency to put all our eggs in the basket of retaliation. That opens up a whole series of problems, in my judgment.

QUESTION: It seems to me we not only have to survive this thing; we have to win it. Your program is one of survival. Are you doing anything, or is anything being done by industry to spread its base, so you will have some place to work? These air attacks run in all directions. You can't get anything done that way.

GOVERNOR PETERSON: That will be done, and it will have to be done through a program based on tax benefits. The only hopeful sign is, my needs in Civil Defense coincide with trends going on at the present time at a good rate--the trend of decentralization and moving out from places.

Bear this in mind--if an atomic bomb goes off over any given city, there will be sizable portions of that city still remaining. Some of the factories are going to remain and we are not going to lose all the productive capacity in any city unless the attack is much more saturated than I think it is going to be or can be, at least in the first strike.

QUESTION: Governor Peterson, I am convinced, as you are, that the people are going to evacuate whether we plan it or not. I am particularly concerned about the cities that are not hit; those that get the five-minute warning. I mean this coordination of attack on 100 cities would be almost impossible to pull off so that there would not be a flash on the radio that something has happened to Chicago or that something has happened to another place; that's all the people in Houston are going to need. American people are strange, in that any one of them in any town you go into, can give you five good reasons--maybe it is the booster spirit--why his city should be the first one hit by the atomic bomb. If it is not the first, he says it must be the second. So here we go.

Are you doing something to decide which one of these cities, other than those we consider target cities, are going to get evacuated whether you want it or not? You say I am not going to get hit. I don't believe you. I am going to see my grandmother in the country and come back after it is over.

GOVERNOR PETERSON: You pose a problem. I just don't know the answer to it. I think it is true the Air Defense Command (ADC) does have some experience in this field. Maybe you can get the experience previous to an attack. The ADC may be able to predict reasonably well what cities are going to be hit. The electrical devices will be able to take all this information we gather that the airplanes are coming in and be able to make some calculations that will permit a selective process of evacuation.

I am sure you gentlemen join with me in appreciation of the fact that while we don't know the answers in any branch of the service, either civilian or military, to all problems at the present time, that is not to be unexpected or wondered at; and I think you also join with me in the thought that, if we use our ingenuity and apply our best brains to these problems, we can come up with reasonable answers. I am an optimist to that extent.

I talked to the man in London who was responsible for fighting all the fires in England during World War II. He told me this amazing story--I had no reason to disbelieve him--that during the process of that so-called phony war--the phony-war stage in the last war--they sat down and calculated how many fires they thought the Germans would be able to start with incendiary bombs, and how many pieces of fire equipment they must have.

His statement to me was that the number of fires started and the number of pieces of equipment they used were practically that which they calculated. I don't vouch for the veracity of that statement, but this was the man who ran the thing. As far as I know he is a fine, sober individual.

That indicates to me that if we sit down and look any problem squarely in the face, we can come up with a reasonable solution to that problem. That is all you can expect of human beings, in or out of the service, or anywhere else.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL VAN WAY: Thank you for a most interesting and informative lecture.

(3 Jan 1955--250)S/gmh