

CIVIL DEFENSE TODAY

9 March 1956

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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

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 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 HOLLIS: I think it is almost unnecessary for me to introduce our speaker this morning. He is a national figure, and his bailiwick and his responsibilities are well known to you all. You also know about his distinguished political record as Governor and as chairman of the Conference of Governors.

As to his present responsibilities and the fact that the public considers them an unpalatable area of discussion, I am sure that he has one of the most difficult and sometimes frustrating jobs in the Government. The big vagary in his job and his responsibility is the wide ramifications.

I think that is well illustrated by a wartime cartoon which appeared in "Punch," where during the blackout this young spirit in his clericals was walking down the street with his halo just above him, and this fire warden said to him: "I am sorry, sir, but you will simply have to stay inside."

It is now a privilege for me to introduce Governor Val Peterson, the Chief of the Federal Civil Defense Administration.

MR. PETERSON: Thank you, General Hollis. Good morning to you gentlemen. It is also a privilege to come here. I enjoy it very much, and have looked forward to this session this morning.

There appeared in "Harper's" magazine sometime last fall some articles, that I think you gentlemen must have noticed, somewhat to the effect that war has become obsolete. I read these articles with a good deal of interest, and I didn't have any particular quarrel with the broad theme that ran through the articles except that I am certain you would agree with me that whether war is obsolete or not is beside the point. If the United States is attacked, we would intend to fight. In other words, it takes two to make peace, but only one to make war. And so our country must be ready to fight. We must be ready to insist on an honorable peace and never be willing to accept a dishonorable peace. Nevertheless, as the President has indicated, a nuclear war is unthinkable with regard to its effect upon our country and upon the world.

When I first became Civil Defense Director at the President's order in February 1953, and started talking, in official circles and out, about my conception of what could happen to America in the event of an atomic war, I know that there were many misgivings, both in official circles and in the country at large, at the things that I was trying to say. I know of no more sobering experience that anyone could have, in Government or out, in the military or out, than to sit down and just think of what happens to America when megaton weapons are dropped on, say, as few as twenty of the largest cities in America and simultaneously on whatever number you want to take, twenty or thirty, military targets.

Very frankly, I sometimes wonder whether America could get off the floor following such an attack. I don't know for sure. No one knows for sure. And I don't take any great satisfaction in ultrapatriotic or emotional references to the fact that we will always fight, because I don't think they are based upon any experience factor that anyone has ever had when we speak of a situation of this kind.

I think that when you consider the effect of such an attack on the United States, you can't take very much satisfaction in the fact that, even though such an attack did transpire, and did bring such devastation to the United States, we at the same time would appear to have the ability to bring equal or maybe greater devastation to our adversary. I don't find anything very appealing or very satisfying in that picture, except that I will say to you that I certainly hope that if we are destroyed, we will destroy the other fellow too. I mean that as an individual. But thinking about mankind and our culture and our civilization, I can't find much to be happy about in that kind of situation.

Out at Chicago, where some of you people were present, I think, both faculty and students, you will recall that we had quite a good conference a month or two ago, a conference of military and industrial engineers, at which I thought some very fine Americans presented some fine papers and good discussions on this broad subject. I suggested out there, and I want to suggest to you again this morning, that, while I hope the Marines and the Army and the Navy and the Air Force, the various elements of them, are able to report today that they are doing a good job of preparing for any kind of a war, that they are in fact drilled and trained and equipped and ready, as far as it is humanly possible to be ready--and I believe that to be the case and I don't contest that at all--I still hope that no one in the military or in the Government anywhere or in any phase of human activity ever in his enthusiasm

to point out how well he is prepared, leaves any implication for the American people or the world, that the preparation he is making will be effective enough that it means that we or the world are in fact ready for a thermonuclear war, because I just don't believe anybody is ready for it.

And I am a little bit amused, and sometimes a little bit amazed, in the hearings that are currently going on before the Hollifield Committee, when references are made to the terrible lack of preparation civil defense-wise in America for a thermonuclear war--all of which I would be the first to grant or to recognize--I am a little amused that somebody doesn't point out that the military isn't prepared for a thermonuclear war either, because if you think you are, then you certainly are misled. There is no such thing as preparation for this kind of war in any final sense. I grant that there may be a squadron prepared somewhere to do such-and-such a thing. But I am talking now about the broadest possible idea of preparation. Nobody is prepared for, nobody is ready for, nobody can stand, a thermonuclear war. It just is not a possibility.

The only thing that makes any sense in our time, your time and mine, is peace. And how in the world are we going to get it, always assuming, as I would assume, that it must be an honorable peace? How in the world can we get it in our time? Must we destroy ourselves? Must civilization set itself back? Must we return to the Dark Ages, in part or in whole?

I think this is the problem--without any reference to partisanship at all, because in many ways partisanship is rather unimportant in the era in which we live--that has most occupied the President. And he has had the greatest concern for it, as has every other responsible leader in the world. Those who talk lightly about knifing the enemy or using force against the enemy simply are not realistic. They are not thinking the problem through. They are not conscious of the tremendous destructive forces that will be unleashed if we engage in a third world war.

