

CIVIL DEFENSE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

14 January 1949

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COMMANDER JENSEN: Today we have our first lecture on civil defense. We are honored to have with us both the first Director of that planning agency, Mr. Russell J. Hopley, and the present Director, Mr. A. H. Mellinger.

I would like to introduce at this time Mr. Mellinger, who is here as a guest.

Our speaker was selected by the Secretary of Defense to be the first Director of the Office of Civil Defense Planning. That a tremendous amount of work has been accomplished by that agency under his direction is evident in the report recently submitted to the Secretary of Defense under the title "Civil Defense for National Security." Today Mr. Hopley will tell us about this civil defense planning.

Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure, indeed, to introduce to you Mr. Russell J. Hopley, President of Northwestern Bell Telephone Company and former Director of the Office of Civil Defense Planning. Mr. Hopley.

MR. HOPLEY: My role here this morning is to set the stage for your examination of a most important subject.

In succeeding seminars you will have the opportunity to study the separate parts which go to make up the function of civil defense in this so-called atomic age. I shall merely attempt to discuss the broad, over-all function at this opening kickoff.

It is reported that some of you have read the report I hold in my hand--"Civil Defense for National Security." If you do not now have one, I am sure that you will at the conclusion of this series. Since release of the report of the Office of Civil Defense Planning by Mr. Forrestal on 14 November 1948, I believe that patriotic citizens have a greater familiarity with the subject than has ever been the case previously. In a sense, the jury is still out, because the plan as recommended still requires attention of the Congress, the State legislatures, and directing heads of municipalities scattered throughout the Nation.

Civil defense is something that, in full implementation during a period of national emergency, would vitally concern every man, woman, and child in the United States, its territories and possessions.

Divergent views should be heard--that is only natural in a democracy such as ours. It is a healthy process. Mr. Forrestal wanted to accomplish the hearing of divergent views when he invited comment not only from every interested agency of the Federal Government, but the governors of the States, all types of national and local organizations, and, in fact, any private citizen who had an opinion on the subject.

Lack of familiarity with the underlying tenets, of course, is no deterrent to public expression in America.

In this interim stage, we have had military men who felt that civil defense should be so civilian in character as to rule out even coordination with the National Military Establishment. On the other hand, heads of municipalities here and there have felt that the military, or particularly the Army, should "take over" every component part of civil defense. We find people who think that the civil defense workers should be armed or formed in vigilante bands. It is confused in many quarters with what we understand as internal security, home guard forces, and the National Guard.

I should like to give you some of the background for the whole project, to review for you some of the assumptions on which we proceeded in our work. I propose to explain some of our early concepts and show how they were modified or perhaps abandoned altogether. I want to explain how the final product of our six to eight months of planning came to have the character it has at the present time.

I was, of course, very much interested in looking over the press reaction after we released our report to the American people, and I remember being struck by the fact that two newspapers in different parts of the country both headed their editorial comments with identical words: "A Grim Necessity." Those three words capture precisely the spirit of the approach we made to the task of planning a civil defense program. In our time war has become total war. The recent conflict proved that in any future wars the distinction between the home front and the battle front is purely academic. So long as wars remain even a remote possibility, our Government would be remiss if it did not take steps to prepare its people to minimize death and destruction in the event of attack.

All of you will recognize this report as merely the basis for a plan of action. It is a blueprint--and we think a good one. We believe that we have succeeded in our objective of devising a sound workable and acceptable program.

It is for all of these reasons that I think it appropriate at the very outset to elaborate on the function of civil defense as we

envision it after long study by a group of specialists. It should be understood that this is the philosophy of the Office of Civil Defense Planning, based on competent testimony.

Fortunately, it was not necessary for us to start from scratch in our work. The reports of the civil defense team of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey presented a complete and detailed picture of the civil defense organizations of our enemies in World War II. They evaluated the strength and the weakness of those organizations and described how they functioned under fire. In addition, we had the benefit of the very valuable analysis of the civil defense experiences of England, Germany, and Japan which was prepared under the supervision of the Provost Marshal General between August 1945 and April 1946. Finally, we had the report of the War Department Civil Defense Board, commonly called "The Bull Board." That report, which recommended the immediate initiation of civil defense planning activities, was released on 15 February 1948.

Many of you probably know that Japan had the oldest civil defense system, since theirs was first organized in 1923. Japan's system was not effective for the reason that the military kept telling their people that an enemy attack could never come to Japan. The result was complacency. The people did not work at it.

