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CIVIL DEFENSE TODAY

25 February 1957

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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

Honorable Val Peterson, Administrator, Federal Civil Defense Administration, 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 Elgin, 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 Elgin 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.

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GENERAL CALHOUN: The large number of visitors here today I think signifies the interest that people in Government have in the subject of civil defense. I might add that this interest is not always easy to maintain.

From his biography you are familiar with the distinguished career of our speaker. He is a figure of such national importance that it is only necessary for me to present him to you. Governor Val Peterson, as Administrator of Federal Civil Defense Administration, has probably one of the most difficult and frustrating positions in Government.

Governor, we appreciate greatly your willingness to come down again and discuss with us the subject of civil defense today. Governor Peterson.

GOVERNOR PETERSON: Thank you, General, and good morning to you ladies and gentlemen.

I assume that in this audience you wouldn't disagree with me radically if I said that the only reason that you and I are free men and women this morning is because America has the strongest Military Establishment in the world. In that sense the fact that we have peace in our world is due to the military strength of the United States. But it's also true that if an enemy elects to inaugurate a war in spite of that strength of ours, the military cannot, in any complete sense, defend the American people.

That, I hasten to add, is no reflection on the military. That's simply a statement of the current relationship between military offense and military defense. Whether that relationship will continue in that manner for a long period of time or not, I am not wise enough to know. No one is, because some scientist somewhere, some weaponeer somewhere, may be coming up with a gadget that will put military defense into better relationship with military offense. And let me assure you that the more rapidly he does it, the better it will suit me personally. I take no pleasure in this imbalance.

Now, what can civil defense do about it? If my statements are correct--and I know of no one in a responsible position in our Government

who would deny them--then in great measure the way the lives of our people in this country would be saved is by what we are able to do in civil defense, or, if you prefer some other term, that's agreeable with me. Call it nonmilitary defense, or call it passive defense. I don't care anything about the terminology.

This morning I will dwell upon the preattack phase in civil defense, rather than the postattack phase. The latter is the cleaning-up phase. And in that phase, by the way, the doctrines are known, there is equipment out, the materials are printed, and civil defense people know what to do. It is a somewhat simpler phase, aside from the aspect of radioactive fallout, which, of course, is anything but simple.

In the preattack phase in civil defense we have only two tools to work with. We have never had more than two, and, as far as I can see, we never will have more than two. Those two tools are simply the utilization of space and the utilization of shielding. To gain space you put distance between yourself and the explosion of the bomb, or the point where you assume the bomb will be exploded, the neighborhood you assume it will be exploded in. That simply becomes evacuation.

This business of evacuation is an interesting one. I started talking about it back in 1953. You have to keep your calendar a little bit in mind when you talk about concepts of this type. We try to think back to what we knew about these things in 1953, because obviously I wasn't smart enough to know in 1953 what I know in 1957. Neither was anybody else in the world at that time.

Now, in 1953, when I came into civil defense, we were talking about 2-1/2-X bombs. In other words, we were talking about 50,000 tons of TNT explosive equivalent. So was the military talking about them in 1953. Of course that's a firecracker in relationship to what we're talking about today.

We didn't know much about radioactive fallout. We did know, of course, about radioactivity. But we knew little about radioactive fallout. Our opportunity to learn about it didn't occur until much later than that, many months later. I talked about it in the United States, but in terms that weren't very direct. There were few others talking about it in the United States at that time. We were doing our duty the best we could.

Now, we conceived the idea of evacuation, and there are at least three kinds of evacuation. There is one type that cannot be impeached,

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and that's strategic evacuation--that is, the thinning out of cities in a period of international tension. It would appear that that will always be good, if we are wise enough to read the signs and take advantage of them, and if our thinning-out process does not in itself trigger off the war, which it might do, because an enemy might take the thinning out of our cities as an indication that we were getting ready to strike him. But early in this civil defense effort we had to save the lives of people largely just from the effects of blast and fire; and if we could get people out of the assumed target areas, allowing for probable error on the part of the bombardiers, we could save their lives against blast and fire.

Then along came the fallout threat a couple of years after we had first started announcements stating a policy of evacuation--along with shelter in outlying areas. This brings us to a point of having to save people also against radioactive fallout under circumstances that may involve practically every inch of the United States--not all of it in readings of high intensity, but a good part of it in readings of high intensity in an attack that could be launched against us.

In addition to that, we now read about the coming of the intercontinental ballistic missile and other types of missiles. And, of course, we can't rely on tactical evacuation of cities after the intercontinental ballistic missiles are in the air. You will do well if you get the people into the shelters.