I recall when I was a boy in college studying political science, which was my field and which I later taught in college, the professor told us to choose a subject and write a thesis on it. I chose to write a thesis on the subject of war. I had a big enough subject, and I learned one of the first lessons that you have to learn in this school business. I learned that you had better tailor your subject to your ability, but I

didn't learn it until it was a little too late in the year. I finally got the dining room table piled up completely with notes and books; and, very frankly, I couldn't assemble them, I couldn't absorb them, I couldn't systematize them. I couldn't get them down on paper. At the time I wondered what was the matter with my mentality. As I look back, I realize that it was simply my audacity that was out of place.

Now we see that the President has someone that he calls the Secretary of Peace. He has more title than he has material to back it up with, I am afraid. Yet we have a Secretary of Peace. He is right in this same kind of situation that I was in. I don't know whether he is going to be more successful than I was. I hope he is, but I don't know. I doubt whether he knows it either. But he is going to London tomorrow to try to figure out how men can live without engaging in war.

I don't know whether you are familiar with it or not, but someone said that for every year of peace in the history of the world there have been thirteen years of war. Now that, of course, has to be analyzed. That means that two nations were fighting somewhere. It doesn't mean, of course, a world war. I never bothered to check those figures, but I have let my mind run back a little bit. You try to figure out when somebody was not shooting at somebody in the world in the last fifty-six years. I think we say now on the political front that there isn't any war today, but I would hate to say that there isn't any shooting going on somewhere in the world right this minute.

When I was a boy in college, I used to read the philosophy of Hobbs and Locke. I haven't gone back for many, many years and read the writings of either of those two men, but I recall the broad distinction. Hobbs said that man is a brutal, shortsighted, selfish, rather miserable animal, and that the bad features of a man are usually those that predominate in man's actions. Locke took a somewhat more optimistic view about man, a somewhat more idealistic view--that there is much good in man, that he is an idealist, that he sets high objectives, that he is learning to bridle his passions and control himself. I used to be quite angry when I read Hobbs' ideas and quite enthusiastic about Locke. Now I don't know for sure about them. Maybe that is the penalty of getting a little older.

I suppose in fact they are both right. We are contradictions, all of us, individually and collectively. There is much good in man. He does tremendously wonderful things, individually and in true society and as a part of society. At the same time he is a shortsighted, emotional, prejudiced, and sometimes brutal animal. And there has never been more brutality in the world than in our age.

I can reflect back to when I was in high school and college--because history was my field and political science and philosophy--and remember reading about the Spanish Inquisition, and the rack and the screw and all the other devices of human torture that were employed in that time and that had been employed at other times. But I don't know of any period in history that equalled ours, starting with the days of Mussolini and Hitler and going up to the present time. I know of no period of history when the infamy of man, as reflected in his treatment of other men, has been equalled. In fact, we appear in this age of ours to have invented some ways of torturing men that were not known before. Certainly the Chinese Communists have been leaders in that field, as have the exponents of Hitlerism and others in the world.

Now, getting back more directly to civil defense, never forget that we wouldn't need civil defense if the diplomats could insure the peace. I would be in favor of stopping right at that point. I'd like to see the Defense Department eliminated, along with Civil Defense, and you fellows out of business too--properly taken care of, you understand; I don't want you to lose any of your emoluments of office--but I'd like to see you out of business. I'd like to see Mr. Dulles insure the peace and the safety of the people of the United States in the world.

But there will be a civil defense just as long as there is a military defense. The reason there will be a civil defense is very simple. You fellows just can't keep the enemy from putting weapons over on our American cities and bringing death and destruction to those cities. Any day that you can guarantee that an enemy can't put a hand on a city, I would be very happy to go out of business. As a matter of fact, if you could guarantee that 90 days in advance, I'd be willing to go out now, and go out fast. But you can't do that. I know of no way you can defend America to the point that an enemy can't successfully attack this country--either by air, or by a submarine throwing missiles into our country, or by other means--sabotage, subversion, psychological warfare, bacteriological and biological warfare--that sort of thing.

Maybe the future will see the development of some scientific and military gadget which will make it more difficult for the enemy to attack the United States. Certainly we all hope that is the case. But it seems unlikely that defense will ever completely stalemate offense in this scientific age of ours. So it appears that we will always be open to attack. And I trust that each one of you knows that I am convinced that when I say what I am saying now, it may be a little tough on the nerves. I am just giving facts. I don't know anybody in any

position of responsibility that denies them, in the military or in our Government. I think that the people who are responsible in those areas are doing everything that is humanly possible to do a good job.

Now, what Civil Defense can do, as the weakest sister in the governmental team, is to save the lives of those people. We are now attempting to utilize space. Until we reach the era of the intercontinental ballistic missile, which may completely eliminate useful warning time as far as we are concerned in Civil Defense--and I think it is safe to say, as far as you are concerned in the military sense, because you can't do much more in fifteen minutes than we can--you can't get your airplanes off the ground in fifteen minutes--you can't move your destroyers against the enemy--and we can't move people out of cities either in that period--but until we reach this period, we in Civil Defense are trying to utilize space, to get people away from the places where these thermonuclear weapons are going to be dropped. This is based on what I think is a very elemental determination--that you can't live if a bomb goes off in your neighborhood. You just have to get out someplace else if you want to live when the bomb goes off. And I find it a little difficult to understand the hesitancy of some people to accept that conclusion. I would like to invite them to test it if they care to, even the explosion of a small bomb.