Germany had what could have been a strong system of civil defense but for the fact that there were too many people reaching out for power and constantly attempting to exert political control over the various segments of the organization. The result was constant conflict, hence their system did not work too well.

England had the strongest and most effective civil defense program. The English system was organized four years before the war. The people worked at it; the result was an effective system and one that contributed greatly to the survival of England and the winning of the war.

In our activity we undertook to avoid the pitfalls and errors in all of the previous experiences; to develop a plan that would stand up as being sound, simple, workable, and acceptable; and to avoid overlapping, duplication, and confusion. We entered on our job with a feeling of urgency--not that we regarded war as imminent, but that we felt our Nation was seriously vulnerable, and the sooner we had provided for the missing element in our defense structure, the better. In the introduction to our report we refer to civil defense as the "missing link" in our national security structure. During the course of our work we held many meetings with representatives from the Armed Services; the various branches of Federal, State, and local governments; and many private organizations, groups,

and individuals. We had the finest cooperation and assistance from all of these people.

In our study, which has been referred to as the most complete yet made, we arrived at a definition which I think should be understood in approaching the subject. In our report we say:

"Civil Defense is the organization of the people to minimize the effects of enemy action. More specifically, it is the mobilization, organization and direction of the civilian populace and necessary supporting agencies to minimize the effects of enemy action directed against people, communities, industrial plants, facilities and other installations--and to maintain or restore those facilities essential to civil life and to preserve the maximum civilian support of the war effort."

That is about as accurate a definition as we were able to devise. From the standpoint of completeness and exact definition, for the benefit of any lawyers who may be present, I would refer you to a section of our so-called "model" state civil defense act which will be found in the report. Therein we describe the function a little more elaborately as follows:

"Civil Defense" shall mean the preparation for and the carrying out of all emergency functions, other than functions for which military forces are primarily responsible, to minimize and repair injury and damage resulting from disasters caused by enemy attack, sabotage or other hostile action, or by fire, flood, earthquake, or other natural causes. These functions include, without limitation, fire-fighting services, police services, medical and health services, rescue, engineering, air raid warning services, communications, radiological, chemical and other special weapons of defense, evacuation of persons from stricken areas, emergency welfare services (civilian war aid), emergency transportation, existing or properly assigned functions of plant protection, temporary restoration of public utility services, and other functions related to civilian protection, together with all other activities necessary or incidental to the preparation for and carrying out of the foregoing functions."

I think it is most important that all of you know what we mean by civil defense. It is a comparatively new subject, but within the period of little more than a decade it has taken on an international meaning. Civil defense, as we think of it, is being organized in many parts of the world at the present time. England, Canada, Chile, and more remote corners of the world all seem to envision the function in the main as an organization of the people for their own mutual protection, separate from the Armed Forces.

I am frequently called on to explain the difference between civil defense and civilian defense as we knew it in World War II days within the boundaries of the United States. As you have perceived from the elaborate definition that I read, we think of civil defense as an organization for the protection not only of the people but of industrial concentrations, plants, and the like.

The old Office of Civilian Defense fortunately was never called upon to carry out its mission. As a result, some 70 percent of its activities were of a commendable, patriotic character but had no relationship to protection of communities from an enemy. We do not feel that civil defense is the proper agency to carry out these supporting activities so necessary in a war effort.

One of our initial decisions was that civil defense should be strictly a civilian activity. There were some who wanted to place the organization under the Army, arguing that in time of grave emergency only the Army has the necessary know-how to step in and exercise the rigid kind of control necessary. The majority of us felt then that the Army should be left free for its primary mission--meeting and defeating the enemy. We recognized that martial law would possibly be required in the event of continued, heavy attack from the air or by atomic attack, but we decided that the Army should be called in to take over only as a last resort. That is the recommendation in our report.

In the beginning, too, there was considerable argument for a strong central civil defense organization having authority to direct the establishment, organization, and operation of the civil defense program throughout the country. Many of the lessons we found emphasized in the reports of civil defense operations during World War II revealed the desirability of such centralized authority. There were unquestionably many valid arguments for that kind of organization. It is interesting, though, how our thinking changed on this point as our work progressed, until we came to hold sincerely a completely contrary position. In our report we recommend that primary operating responsibility for civil defense rests with the State and local governments, where it properly belongs.