So it appears that this idea of tactical evacuation, as differentiated from strategic evacuation, is going to lose a good deal of its meaning when intercontinental ballistic missiles become operational. I don't know what day that's going to be; but I know there was a good, long time between the time I saw the first B-52 and the day they became operational. As a matter of fact, it was a very long time. So I suppose it will be a long time before these ICBM's are located at proper launching sites and scattered around where we want them, or where the enemy wants them, to undertake that type of warfare. Certainly they won't come overnight. But when that time comes, it appears that that part of our program will be somewhat out of the window.

We proposed evacuation as a means of saving lives. It was suggested to me by one congressional committee that I invented this thing. I didn't invent it. Evacuation has been in practice all through the ages, as you all know. Some of you have been mixed up in it and didn't like it, and for a good reason. Well, one gentleman suggested that I proposed it because it was cheaper than building shelters.

If it's a crime to do something in a less costly way, I am perfectly willing to plead guilty. I am in favor of trying to do something in this country to protect the interests of the taxpayer and of the Treasury and to maintain fiscal stability, because we can wreck the United States by spending as well as we can wreck it by other means. However, that was not the reason for it. It was simply incidental, if it was considered at all by us.

Now, we get to this business of shielding. What can we do about shielding? Well, there is much we can do. Obviously, you can't shield people against the effects of a thermonuclear explosion if they are caught in the crater area or within the fireball. But not everybody is going to be in the crater and not everybody is going to be in the fireball. So we can build shelters and we can save human lives and we know it. We have been studying it for a long time.

I can say to you that I have submitted to the President of the United States a shelter-building program for this country. I have had the privilege of briefing him on this subject. He and certain of his advisors have been studying this problem since then--this business of shelters and whether this country should undertake this kind of a program.

There are many other considerations that are involved at his level, things that he must consider in addition to and beyond what I have to consider, that make it a real problem for him to think about. I could tick off a few of those, but maybe they occur to you. Maybe the money could be better used someplace else in national security, national defense. He has to consider whether we are going to have peace in this world. That seems rather dubious. He has to consider whether somebody is coming up with a defensive gadget that would put us in a better relationship, defense against offense.

He also would have to consider, I would think, whether some scientist has in the back of his mind an idea that will make thermonuclear weapons obsolete, because that certainly is not an impossibility. As a matter of fact, we would be very foolish to think that forever we will consider the thermonuclear weapon the most modern of weapons. It's probably not the ultimate weapon. Somebody will come up with a better way of killing people and destroying property. You may have to wait fifteen, twenty-five, or fifty years, but it will happen sooner or later. Mankind dedicates a great deal of energy to finding ways to destroy. Many of the best brains in America and a good deal of the money is devoted in that direction and very little in the direction of trying to maintain peace and save human lives. And if I speak feelingly on that, I mean that feelingly.

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Now, what can we do about this shelter situation? I asked my agency many, many months ago, a year or a year and a half ago, to make a study for me; to take any city in America of a million people or more and tell me what would happen if you dropped on that city various sizes of thermonuclear weapons.

We assumed that in this city we have built shelters to withstand 30 pounds of overpressure per square inch. Why did we pick 30 pounds? Because we could save the maximum number of lives for the least amount of money at 30 PSI than at some other pressure. You could build them to 100, you could build them to 1,000 PSI, if you wanted to. But the cost factor becomes tremendous. As a matter of fact, the difference, as I recall it, in percentage of lives we could save between 30 and 100 was either 11 or 13 percent. If you were in that 11 or 13 percent, you probably would be willing to double the investment in order to have a chance to live. We scattered these shelters out over this city of 1,800,000 people. I usually don't give any publicity to the city, but I'd just as soon tell you that the city was St. Louis, Missouri. It has 1,800,000 people in the metropolitan area. These shelters were placed on the basis of census tracts. We tried to keep the shelters small, small in the sense of not having too many people in them, because this is a problem in probabilities if there ever was one--what I am talking about now. We assumed that the people were in them and the bomb fell. What happened?

Well, for example, we assumed a drop of one 20-million-ton bomb and four 5's and they came out roughly the same in terms of devastation and loss of life--not exactly, but roughly the same. They indicated, giving the enemy the benefit of the doubt, the advantage of the situation, that we would lose in that city of 1,800,000 people 40 percent of the people even in shelters that would withstand 30 pounds of overpressure per square inch.

Now, 40 percent of 1,800,000 people is 720,000 people who would be dead after that bomb went off in St. Louis with the shelters. And it's well to bear that in mind, because some people have a tendency these days to oversell shelters. There's some tendency to believe that if you build a national system of shelters, you can save all the people. A statement was made recently before the Holifield Committee that if you build 38 billion dollars worth of shelters, you could save 99 percent of the people. I think there must have been words to qualify "outside of the target area" or "outside of the area of blast," because if those qualifiers were not there, the statement was tragically misleading.

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Now, is it worth while to save 60 percent of the people of a metropolitan city of 1, 800, 000 people? Of course it is.