In other words, until the ICBM comes into play, we are placing considerable emphasis upon evacuation, upon emptying our cities, thinning them out--I think that is a more accurate expression than "emptying"--thinning them out, moving the people away from the population centers outward.

Of course, we have an extremely difficult problem to face, because we don't know where the confounded bomb will drop. We know about where we think the enemy should drop it, or about where we would be inclined to drop it. That is not too hard to determine. But you fellows are going to be pursuing him up there with fighter planes, we hope, and you are going to be firing at him with all kinds of missiles from all directions--from the air, from the ground. You may make him a little nervous about getting home, and he may kick off the bomb a little too soon or a little too late. So our problem becomes extremely complicated. However, all of our probing around in studies would indicate that you still gain by thinning out, because he can't drop the bomb, one bomb at least, in all 360 degrees of the circle simultaneously. If he catches the people moving in one direction, he is going to miss those moving in the other three directions.

Along with that evacuation, we are stressing--and we are not meeting with much success--protective construction, because you can build houses that will withstand a great deal of overpressure. We are also stressing the building of backyard shelters. I doubt if many have been built, but I can assure you that when I build a home, I am going to build one myself, no matter where it is; and it is going to be one that is tailored according to the needs of that particular community, wherever it is. I think it just makes sense, because a shelter in the backyard, with a little concrete in it, maybe a little steel in it, can protect you and save your life right up to the edges of the A-Circle in one of these explosions. I am willing to invest a little money in one of them for myself.

You may know that there have been some engineering discussions and studies that indicate that you can get a tremendous amount of protection out of a concrete building reinforced with steel, or a shelter employing the principle of the oval or the arc, that might be sunk into the earth three or four feet, with the rest of it protruding above the earth. That will stand tremendous overpressure.

And it would appear that you can build such a structure in your backyard. Assuming the explosion of a weapon of 20 million tons, you could probably build such a structure in your backyard and live within four or five miles of the point of explosion of the bomb. And that means that everybody else from that point out would find it somewhat easier to live through the effects of the explosion.

As a matter of fact, it seems to me the military has been unduly slow, just about as slow as we have in Civil Defense, in thinking about protecting yourselves on your bases and military installations against the effects of an atomic attack. I don't know anything about the uniform that is going to protect anybody when the bomb goes off. If there is anything, I want to get in quick-like. I want to resign as a plain citizen and get over on your side of the fence.

I was really amused at Chicago when somebody was talking about the tremendous payoff there was going to be in the civilian side of the Government following an attack. We would be short of presidents, mayors, governors, and judges. I can assure you that you are going to be short of your percentage quota of admirals and generals too. There is going to be a lot of opportunity for promotion following this explosion. We must not give the impression that there is any such thing as any part of our society being safe when this happens.

By the way, I have never forgotten what a shock it was to me when I went into a citizens military training camp in 1920 at Fort Snelling and found for the first time in my life that officers really participated in battle, when it was explained to me that the second lieutenant was the first man over the top of the trench to lead the platoon into action. I always thought that was a terrible way to treat a newly indoctrinated officer--that he would be the first one sent over the top. I hope that we fight our wars better nowadays than we did at that time. That puts an awful premium on accepting a commission.

Now, if we come into the ICBM era, what can we do about this thing civil defense-wise? Well, actually I think there are only two things we can do. I don't think Civil Defense has any more than two tools to work with, and I don't believe it will ever have more than two tools to work with, in the phase of civil defense that interests me most, and that is the one in which we try to save lives. There is that other phase of civil defense, which I am not even going to take time to talk about today, and that is the cleaning up afterwards. It is the phase in which our teamwork is best established, we are best equipped, and in which our doctrine is known. It is based pretty much on the German and English experience. And, with the exception--and this is a pretty big exception--of the introduction of the necessity of cleaning up and protecting against radioactive material or decontamination, it is a phase that we know quite well, and in which I think we are quite advanced.

But in this other phase, in what I call the preattack phase there are only two tools that we have to work with in Civil Defense. One is the utilization of space by dispersal, scattering things out across the country, creating more targets, creating so many targets that the enemy can't hope to hit all those targets under any known conditions today. And the other is going under the ground, either going under the ground or building these structures on top of the ground that I am talking about--I don't know how economical that is; I don't know enough about it engineering-wise--these structures that will be able to take this tremendous overpressure.

Now, the thing that dismays me more, not only about civil defense, but about our total national security, is the fact that I don't see more than about two grains of evidence that anybody in America is the slightest bit concerned about dispersal of industry and population and going underground, taking advantage of the rocks in America. And I mean anybody, from top to bottom, inside and out, in all aspects of Government, all elements of Government, the military and everybody else.