Another of our early assumptions contributed to that final decision. It was not precisely a reversal of opinion, because we kept our minds open and tried to steer an even course until the evidence of our studies and thinking pointed heavily to one inevitable conclusion. That other assumption was that a well-organized civil defense program should make maximum use of existing facilities and services--fire departments, police departments, health departments, and like agencies. It is obvious that an organization designed to protect the people and their homes and their properties should not duplicate existing agencies and organizations. Rather, as we concluded, it should depend on those organizations

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for the assumption of the additional responsibility and should assist by laying down principles, establishing policies, and providing over-all guidance. This consideration carried considerable weight in our thinking on this point.

Having dealt in a general manner with this most ramified subject, I think I should give a little background and history of the Office of Civil Defense Planning. It is appropriate that you might ask, "Who says this? Who are these people who have prepared a program of civil defense for the Nation? What is the necessity thereof? And where do we go from here?"

In March 1948, I came down to Washington from Omaha on leave as President of the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company to head the Office of Civil Defense Planning and to act as deputy to Mr. Forrestal on civil defense matters. At that time we were given a powerful, five-page directive which outlined the requirements, the responsibilities, and the general area and field in which we were expected to operate. I would like to read just one paragraph because it really spells out the over-all job we were expected to accomplish. That paragraph is:

"To prepare, and to submit to the Secretary of Defense a program of civil defense for the United States, including a plan for a permanent federal civil defense agency which, in conjunction with the several states and their subdivisions, can undertake those peacetime preparations which are necessary to assure an adequate civil defense system in the event of war."

My commitment covered the first phase of this activity; that is, the direction of the development of an over-all plan. The interim phase in advance of action by Congress is being directed most fortunately by Mr. Aubrey H. Mellinger, an old friend and associate, who will speak to you later today. Then comes the third part, or actual implementation of the plan, after appropriate action has been taken by the Congress, the States, and the localities.

Returning to the planning period, we deliberately kept our organization on the small side with 43 key people, who were assisted by a standing group of 133 consultants and advisers recruited from the fields of science, education, government, business, industry, and similar groups. To effect a good balance, we reached out over all geographical sections of the country and brought in the top talent and ability in the various specialized fields that would be involved in a broad civil defense activity.

This is the result of our labor--"Civil Defense for National Security." What does the report propose? In a nutshell, the major recommendations call for:

1. The establishment of a permanent Federal Office of Civil Defense to be established within the Executive Branch of the Government and to be headed by a civilian director, with a staff not exceeding 200 people.

2. Within this office would be a technical staff, headed by a deputy director, with divisions comprising communications, engineering, fire services, police services, warden services, and emergency transportation.

3. A plans and operations staff, headed by a deputy director, with divisions comprising organization and methods, mobile reserves and mutual aid, evacuation, aircraft observers and air-raid warning, manpower and materiel, plant protection, and civilian war aid.

4. A training staff, headed by a deputy director, including field services, methods and training materials, general education, schools and colleges, and leadership training.

5. A medical and health services and other special weapons defense staff, headed by a deputy director, to include medical and health services, radiological defense, chemical defense, and other special weapons defense.

6. We also propose the establishment of regional coordinators to assist in coordinating matters between the States and Federal organization and with the military, when involved.

7. Our plan contemplates the establishment of a civil defense agency within each state, starting with the governor as the responsible head; then the appointment of an advisory council composed of representative citizens of the state; and the state activity to be headed up by a director.

8. Similarly, in each community the establishment of a civil defense agency under the mayor as the responsible municipal official, with an advisory council of representative citizens, and the local activity to be headed up by a director.

9. Our entire plan is proposed on the basis of:

a. Placing the full operating responsibility in the state and community, where it belongs.

b. Leadership, guidance, coordinating, training materials, and the advice and counsel needed, to be furnished by the Federal organization.

c. Maximum utilization of volunteers, existing agencies and organizations--governmental, public, and private--and all available skills and experiences.

d. Well-organized and trained units in communities throughout the country, prepared and equipped to meet the problems of enemy attack, and to be ready against any weapon an enemy might use.

e. Intensive planning to meet the particular hazards of atomic or other modern weapons of warfare.

f. A peacetime organization on a small nucleus basis which could be used in event of peacetime disasters, such as fires, floods, explosions, tornadoes, and other similar catastrophes, and which could be quickly expanded to meet the exigencies of a given situation in a war emergency.

g. The plan and the legislation that we propose have been developed on a "model" basis for the Federal, State, and municipal organization, and can be easily modified and adjusted to meet a particular situation in the community or state.

h. Our plan and legislation also contemplate that the organization will not engage in any political activity or any other activities outside of the purely civil defense field.