What happens if you don't build shelters? I think that you must look at that side of the coin too, because that is even more important. Well, if you don't build the shelters, you would lose under these varied assumptions that I gave somewhere from 92 to 98 percent of the people.

Now, then, what would it cost to build those 30 PSI shelters in St. Louis? It would have cost 235 dollars per person, or, to give a round number here, a little less than 450 million dollars for that city.

If you have been reading the testimony before the Holifield Committee, you will find that various people come up with various estimates of the cost of building shelters in the United States. This is a fairly complex matter, or relatively complex. And so you can't judge the validity of the figures unless you consider the cost components that the man is basing his figures on.

In our case we arrived at our 235 dollar figure on the basis of these cost components: First there is the structure. If you build a shelter to withstand 30 pounds of overpressure per square inch, it costs one figure. If you build it to withstand 100, or any other figure, you are going to have an increase or a decrease depending upon the strength. That's just common sense.

The next thing is that some figures include land cost and some don't. You aren't going to get all this land free. So that's another component.

The third is that there is no sense in building shelters at all if you don't stockpile food in them in advance. You can't get it in there afterward. You can't call up the Safeway and get the stuff in there after the bomb goes off. You must have it there before or you aren't going to have it there at all.

And why is that important? Because our studies show that for many of the shelters that would have been in the fallout pattern, we would not have been able to remove the people for four or five days, due to radioactivity, assuming that we could remove them by motor car. And if they had to walk out of those shelters, which could be a possibility--it might be that you couldn't bulldoze in to get them because of the intensity and because of the debris--they would have had to stay in the shelters much longer. And, gentlemen, you know perfectly well, on the basis of your

reading and maybe some of you on the basis of your experience, that without food the situation would be horrible. So you might just as well accept that you've got to have the food in there in advance or there is no use talking about building shelters at all.

You must have water in there in advance. For some portions of the United States you must have some heating arrangements in those places. And in many or maybe all portions of the United States you must have some type of air-conditioning. I am not talking about maintaining the temperature at 68 or something like that, but something that would control the temperatures and the air in the place.

You may have to have gas filters, as they are providing in Sweden and Norway in their shelters.

In addition to that, you would have to have bedding. If people are going to stay there for long periods, they will have to be bedded down in some way. You must have sanitary facilities. You must have some type of communication facilities in these shelters.

So that if anybody talks to you about building shelters and estimates what they are going to cost, you had better ask him right off the bat, "What components are you figuring into this cost of yours?" If you don't know that, you don't know whether you are buying a junker out of somebody's secondhand lot or whether you are buying a usable vehicle. It makes some difference in what you get and what you pay.

Now, our problem here becomes complicated. It is a little ticklish dealing with figures; but, as I recall it, I think we figured on a nationwide basis that we had to build shelters to protect 100 million people against blast and fire. So if our figure was 235 dollars a person, you would multiply it by 100 million people and you would come up with 22 or 23 billion dollars. That is for blast and fire shelters alone.

Now, students might differ as to the exact number of people for whom you should build these shelters. There might be some difference of opinion with respect to that. You can honestly get different figures.

Then you also have this problem of radioactivity. We believe that in addition to building shelters in the big cities against blast and fire, you are going to find that in the small cities and towns and in the rural neighborhoods, where there will be quite an intensity of population, you will have to build fallout shelters to protect against the effects of radioactive

fallout, because there will be portions of the United States in which the intensity will be so high that you simply cannot live even in your basement, certainly not in your house. So it appears that prudence requires that fallout shelters be built to permit people to live through any intensity of radioactivity that is conceivable.

With reference to one attack that was posed upon this country, I heard a gentleman refer to this Atlantic seacoast area and make the statement that a certain percentage of the land, involving 40 percent of the population of the United States, would be denied reentry because of radioactivity for ten years or more.

Now, whether that's right by two or three years I don't care. It's pretty academic, isn't it? Let's say it's only seven. Say it's eleven. It doesn't make much difference. We haven't fully faced up to the effects of radioactivity yet in this Nation, as far as I know, either civil defense-wise or militarywise, because when I get out in the field and talk to military units I find they don't have any plans for defense against radioactivity in some installations.

What is the radioactivity plan in this institution? Do you have monitoring devices here? What are you going to do if there's some radioactivity in the air this afternoon? Are you prepared for business here? I don't know. Maybe you are. But there are a lot who aren't, and I assume it's on the assumption that the uniform in some way will dispel the effects of radioactivity. You understand, I am speaking good-naturedly now.

How many of these people will you have to build these fallout shelters for? I believe, about 68 million Americans. Now we are up to about 168. These shelters will likely cost 100 dollars a person. They are furnished in the same way as far as food and that sort of thing is concerned. A hundred dollars a person comes out about 6.8 billion; the total program for shelters to around 32 billion dollars.