I see little evidence in America of enough wisdom to utilize space and shelter properly to survive. And if the attack were to come tomorrow on America, one of the things that would knock us flatter than anything else, would be our refusal to have dispersed and gone underground.

Norway is doing it, Denmark is doing it, Sweden is doing it, Switzerland is doing it. I don't know much about Russia, but apparently Russia is doing it. We are not doing it. We are continuing to insist on doing business as usual. When we expand a plant, even a war defense plant, we build the expansion right where the parent plant is. We build the target bigger and more lush for the enemy. We keep concentrating things in these centers of population and industry.

We don't want to do anything that will affect the pocketbook nerve. We don't want to affect the Chamber of Commerce concept--that we must make our town constantly bigger and better--and I believe in that too. I am not going to be convinced in my own mind that America is serious about survival until America does disperse industry and does start to put some of this stuff under the ground and to employ some of this protective construction.

And I don't quite understand the minds of the people who say that, if there is a third world war, we won't employ these weapons. I personally can't accept that. If that is the case, why are we making them on both sides? Did you ever know of any soldier who didn't use every weapon he could get? And wouldn't he be stupid if he didn't use the best weapons he could get? What kind of fellow would he be?

So I am not very enthused about that line of thinking. But people are saying that in future world wars we won't use these powerful instruments of destruction; that we'll go out and fight with bows and arrows; that it's going to be kind of a gentleman's war we are going to have. There is nothing gentlemanly about war. There never was and there never will be, in my judgment. That's just one man's opinion.

Why don't we disperse? Why don't we go underground? Simply because we are afraid of the effect on the pocketbook and on the taxpayer.

Now, I am not proposing, I am not foolish enough to believe, that we could take the motor industry out of Detroit, lift it up, and put it in some isolated place in the Rocky Mountains or the Sierra Nevadas. I am not proposing that. But I am proposing that when you expand those

industries, the expansions ought to go out in the Sierra Nevadas or the Rockies and be put underground. And certainly the sensitive portions of our military production should be out there under the ground.

In other words, the best example I can give you is the one that Dr. Robert Wilson, president of Standard Oil of Indiana, gave to me last August at the Governors Conference in Chicago. Dr. Wilson is a scientist and he served on one of the higher level continental defense study committees, of which we have had many in recent months and years. I don't remember which one it was at the moment.

Now, because he is a highly intelligent and competent individual, what did he do when he got back home after serving on one of these committees? He called his board of directors together and he said:

"Gentlemen, in view of the possibility of an attack on this country, the enemy's potential for destructiveness, and the importance of our industry to America, when we build the expansion we are planning for our plant at Whiting, Indiana, we are going to build it at Mandan, North Dakota. We're not going to build it in Whiting, Indiana."

Now, I say that it did not hurt Whiting, Indiana, because they had all the work they needed there; but it made the problem a lot tougher for the Russians, because when they come to strike, they will have to strike Mandan, North Dakota, if they want to knock out our petroleum cracking facilities in America, and the other things that Standard does. They have got to hit two targets now instead of one. And we ought to be multiplying those targets around America. Some of them ought to be underground. That is just common sense.

As I told you here before, in Sweden they have discovered ways of creating cubic feet of space in rock for just a little more than they used to spend for creating it in a building on top of the earth. And, because the maintenance costs are less over a period of 35 or 50 years if you amortize the capital cost, it is cheaper to be underground than on top.

Now, why can't we accept that kind of philosophy in the United States? You talk about military preparation; you don't even have your bases scattered around the United States sufficiently to withstand an enemy attack at the present time. You know that and I know it. And I assume the same thing is true of the Navy. You are in too few bases,

too much on too little property. And it takes you hours to get these airplanes off the ground and in the air. Let that fellow come in fast and he catches you on the ground. And if he catches LeMay's outfit on the ground, and you don't retaliate, then maybe it's all over in a fairly short period, although I don't care to get into that debate too far. That's a good one. Maybe it's two-sided.

Now, what's the Government doing about this? Well, so far we have a program that has been administered by ODM. They have extended some tax amortization benefits to defense industries that built new plants under certain criteria which they established, which meant in effect that they had to be out a distance--I think we used to say ten miles--from the true aiming point of an enemy atomic attack. Of course ten miles doesn't mean so much any more. The darn bombs are getting bigger all the time, and I don't see any limit to that either, do you? They started out talking about 20,000-ton bombs; now they're talking about 20-million-ton bombs; and I suppose, as far as science is concerned, you can make them as big as you want to. It's just a question of how big you can carry them, that's all.

That responsibility for dispersal is now mine, in addition to the regular elements of Civil Defense; and I don't have any teeth in the law to go out and enforce it. I have to try to persuade people to do it. People just simply think there isn't going to be any war. Or some of them have been misled by flamboyant military propaganda, put out at about the time of the appropriations, into believing that the military can keep an attack from occurring on this country. They either think there won't be a war, or that the military can make them safe, or that nobody will use such bad weapons in a war, or that it is hopeless anyway. A combination of all those makes these people just sit tight, and they don't do anything about dispersing and getting underground.