The basis of civil defense relates to:

1. The individual, who, with proper training and information, must, in the event of an emergency, take care of himself.

2. The family which similarly, with training, must take care of itself.

3. The community which should, as a general proposition, organize to handle any emergency within the community.

4. If the emergency was of such proportions that the community was completely overwhelmed, then the calling in of mobile reserves set up on the basis of mutual aid. Our plan proposes the organization of mobile reserve battalions (Class A and Class B) that can be moved into an overwhelmed community from various locations throughout the several states. It is proposed that these mobile reserve battalions be organized on the basis of setting aside a small percentage or a small part of the protection services in each community in the state (fire, police, medical, etc.), to be supplemented by volunteers in sufficient numbers to round out an effective unit. Each unit would comprise medical services, fire-fighting services, rescue services, debris clearance services, police services, emergency feeding services,

installation and repair services, and radiological defense services. Each unit would also have assigned to it 6 planes and 12 pilots from the Civil Air Patrol to assist in transportation, traffic control, and similar duties.

If, after the mobile reserves had been called in, the community was still overwhelmed beyond its capacity to handle the situation, then we believe the next step should be:

5. Military aid to civil power, to operate emergency plans that have been and are being developed.

6. The last step then would be martial rule, and then civil defense would continue operations but under a new boss.

Before my allotted time expires, I would like to discuss a few questions that fall within the "where do we go from here?" bracket.

Let us get back to No. 1 of the basic recommendations that I summarized. This has to do with eventual placement of the proposed national agency.

In our report we say:

"It is proposed that there be established within the Executive Branch of the Federal Government an Office of Civil Defense, headed by a director who should be a civilian of outstanding ability and qualifications. There are but a few places within the Executive Branch where this office could be properly placed. The two most appropriate of these would be: one, reporting directly to the President; the other, reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense. Since a very large part of the civil defense program will require continuous coordination with all agencies responsible to the Secretary of Defense, it seems reasonable that the latter would be preferable."

It is my personal view that the office should function under the Secretary of Defense. This is a matter that will have to be settled by Congress. There have been other suggestions, of course.

A number of states and cities have already started the framework for civil defense. I cannot emphasize too much what we believe to be the fundamental requirement that final decision rests with the community subject to state authority. If Smithville, Arkansas, does not organize, that is entirely up to Smithville. If Jonesville, New Jersey, which is an industrial community, wants to organize on a complete scale, that will have to be decided by Jonesville through its elected governing officials.

In the chapter on training we say that in all-out war effort perhaps 15 million persons not enrolled in the Armed Forces might be

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expected to carry out civil defense tasks. Nothing like that is contemplated in peacetime. Only a nucleus group is necessary. It would be a healthy thing if a high percentage of the American people in peacetime arrived at a fuller understanding of civil defense.

I would like, before closing, to quote a few editorial excerpts, which have with three exceptions been overwhelmingly favorable. First, naturally, I will read from the "Omaha World-Herald": "A job well done... It is simply a prudent and reasonable plan to supplement this country's armed might with an adequate civil defense program. The...committee has submitted such a program."

"New York Times": "We commend it [the plan] to Congress and to all citizens as a reasonable and important document... The sooner a civil defense act is passed here and put into effect, the better it will be. This is an act of prudence that should not be long delayed."

"New York Herald-Tribune": "The able report on this subject represents a minimum structure... The proposed system has been very carefully constructed."

"Washington Post": "Precisely because it is the efficiency of the civil defense organization that may determine whether this country can withstand atomic war. That is the purpose of a new and admirably thorough study 'Civil Defense for National Security.'"

"Washington Star": "To ignore the warnings contained in the remarkably comprehensive report, to fail to make reasonable preparations to deal with some future emergency because the prospects seem too remote, would be to take risks of the gravest sort."

"Dallas Daily Times-Herald": "The program...as outlined...serves as a grim reminder of the sort of world in which we live. Therefore, it is up to those of us who are civilians to start getting ready... without delay."

I hope that these words of mine have contributed to your informational store. I shall be happy to answer questions on specific matters that may not have been adequately covered.

QUESTION: Mr. Hopley, do you know of any community that has set up an organization under your plan?

MR. HOPLEY: I understand that New Jersey is now in the process of setting up a civil defense organization along the lines recommended in our report. New York, California, and Texas already have a nucleus organization.

Does that answer your question?

QUESTIONER: I was thinking of a city rather than a state.