Now, I am told by some research people that you had better not talk about building shelters to withstand 30 PSI, that you had better start in building them at 100 PSI, because the weight of the attack that might be possible would make it necessary that you build to the higher standard.

Then what happens? Well, you take the number of people for whom you are building shelters against blast and fire and you multiply that number of people by 415 dollars per person instead of 235. You come

out with a figure of around 46 or 47 billion dollars. That's why I said recently in a television interview that I thought a shelter program eventually would cost this country from 30 to 50 billion dollars.

Dr. Teller, when he testified before the Holifield Committee, I think, used the figure of 7.5 billion. I notice that he disqualified himself as an engineer or specialist in this field, and I don't know what basis he used for his figures. But I can assure you that to the best of my knowledge--and we have been looking at this problem for a long time and looking at it pretty hard--it's going to be in the upper ranges.

Now, if it becomes 40 or 45 billion dollars a year, that's as much as we're spending on military defense and foreign aid in a year. You can't say that it's beyond the capacity of the United States to meet financially, because you couldn't meet it in any less than eight to ten years at the best. If you took ten years to build this shelter program, and if you used our 32 billion dollar figure, you would spend 3.2 billion a year. If you used a 45 billion dollar program, you would spend 4.5 billion a year. You could add that to the burden that the United States is already carrying and it probably could carry it. But you would be adding to an extremely difficult present-day burden. You would be compounding the difficulties in the United States. So it's not something that should be taken on lightly.

There isn't any easy way out of this thing. That's what I'm really trying to say to you. Somebody will come to me once in a while and say: "Why do you change your tactics so frequently in civil defense?" For the same reasons that you must change yours, of course. There is more changing to do, too. Why are you having so much strain over in the Pentagon? Because the facts of the thermonuclear war are coming to roost. That's the reason for it. There's nothing mystic about it. Everyone is trying to get adjusted to the facts of this thermonuclear age.

I have said many times--and maybe some of you will want to quarrel with me--that I don't believe there is any such thing as being prepared for a thermonuclear war. I am not arguing against preparation. That's not my point. There is no such thing as being prepared for a thermonuclear war in any final sense. Oh, somebody may be prepared to push a bell when he sees enough intruders on the screen to indicate that the war is ready to start. I hope and pray that General LeMay can get his bombers off the runways into the air, that the enemy can't catch enough of them on the ground to knock out a meaningful portion of his striking power or a meaningful portion of our naval striking power. I think

some people are ready in that sense. But nobody is ready in any final sense, and I don't believe anybody ever can be ready in any final sense.

The fact of the matter is that you men, in alliance with the scientists, are just about at the point of putting yourselves out of business. At least you are causing a lot of people to wonder about the worthwhileness of your activities. I trust that that includes yourselves. You've just done too well. You've overreached a little bit in this situation.

Now, I realize that when you talk this way, somebody always says: "Well, that's the way they talked when they invented gunpowder, or cannon balls." I suppose that's true historically. But I'm a little bit inclined to think that the order of magnitude here may make the historical parallel somewhat dubious. I may not be right about that. I hope I'm not. I hope I'm wrong, as a matter of fact. But I wonder about it.

And there's this easy assumption that defense always catches up with offense. As I told you, I'm in favor of that. But I don't see too many signs of it at this moment in this current situation. Maybe it's around the corner. If it is, that's wonderful. The quicker it gets out here, the better. I don't care whether it eliminates us, the boys in blue or gray or brown or whatever kind of uniform they're wearing, or the whole kit and kaboodle. But you must bear in mind this one thing always: that it takes only one to make war, but it takes two to make peace. I want this country militarily strong until I am positive about the two being willing to maintain peace. So I am not critical, you understand, at all of your efforts and the money we spend in that direction. I think it's been money well spent.

I think we may have made three mistakes in this country when we started off in civil defense under the present act, 1950-1951. We are only about six years old in this agency. By the way, I have today about 1,093 people on my payroll. That may not be as many personnel as you utilized to sell the tickets and pass out the popcorn bags at the Army-Navy game. I have less than a battalion doing my job. There are more people than that shining shoes in the military. I just want to get these things in proportion. But I have only a battalion working for me in Federal Civil Defense and there's about a battalion and a half in the states and cities. So we have less than a regiment to face this problem with. That's not a very big force. Even on a planning basis it's not a very big force. I've got to find some way to get some more. I don't want you to have less, but I want more. I'm not complaining about your situation at all.

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Now, I said I thought we started on a mistaken basis in the United States in civil defense. The first thing is, we were born in a period of crisis and on a crash basis. I remember being called, as a governor, into Chicago in September of 1950 and being told: "You've got to go home and start a civil defense organization, because we may be at war with the Russians in the next thirty to ninety days." Do you remember that? That was the end of 1950 and early in 1951.