When Harold Talbott tried to suggest that maybe the aircraft industry should not continue to be concentrated in Southern California, and in Seattle and Wichita, Kansas, a tremendous outcry went up in Los Angeles, and I don't know whether it would be safe for him to go back there yet. It touched the pocketbook nerve.

Well, in addition, we have tried so far to build a civil defense in this country on a voluntary basis. Personally, I don't believe you can beat volunteers for enthusiasm or willingness to do anything and everything in a given situation. I just don't think you can beat them. But I also do not think you can maintain the zeal and enthusiasm and participation of volunteers over the long pull. It is just contrary to human nature.

We couldn't maintain the fine military establishment we do in the United States if we didn't pay people, decorate people, extend every benefit to them; and maybe even then we couldn't have them if we didn't draft them or threaten to draft them. And I am fearful that over the long pull we can't maintain civil defense on a purely voluntary basis. We are coming in this country to the creation of a hard core, a professional group, in civil defense.

In addition to being a voluntary organization, I lead an army over which I can give no command. And that is a good trick, if you can do it. In other words, at the Federal level we disseminate information. In the event of war we coordinate civil defense activities. We have tremendous powers in the case of war. We don't have them in peacetime. Thereby we fall into a dangerous trap, because for the kind of war we are going to face this time we have to be prepared in advance. It won't make much difference what we try to do about it afterward. If we are not prepared in advance, we are sunk. We have tremendous powers after the war begins, but we have very little power before the war. That is kind of a difficult situation to be in.

But we exercise leadership and persuasion. We disseminate information. We do some coordinating in peacetime--in leading people to work out solutions to these problems.

In addition to that, when we complete the survival studies which we are now running in the big cities of America--we are trying to tailor civil defense for every great city, trying to achieve a balance between evacuation and shelter, trying to achieve a balance that will be good for the period until we reach the ICBM, and then will be good after the period when ICBM arrives, in broad outlines--we will be able to go before the Congress of the United States with a program that will require X millions of dollars or X hundreds of millions of dollars for improving roads to enable people to get out, if the age of tactical evacuation is still here; plus X millions or hundreds of millions of dollars for shelter, inside the city and outside the city; and for protective cover against radioactivity. Or, if we are in the period of the ICBM by the time we conclude our study--and I don't know when that period is going to be, whether it will be next week or next month or a year from now--and I think no one else knows exactly when the breakthrough will occur--then we will require X hundreds of millions of dollars or billions of dollars for dispersal and going underground.

Now, that raises some more considerations, because if you add X hundreds of millions of dollars or X billions of dollars to the current

expenditures for defense, which do not give complete defense, then you compound the problem of the budget, which is important in our economy and in our Government. And I am sure nobody in America is going to put the budget difficulties ahead of the security considerations of America, but that is something that has to be debated. It is something that requires persuasion.

I close with this idea: As bad as the situation is in the world this minute from the standpoint of a possible war, an all-out war, it is still not bad enough to be hopeless. It is still possible by a combination of strong military defenses, acting as a deterrent, to keep an enemy from attacking. Certainly we must put great emphasis upon that. I wouldn't argue against that for a minute. It is also possible, if we will face up to the problem squarely, to do things in passive defense or nonmilitary defense, joining with the military, to make it impossible for an enemy to knock out America. The question is, Are we willing to face up to it, and are we willing to undergo the effort necessary to do something about it? Very frankly, I don't see too much evidence of it yet.

Personally, I rather doubt whether men will live in peace. I rather expect there will be a war sometime in the future. And I am dubious of America's ability to survive that kind of a war if America doesn't do some things that I think need to be done that are fundamental.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL O'NEIL: Ready for your questions, gentlemen.

QUESTION: I appreciate what you said about dispersal in industry, but I still take exception to what you said about evacuation, and I want to be sure I am firm in my assumptions about that. Under a few hours notice, as I understood from the platform recently, even if we could clear the city, we have to recognize the strong economic inducement to move back into the area as soon as possible afterward, if we are going to keep the ball going, keep the wheels of industry turning. But in the light of the effect of fallout, perhaps the safest place would be behind a wall in the city. The bomb might hit someplace where we didn't expect it to hit: So with all the confusion that you would bring about in trying to clear the city, I feel that if we have only a few hours notice to work with, we have got to indoctrinate the American people to hold fast and not try to move down to the 14th Street Bridge in trying to clear Washington, for example, when you consider the traffic jams that occur there just in the normal run of traffic at the end of the day.

MR. PETERSON: Well, now, under these survival studies that we are undertaking, we are trying to tailor our program to each individual city. We are trying to find out exactly what we can do with evacuation, with practical evacuation. You and I, of course, would be in complete agreement on strategic evacuation. We define that as meaning simply the thinning out of the city in a period of tension. For instance, in Stockholm, the plan now is to thin the city down from 800,000 to 50,000. In a period of tension the people don't have any choice. They are ordered out of the city and told not to come back. They will know where they are assigned in the country.