MR. HOPLEY: I don't know of any city.

QUESTION: What happens to the American Red Cross and similar organizations in your plan?

MR. HOPLEY: The plan contemplates the complete typing in of the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and similar organizations. Of course, the Red Cross has certain statutory obligations or duties that will be observed. As a matter of fact, the Red Cross has a member of its organization in the Office of Civil Defense Planning. The plan contemplates complete coordination with such organizations.

QUESTION: Mr. Hopley, could you say how the coordination is to be effected between the Office of Civil Defense and the interested government departments?

MR. HOPLEY: Using the Federal organization as an illustration--and the same would be true of the States and municipalities as related to various agencies in their spheres of activity--we think that the coordination would be carried on by these various groups that I identified (fire, police, radiological, and so on) through the regular Federal Civil Defense Agency, with the military, the FBI, the National Security Resources Board, and all the other agencies that might be involved. We had hoped that it would be on a very informal and easy basis, as we found it to be during our nine months of activity.

QUESTION: In that connection, sir, it is my understanding that at present the military is allowed to intervene in a civil disturbance only in a situation where the Federal Government exercises control, the theory being that the Army cannot properly serve under some local civilian command. Do you visualize that that would exist, or would some arrangement be worked out whereby the Army could go in and assist without the Federal Government actually exercising control of the situation?

MR. HOPLEY: The steps would be in succession, as I mentioned: First, the civilian activities being completely utilized to a point where they are exhausted or the emergency is beyond their control; then the calling in of military aid to civil power under plans that have been developed for that purpose; and finally the establishment of martial rule, or martial law, as it is called. We would think in terms of that just being a very normal and natural process under emergency conditions of the type that would bring it about.

It may take some further legislation.

QUESTION: Will legislation be needed?

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MR. HOPLEY: I am not sure how we have covered that in our present proposed draft of the law that we developed, but I believe that it has been taken care of; but if it hasn't, then additional legislation, if required, would be drafted.

QUESTION: Sir, I have one other question with respect to the national organizations; it is not quite clear how they are to be integrated at the various levels since at the lowest level they would be responsive to their own state and municipal organizations. How will they actually fit into the proposed plan whereby we would have one civil defense director for a city and for a state?

MR. HOPLEY: That would be done through the so-called chain of command, as you would call it. We have elected to use another term instead of that. I think the term we have used is "the lines of administrative and operational activity," which is one and the same thing; but the civilian understands this latter term. The Federal responsibilities would be outlined as they are in the proposed law, the state responsibilities would be similarly outlined, the municipalities would operate under ordinances, and so on. We conceive and contemplate that this entire activity with all the legislation passed would work just as a very effective piece of machinery after it has been well oiled.

I think it might be of interest, in the particular question you raise, that the Council of State Governors, in its meeting in a New England state last spring, passed a very strong resolution in support of a national civil defense activity and agency and organization and so on, provided that the operational responsibility rested in the states and in the municipalities. We have consulted with them on the broad question you raise, and up to this time it has not seemed as though there are going to be any problems that would be insurmountable at least.

DR. FITZPATRICK: I think that one of the most interesting things you said was the fact that you had some criticism. The way you dismissed it was a little dubious to me. What were the actual criticisms that were made? No matter what source they came from, I think they ought to be met and discussed.

MR. HOPLEY: I heard some of those criticisms and I read them.

The principal criticisms are these: war mongering, the establishment of an over-all central authority of control, SS troops, brownshirts, concentration camps, and things of that sort. I think I can say with an absolutely clear conscience--and I believe that every individual in our organization can say this with the same feeling--that every statement of that type that has been made is without foundation and is absolutely false. They will be answered.

Some of them have been answered in one way or another up to this time, and as time goes on other answers will be given in the right way. I think it is just as well not to rush in after some of these charges are made and counter with immediate replies. I think it is just as well to let the thing settle down and sift a little bit before we come through with an answer, which action, I believe, would have a more effective result than would otherwise be the case.

I think it is a good thing that we have had some criticism. We have had some wholesome criticism. I predicted when I left the job that our proposed plan wouldn't be unanimously received with open arms on the part of 145 million people. I expected we would have a lot of criticism, and that it would be pushed around and kicked around.

GENERAL HOLMAN: Mr. Hopley, your talk this morning has been a very splendid contribution to our understanding of an important element in national security, and I know that I speak for the entire student body, the faculty, and our guests when I say that we are deeply grateful to you.

MR. HOPLEY: Thank you. I am glad to be here.

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