So we went home and we rang the bells and woke the people up and stirred them up. We've been ringing the bells ever since. But you can't keep the people stirred up forever on that basis. In other words, you've got to get off the high burner and over to the low burner. You have to go at this on the long-range basis. We must sell our merchandise more quietly, more sedately, and quit this business of going out and stirring up the folks. At least that's my judgment. That's the first thing that I think has been wrong with it.

The second thing is that we have relied on volunteers pretty nearly exclusively. And, gentlemen, I don't believe you can beat American volunteers for the short pull; but you can't keep a nation volunteering forever. I think I've said to you before that there wouldn't be one military service in existence one tenth of one second if you didn't either draft men, threaten to draft men, uniform men, pay men, give them fringe benefits, decorate them, or use band music. You couldn't do it, and I can't do it either in the long pull. It just can't be done. You're right; we're wrong. We tried to do it over the long pull with volunteers but we must get a hard core of paid people.

Now, we don't want a big army, but we must have more people. Then you build your Government workers around that core at all levels, and you build your volunteers around them. Then you are ready for business.

This assumes that we can tap some of your Reserve officers and some elements of your National Guard and the Regular components. They aren't going to be able to move out rapidly after an attack on this country. That involves a lot of people in all branches of the service. And if the present plan is approved, many of you are going to be assisting Civil Defense.

Now, I said there were three things wrong with Civil Defense. First, we were born in a period of crisis. We tried to stay on a crisis basis.

Second, we tried to do this on a basis of volunteers practically exclusively. And the third thing was, we tried to do it for nothing, I mean, in money. Moneywise we have been trying to do it for nothing. We can't do it. We're not that good. It takes more money than we have been spending in this field. If we don't want to put the resources into it and the effort, then we can't do the job and we might be better off to liquidate.

I have made recommendations, in the proper channels, for strengthening civil defense--every possible recommendation that anybody has been able to dream up yet, excepting one, that's the drafting of men. I have also said that it is entirely possible that if we get all of the legislation we have asked for now--we have seven proposals before the Congress, not including the shelter program, which has neither been approved or disapproved--but if we get all of those changes, we may still find in a number of years that it isn't enough and we may then have to draft men and women or share in the draft with you. That is now going on in this field in other countries. There is such authority and men are actually drafted in some of the countries of the world at the present time in civil defense.

Now, that's enough, General.

COLONEL MURPHY: Gentlemen, Governor Peterson is ready for your questions.

QUESTION: On this shelter business it seems to me that in order to ever get anywhere, we have to decentralize it first, take the money part of it out of the seat of the Federal Government. In other words, as the people in the cities need it, they are obviously going to have to spend the money. It's going to be pretty tough to get the people in sparsely populated areas, say, down in southern Nevada or Alabama or somewhere, to spend their tax dollars for somebody in New York or Boston. Is any thought being given along the line of putting it on a community basis or a city basis rather than a Federal basis, still with Federal guidance, of course?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I'm a States-righter myself, but I don't think it'll work, and let me tell you a story.

I was talking to the executive committee of the Governors' Conference in Chicago last December about these problems. One governor, who happened to be a Republican, cleared his throat, slapped his hand down on the desk, and said: "Now, listen, Val. We just gave you fellows in

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Washington two main jobs. One was to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and the other was to provide for national defense. This is part of national defense. The Federal Government ought to pay every dime of it. We ought to do some of the work. You ought to get down and quit talking so much and shell some dough out and we'll start doing some work."

I am sure that the governors and the mayors with few exceptions believe that this is a part of national defense just as much as buying bombers, battleships, or muskets. They just do not feel that it's a proper expenditure strictly at the local or State level to build shelters to protect the people against enemy action.

Now, I think I should add quickly on shelters that I don't want to see-- and this gets back to your problem more directly--a single public shelter built in the United States that does not also have a peacetime use.

And here's what we believe: We proposed to start out modestly. We proposed that we build these shelters first in public school buildings. I think the reason is obvious to you. Then we proposed building them in hospitals. Next we proposed building them as public garages for parking purposes. We would probably build them in churches. Why these places? Because they are scattered out where people live. Also they all have emotional attachments for the family, for the mothers, the fathers, the children, as community installations.

QUESTION: With regard to the postattack situation, you made reference to the large group of people that would be necessary for cleanup purposes. In that connection I am wondering whether you are familiar with Dr. Teller's ideas along that line, and whether consideration is being given to the possibility of employing the National Guard and the State Guard for that purpose.

GOVERNOR PETERSON: Yes. We've been discussing all those possibilities for several years now in the Government. As a matter of fact, I have suggested--and I did so over here before this class in the years gone by--that I thought that Reservists should be given credit toward their retirement for services performed in civil defense. If it becomes necessary to pay them, I think Civil Defense should pay them, but I think they should acquire points toward their retirement.