Of course I don't see how anyone would be opposed to that kind of program. The only difficulty I see about it is--maybe there is somebody from the State Department here--what would you do if you were in the Kremlin and received notice that American cities were now evacuating? Would you assume that it meant that America was getting ready to strike you, getting its house in order before it struck? We always have to worry a little bit about just what the State Department would say if we wanted to evacuate these great cities, because the enemy might misinterpret that.

Now, the only study that has been completed of evacuation in the world that I know of is the one we have made in Milwaukee, with which you may be familiar. It was made by practical, competent engineers, both those who deal with the construction of highways and those who deal with the movement of traffic.

For instance, in Milwaukee we were told that in the daytime, in good weather, in two hours you could move 600,000 people to safety; that out of 1,010,000 you could move 600,000 to safety in two hours--70,000 by railroad and the other 530,000 by motor car. This is a matter of percentages.

So I don't know that I could accept your statement that you wouldn't be able to evacuate if you had only two hours. I think I would rather say, let's see what we can do in a given situation in one hour, two hours, three hours, four hours, five hours, and six hours; and then let's abide by the facts.

Certainly, I would have to agree with you that if the facts indicate that it is not feasible in a given situation, let's not get into it, because after all, we want to survive. We want to save all the human lives that we can.

I personally believe that in Houston, Texas, in a place involving a million people, in the metropolitan district, if they would plan carefully and practice, run some dry runs, they could evacuate the entire city in two hours or two and a half hours--a million people. The reason for that, of course, is that it is on level, flat terrain, employing a checkerboard system of roads, so that there is a road out every mile. Now, when you get to New York, you are up against a totally different problem; and even in Washington you have a different problem.

We have used the best brains in America. We are making more studies. We have run many tests in America and every one indicates that evacuation will work. I am still willing to admit that under certain circumstances it may not work. In that case we don't want it. If a study indicates it won't work, we don't want it.

But now, as to the second point you made in your statement--and this is not said critically--I am afraid you evidence what I consider a World War II outlook--that of holding people at the lathes and keeping them producing in order to fight a war. I can't subscribe to that. When you are dealing with a situation where one bomb can eliminate one city, then I think the only way you can keep those factories going is to disperse them under the rock and get them where you can't knock them out. I personally will not be a party, on the basis of my present information, to asking the people to remain in Washington or any other city on the basis of maintaining production in the event of an enemy nuclear attack. I think it just means consigning millions of people to immediate death.

And I say that in spite of the fact that a learned former professor of languages at the University of Pennsylvania, now an editorial writer on one of the papers, out of the profundity of his wisdom and knowledge, wrote an article in "Freedom" magazine, that was copied by the "Readers Digest," in which he pointed out what he termed nonsense in Civil Defense. This was the idea of evacuation; and the writer, with the proper emphasis on sales of words put together in strings, suggested maybe on the basis of the clogging of the roads in France in World War II, which was a situation not at all similar to the one we are facing, that maybe by broad implication there might be something subversive about this idea of evacuation, something un-American. And that I find is just a little bit difficult to take personally.

QUESTION: We undertake in the studies here to determine what we are going to do with the manpower pool, how we are going to split

it up in time of full mobilization. Civil Defense appears to have a figure somewhere between 12 and 17-1/2 million Civil Defense workers that it will need in time of full mobilization. My question is, Is any significant portion of that to constitute full-time workers in Civil Defense, which would tend to deny that much of the manpower pool for other purposes?

MR. PETERSON: That is a mighty far-reaching question that you ask. I think personally that the situation will be so desperate following an all-out nuclear attack on our country that every man, woman, and child will be subject to assignment in a labor battalion or whatever you want to call it. I personally think the situation will be so desperate that you gentlemen who wear the uniform will have to forget in many instances about your so-called primary military mission and that in fact you will be part of those labor battalions, out trying to clean up America and bind the wounds of America and get America back on its feet, because, as I see the picture, after this attack there will be only two things that count. One of them is to retaliate with the very best of our ability. That will be the number one mission of the military. Those elements of the military, regardless of what branch of the service they are in, which are engaged in that retaliation will have to retaliate, and retaliate fast and effectively, or we are going to get another wave of attack on our country. But I think all the rest of us, including the Regulars, the Reservists, the National Guardsmen, and every man, woman, and child in America, whether we label them Civil Defense workers or not, is going to have to be out cleaning up this country and getting her back on her feet.

Now, to answer you further than that, I would have to go back and explain the kind of attack I think is coming, the number of cities that will be hit, the number of military installations that will be hit, and the devastation that will occur. But that gets us into a long situation here that I can't get into now. I am afraid my answer is not too good; but, my friend, you ran a snowplow down the road when you threw that question.

QUESTION: You have answered one question I was going to ask that had to do with a question that the class had about everybody in the military and everywhere else getting a little training in civil defense--your Home Guards, Reservists, and everything else. I would like to confine that to the Air Force, to the SAC bases. Do you think that the SAC bases will be the primary target and the second target the population?

MR. PETERSON: I think SAC bases will be the primary target, and I think some other military installations right along with SAC. But I would rather believe that the Russians would not start a war until they had the capability of hitting all of those military bases and X number of cities simultaneously.

Further than that--and again this is only one man's opinion--and one man's opinion is frequently not too good unless he is sitting in the Kremlin or someplace like that--I can't understand why in the world the Russians would be foolish enough to start a war presently, because they are doing very well without a war. I can't believe that they would be shortsighted enough to start a war under those circumstances. That doesn't answer your question. That is just gratuitous, but as a student you are entitled to some little latitude.

QUESTION: A number of us in the State Department have been concerned about the present legislation on Federal Civil Defense because of the way in which functions are parceled out to the States. Would you care to comment on the difficulties and some of the strengths that that may entail?

MR. PETERSON: That law was written in 1950, when the World War II atmosphere was still prevailing in the minds of men everywhere. As a matter of fact, I found it was still prevailing when I got in it, in 1953.

But there is one thing about the law that is in my judgment inadequate today and that is one sentence that says that civil defense is primarily a responsibility of the States and the localities. I think that is out of date. The best illustration I know is just to employ the Philadelphia metropolitan area as an example. If you drop a bomb on Philadelphia, one bomb, of 15 or 20 million tons or more, it would result in damage by blast and fire and in radioactive fallout involving 11 counties, in parts of 3 states, and 39 cities of over 10,000. Now obviously the people of Greater Philadelphia cannot do anything effective unless all 39 cities, and all 11 counties, and all 3 states cooperate. And nobody has complete command authority in that area.

That is one of the things we are trying to do in this metropolitan study that we are working out. And, by the way, I asked the Governor's Conference a year ago to help us work out some type of governmental device that will permit us to set up a metropolitan Civil Defense organization. And actually--I am not much with a crayon (going to blackboard), but if this (drawing) is metropolitan Philadelphia, and this is

the area that is going to be destroyed by blast and fire, these 11 counties, in 3 states, and 39 cities, the problem then, is to take in enough area around it--it may not be in such a symmetrical pattern as this--to permit the absorption of all the people we move out of here into the basements of structures that will give them relative protection against radioactivity, and to provide them with food and shelter. So actually it is just silly to talk about States any more, or State boundaries, cities and counties, with respect to civil defense.

Now, you may say: "All right. Why don't you change it?" Well, we are studying all the implications of this proposal, but we have to take them up in channels in a democracy. We will have to persuade Congress. We will have to persuade the State governors, the members of the city councils, the legislatures, of these things; and in a democracy these things take time.

I get a little amused at the scientist who suggested that we didn't know our business because we hadn't corrected all these things. I only say he doesn't know his human beings. That would be the only answer I would give. Or he doesn't know his government.

There are a number of things that we need to do. As a matter of fact, there are some people in high levels in the States who believe, and are willing to accept, that civil defense is essentially a national responsibility. They would argue something like this: If we are attacked in any part of the United States, the State doesn't send up interceptors to meet the attack. Why should the State then be so largely concerned in cleaning up the effects of that attack? The attack is military in nature and it is stopped by the military.

The fact of the matter is that a tremendous responsibility in civil defense must by the nature of the problem always rest at the city and county and State levels. But I think we must have a larger degree of Federal authority, and I do not believe it is going to work until the agency that I currently head is able to at least set up standards for local Civil Defense organizations and run inspections in order that we can crack the whip over the States that are not doing the job.

One way to do that would be for us to pay 70 percent of all the costs--the equipment costs, the personnel costs--at the city and State level. Then we could order people to school and professionalize the thing. People would know there wouldn't be a shift in all personnel every time the governorship changes. In other words, we can get a

little control over the State and city organizations, like we have been able to get over the National Guard by federalizing it, by setting up standards, by having inspections, by establishing the principle of recognizing grades federally for the men in the National Guard.

Now, I think all those things have to be done. And we are aware of them, and we are making recommendations through proper channels in the Government. But we just can't order them in a democracy. It takes time to grind them through the wheels.

QUESTION: It would appear that money is the underlying single factor whether you are talking about building bases that are reasonably well protected or whether you are talking about dispersal or civil defense or anything else. Do you have any suggestions on how to block this pocketbook nerve that you have talked about?

MR. PETERSON: I don't think money is any problem in America if we are absolutely convinced of the situation and what is needed to meet that situation. In a democracy--and I wouldn't want to live under any other type of government--we make our problems more difficult by the eloquence of our voices and the ease with which we rattle off words on typewriters. Everybody has an idea and everybody expresses it to everybody, until one day in their enthusiasm they say: "There isn't going to be any war. Everything is safe in the world." We keep ourselves in a kind of state of mental confusion, to the point that we lose the resoluteness that is necessary to accomplish a job.

I don't know what the answer to that is. It is much easier for people in a totalitarian society to set up objectives and move forward to them relentlessly and continuously. We just can't make up our minds for sure whether the world is going to be peaceful and we might as well go fishing and play more golf and enjoy life better--which I wish we could--or whether it is going to be tough and we have to have more and more guns and be prepared better. We just find it difficult to get on a road and stay there. As a matter of fact, it is difficult.