The Air Force, as I recall, has 150,000 Reserve officers, and I think the Air Force will admit that it doesn't know what it would do

with 75,000 of them immediately in case a war started. They have had command experience, many of them. They have had certain degrees of leadership training and most of them are very good. I'd like to use them. I'd like to use any Naval Reservists that the Navy can spare, any Army Reserves, any Marines. I think those people ought to be tied into the civil defense program. I have so proposed at the highest levels and have discussed it at other levels in the Government.

It takes a while, you see, to sell a thing like this. The first time I proposed it, they just practically carried me out of the room. But the situation is changing a little.

Now, it's been agreed in the Government and approved by the Secretary of the Army and the governors have been notified that in the event of an attack on the United States, many of the governors will have at their command for a period of time the ground elements of the National Guard. I don't know whether the National Guardsmen like this. But you're not going to call the National Guardsmen and Reservists to duty the morning after the attack and start drilling them or start shipping them. There won't be any place to ship them from, no boats to put them on, and no place to send them to if you were going to ship them, for quite a while.

The Secretary of the Army has notified those governors in the few States where their ground troops will be shipped out as combat teams by air. The others have been notified in the States where the Guardsmen will remain. So the ground elements of the Guard will be used in case war comes. And I can assure you that ground elements of any other service that are available will be used in this home job in case war comes. And, of course, President Eisenhower has the idea that the military would be used to support and uphold civilian authority to help do the job in an emergency of this kind.

QUESTION: In the postattack period, with as little money as has been given overall for civilian defense, I can't quite see where we would be too well prepared in the items of getting ionization chambers, rubber uniforms, or other equipment to work with in decontamination. Just how well along are the larger cities, say, New York and Philadelphia, in having the detection devices and uniforms that they need to go after the cleanup job?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I don't think that we have too many uniforms out; nor are we proposing them at this time. With respect to monitoring devices, we have thousands of them out. I am permitted by a rider

attached to our appropriations bill to donate or grant monitoring devices to cities and States for training purposes. We are shipping them out by the thousands.

Now, we have to be careful there, as you men well know. We have to be sure that there's somebody out there who knows how to handle them before we ship them out or we'll have a boondoggle on our hands. So we first have to call people in and train them in how to handle these monitoring devices and then get the monitoring devices out to them. That thing is now in process.

However, you said something there and I don't want to read more into it than you intended--that's not the purpose of my making this comment--but I found in civil defense when I came in and for a couple of years afterward a great talk about rescue teams and fire fighting and all that sort of thing when one of these cities is bombed with A-bombs. But really if you drop one or two of these big bombs on New York City, the fires may all be burned out before you will ever be able to put a fireman in. The radioactive intensities will be so high that you would consign men to death if you sent them in there to fight fires. So that as far as rescuing people and fighting fires, it may be confined to the periphery of the city. Of course, downwind in the areas of high intensity you aren't going to be able to get in there to fight anything at all. In other words, they may all be burned out, gutted out, long before you can get in.

QUESTION: What are the pros and cons on the Defense Department taking over civil defense entirely?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: That would be very fine. I'd be glad to have them do it right now. I mean from a personal standpoint that would just suit me fine.

However, to answer your question more seriously, no one speaks for the President except himself, but I think I could say that the President would prefer to see civil defense kept in civilian hands rather than having it put in military hands, because that's more in keeping with our democratic traditions in this country.

In addition to that, if the military is going to take this responsibility over--and I think the military could do it; you would have to have a period of indoctrination and training and that sort of thing and I think that could well be done--you also run into the feeling--and it is bona fide--that the military has a primary mission that excludes their paying attention to

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this particular problem. I don't know whether that would stand the most careful scrutiny or not in modern warfare. But that's been the policy.

The military, you know, created civil defense in the United States. It was at the insistence of the Defense Department that civil defense was set up in the United States. We are sort of a stepchild of the military. Our relationships now are very excellent, I should say, all through the country and all through Washington.

Of course, in the final analysis you must have volunteers, because you couldn't uniform enough men to do this job. We would bankrupt the country and wouldn't be able to do anything else, because in this situation whether a person lives or a family survives or a community survives depends upon what the person does, what the family does, how local leadership reacts. That's the nature of the problem, you see.

By the way, I want to pay my respects to one man in the military who has given us in Civil Defense the utmost cooperation right from the beginning, and that's General Curtis LeMay. Maybe it's simply because he knows how well he can blow everything else to pieces that he's concerned a little bit about what the enemy will do to us.

QUESTION: You haven't emphasized very much yet the problem of restoration after an attack, which I believe is also a part of the civil defense problem. What about organization and equipment and so forth to do that?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I didn't discuss that today because in this field we have copied the techniques of the British and the Germans. They had pretty sound techniques developed in the last war. The only thing that is new is the magnitude of the problem--which is quite an exception, I'll grant, over World War II--and this problem of radioactivity, which is another tremendous exception. Otherwise the doctrines and techniques are pretty well established. We have a great body of doctrine. It's well distributed across the United States. Most cities and States do have civil defense in this area, and in many States some parts of this postattack civil defense organization are very good.

In no State is every phase of it good, and in some States it is nearly nonexistent. We haven't abandoned the postattack field by any means. But I've turned my attention more to the preattack phase, because it's what you do there that determines whether you save lives, in a large measure.

Of course, as you know, we are stockpiling medical supplies. We have stockpiled today 153 million dollars worth of medical supplies. We have another 60 million on order. We are asking for 75 million next year. We are trying to stockpile about 411 million dollars worth of supplies. I suppose frankly that it ought to be run up to maybe a billion or more to try to get the country ready. We follow the doctors' advice in this field--the American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association, the American Nursing Association. We follow their advice in these directions.

If I may, Mr. Moderator, I want to add one more thought, because a question may not impel it and I may forget it and I want to get it on the record.

I personally am not going to assume that America is serious about survival until we start putting some of our industry under the ground and take advantage of the space in the United States. And that we aren't doing yet. We aren't even requiring in Federally built buildings in Washington the installation of protective features. Until we start building protective construction into our Federal buildings and other public buildings, I just won't think we're being serious about the problem of the thermonuclear war. That's my own particular test. Maybe it's not the right test, but I think that's an important test.

If you want any military potential after these bombs go off, you had better get some of this stuff under the mountains, under the rock, under the ground, and scatter it, because we're sitting ducks today. We have the best target complex for somebody to bomb from either a submarine or an airplane that the world ever saw.

QUESTION: In your briefing of the President on the possibility of building shelters with 30 PSI resistance, what were your specific recommendations, which I am sure he asked for, as to how strong they should be, how large they should be, and where you should start to build them first?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: We recommended that none of them be built to contain more than two thousand people and preferably a smaller number of people than two thousand. Of course all these other things were involved in our cost components. We recommended dual-purpose shelters, starting the first year with 255 million dollars, starting with schoolhouses and hospitals in the beginning, and then exploring the field of getting into parking garages.

In Stockholm, Sweden, a year ago December I went through one of those parking garages. I've been watching those shelters for several years. I went through one that has been completed. It will take ten thousand people. I think that's too many. But it will take ten thousand people. They have leased it to a garage man. He is displaying cars there, selling cars, filling them with gas and oil, repairing them, and storing them. He paid them 40 percent of the total cost of the shelter, cash in advance, for a 35-year lease. They also have an agreement made with another garage man. The car business must be better there or just as good as it is here. They have an agreement with another man to take over the same kind of a shelter except that it will take twenty thousand people. He's going to sell automobiles there too.

QUESTION: Do you have any information on what the Russians are doing in this problem?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: Very little. We've been trying to get it. We've had some reports through the proper reporting agencies in this area. We're not able to learn too much. We know they do have civil defense. It's quasi-military in character, as I am sure you know from your studies here.

The only positive information we have with respect to shelters comes from Russian satellite countries. We have information there of a positive character that they are building shelters. They have built and are building shelters in mountains, where mountains are closely adjacent to some of those bigger cities in the satellites.

It has always made me believe--I grant how amateurish I am in your field, and I trust on occasion you may grant it in mine--that while it's true that our striking power can devastate Russian cities if we are attacked, it's also true, in my belief, that the people won't be in those cities when our bombers get over there. I believe that they will evacuate their cities, either to shelters or to some other places--they'll try to get them to the safest place--at the moment that they order their bombers off the ground or shortly thereafter. At least they'll figure the time differential. If it's a propeller-driven attack or a jet attack, they will figure the time lapse from the time they start the attack until our boys can get back and get their people into safety. They'd just be stupid if they didn't, wouldn't they?

Now, whether we can pick that up, whether that will be one of the things that will tip us off, I don't know. I suppose they'll attempt to cut communications the minute they start an attack.

QUESTION: My question is with reference to general support of the civil defense program and specifically as applied to Congress. Congress has not participated in these Alert exercises. I would like to have your analysis of why this program has not had better support, particularly from Congress.

GOVERNOR PETERSON: I think you have raised an important problem, one that certainly concerns me. I have tried different ways to orient the Congress. It's a pretty difficult deal.

Why is it difficult? Well, I think the best explanation I know is this: Let me go clear back to Nebraska. While I was governor we used to have about 525 bills a session thrown in the hopper. They probably have more today, because everybody is getting bigger and better, you know. But these fellows down here in Washington get thousands of bills dumped on them every session--thousands of them. In other words, pressures on them come from their constituents and from the country on legislative matters, on the chores that they have to do for the people back home, on the committee meetings they have to attend, and the sessions they have to attend, the job of keeping their political fences up, trying to live a little bit with their families. The best way to get action out of the Congress is to get action from home. I am certain that if I were sitting up in the Congress and the Federal Civil Defense Administrator came up to talk to me about his problems, I would try to be polite to him, but I think my mind would be centered on something a little distance away.

But if a Congressman walks down the street of his home town and a prominent woman in town gets him by the collar and says: "Look here, Mr. So-and-so, I want some action on civil defense," he has a different problem. He can't shake her off. She lives in that town. She has influence in that town. She has influence in political elections. He has to listen to her.

Now, we just haven't had enough people grabbing their Congressman by the collar. That's all I'm trying to say. We just haven't got our story across to them. I personally am not inclined to blame the Congress. It is a job to sell your merchandise.

We have never had anyone at our headquarters who has listened to us tell our problems and our proposed solutions who didn't say: "Well, that's a pretty reasonable approach to the thing." Our job is to get our story across to the people. We just aren't doing it.

Now, we've done fairly well. Our public opinion surveys show that about 85 or 90 percent of the American people are now aware of the problem. That wasn't true four or five years ago. They are now aware of the possibility of thermonuclear attack--what it means.

But what percentage of the American people are we getting involved in our program? We've sold them the broad threat; that's pretty well sold. We've sold it, along with a lot of other people in Government. But I think the figure has dropped down to about three percent of the people that are enough concerned about it to do anything about it.

You might say, "Why don't you do a better job of selling?" Well, last year we had about a million and a half dollars for our entire education services program. I have forgotten the figures, but if you will find out how much money they allot to sell Chevrolets--and they have been selling those now for a long time--I think you will find they spend somewhere in the range of 60 million dollars a year just to sell such a wonderful, but such an ordinary, such a well-known, product as that.

GENERAL CALHOUN: Governor, I would like to violate our own policy here. I was hoping that someone would get you on to the question of the relationship between FCDA and ODM with particular reference to the regional setup. Are there conflicts, and are we making progress in resolving these conflicting authorities?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: Let me say that my own relationships with Dr. Arthur Flemming have been of the finest order. We are very good friends. We have cooperated. We have never had the slightest difficulty at any time at that level between the two organizations.

I think that farther down the barrel somewhere there have been some frictional situations. They have not been serious, but there has been some misunderstanding. We have adjudicated those things, straightened them out, and are now in good shape.

However, actually in the broader sense, we're an operational agency and ODM is a staff arm of the President. We are responsible for trying to get America back up on its feet, binding up the wounds of the people, getting people fed immediately following an attack. It would appear that for a period of many days or weeks we won't have much time to consult with too many people in carrying out our responsibilities. We expect to do that. Dr. Flemming understands that and agrees to that. But then after a while there comes a period when you begin to think about economic

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stabilization, or rehabilitation and then stabilization. Then ODM becomes the controlling element in the American Government, and we may in fact be working for them. If necessary we should be and will be.

Now, Doctor Flemming and I have always pretty well understood this differentiation. I am sure that ODM and FCDA have plagued a lot of good people across the country with our two regional establishments, and in Operation Alert 1956 with our somewhat overlapping advices to the people in the field. So we are now in the process of reducing our relative responsibilities to paper. We have agreed at top level on paper, and that's now in the process of being translated into somewhat more elaborate statements for consumption in the field.

QUESTION: We have studied in our course here requirements for mobilization, particularly support for the military. One of the big unknowns has been what materials would be required to rehabilitate the homeland, the homefront. Could you tell us where we stand on the estimates of materials for that purpose?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: There is a document in the Government now, known as our Basic Responsibilities Paper, that was approved by the President. For a long time it was available only in a classified form and with a limited circulation. In effect we tried to operate it in 1956 without having circulated it, and that's a good trick if you can do it. That's one of the reasons we have some confusion. This paper is an agreement between the Secretary of Defense and the Director of ODM and the Administrator of FCDA, approved by the President. So in effect it's a Presidential order.

FCDA becomes a claimant, among its other responsibilities, for the entire civilian economy in the United States following the attack. DOD claims for the military in the United States. ODM acts as the umpire for the President.

Does that answer your question?

STUDENT: No. Perhaps I didn't state my question clearly. My question was, Do you have some estimate of what these material needs would be?

GOVERNOR PETERSON: Oh, yes. We've had a group working for a long time utilizing these monsters that they have created--Univac and

that sort of thing. We have a division in our organization developing the estimates of materiel needs for civilians after an attack on this country.

We have been doing what we call bomb damage assessment work to help us in the civilian requirements field, trying to get that on a machine basis. We are working on it together with ODM. You people are in it-- various elements of the military--as I understand it, trying to be able to punch a couple of buttons and indicate to the machine the weight of the attack and the machine will tell you what the damage was to the resources of the United States.

Thank you a lot.

(30 April 1957--3, 950)B/ebm