I like what Carl Sandberg said one time out in Des Moines. He said the only hope for the world was the fact that there must be enough intelligence in a large enough percentage of the Russian people to convince the leaders of Russia that it just simply isn't realistic to believe that America is out to dominate the world, that we are out to take over Russia, and that accordingly they had better slow down a little bit in their attitudes and approaches and that it might be better for them to see if they couldn't live together with us in peace.

I think, from my own standpoint, that a more significant thing is this: The most certain law I know of in the world is that everything changes. Nothing remains the same from day to day. I can't help but feel that something will change some day in Russia. You can't foresee it today. I mean, I wouldn't attempt to portray what it is, or when it will come, where it will come from, or how it will happen, or anything; but certainly those countries are subject to the same rule of change as everybody else in the world. Maybe something will change that will suffocate this whole thing sometime. I wouldn't plan on that for today or for next year, but I say, maybe that's the hope for mankind for the future.

QUESTION: We have been told from the platform that in the budget for the District of Columbia something on the order of 75,000 dollars has been set aside for civil defense for the District, whereas I think something on the order of one quarter million dollars was allocated to run the Zoo. What is being done actually so far as evacuation or clearance of the District is concerned? Or, if nothing is being done, what do you recommend should be done?

MR. PETERSON: We are in the process right now of making a survival study here in Washington. The Federal Government is financing such studies, and we are undertaking one in the Nation's capital. It is already under way, phase one. There are four phases in these studies. We are in the process of the first phase.

QUESTION: Is anything being thought of regarding the practicing of evacuation?

MR. PETERSON: No, because the very nature of these studies is such that we won't have the plans until we complete the studies.

I want to suggest something right here, make a quick grab at it. There has been a military tradition for several thousand years. You have had a long time to experiment and to learn. You are spending 35 billion dollars to learn and experiment. We are talking now about a field in which we have only a handful of years of experience. We don't have those thousands of years of background. It is an extremely tough problem. We don't use the "Secret" stamp quite as generously as you do. We work out in the open, in a goldfish bowl. You can't judge the rate of progress that we make quite in its relationship with your own progress. I don't say that in any derogatory way.

QUESTION: In your planning why didn't you give this National Capital the priority that you gave to Milwaukee?

MR. PETERSON: I think maybe you have us a little bit there. When I first came in, I didn't think I had any more responsibility for Washington than I had for Milwaukee. Actually I did go out and start working in Milwaukee before anywhere else in America. The reason I did that was because I had a very understanding mayor out there, who was a leader in this type of work in America, and a governor who understands it, and a Civil Defense Director of the State and also at the city level who understood it. So with that kind of atmosphere, we went out there.

Now, I think I made a mistake, very frankly, simply because this is the seat of the Government. I think we should have started here and got this in higher gear, not because the people of Washington are worth any more or less than the people of Milwaukee, but simply because this is the seat of the Government, and that's a sensitive nerve and must be kept as alive as possible in the survival of the country. I think your point is very well taken.

QUESTION: I don't know whether you have answered my question or not, but it has been proposed in some quarters that the Federal Civil Defense Administration be placed in the Department of Defense. Would you comment on that, please?

MR. PETERSON: Well, purely from a personal standpoint, I would be very glad to have the order written right now. If the military department takes it on the same basis that I have it, well, personally, I don't think they will know what to do with it, because it doesn't operate on that basis.

But, seriously, from an official standpoint I wouldn't like to see Civil Defense put in the military, because I don't want to see the military influence expanded in America any further than it is. And that doesn't mean that I am antimilitary at all.

One of the things that has kept our country, I think, straight and enjoyable to live in is the fact that the military has always been subservient to the civil population. After all, you fellows were citizens even before you were soldiers. You share in and are part of our great tradition of democracy in America. Because of the nature of the civil defense problem, which has to be worked out at the city and State levels,

using civil authorities, the constituted authorities at those levels, I would hate to see a situation in which military men are injected into it too far.

Further, I don't think the military, as presently organized, has special competency in this field. I think they will develop that, however. I have great confidence in your ability to develop that competency.

So I think at the present I would prefer to see that kept out of military hands. But I think there must be a much greater military support and closer relationship. And we are developing that every day. We are developing a wonderful relationship in nation defense, and now are carrying it over into the other elements, into the wartime elements. But I am not going to close the door as far as I am personally concerned. I am going to continue to think about it.

Don't be misled by anything that you have read about England. England is not putting Civil Defense in the military. I was just over there in December talking to them about it. They are creating a situation where 60,000 or 70,000 military people a year are actively engaged in civil defense. That's a token force for a mobile column, to move around the country.

I personally would like to see every boy, in the last two or three months of service under the draft, receive training in civil defense, and be assigned to a Civil Defense organization until such time as he is called by the military following an attack on the United States. I would like to see the servicemen get credit for service like that toward their retirement. I'd like to see the Governors assured the use of components of the National Guard until they are needed elsewhere following an attack. Those things are all in the mill and are receiving consideration by the military.

COLONEL O'NEIL: I think our time has run out. On behalf of all the students and the faculty, I want to thank you very much for coming down here and being so frank in philosophizing on this knotty problem of civil defense.

MR. PETERSON: May I just say one further word? I want you gentlemen to understand that while I have poked at you a little bit here this morning, I want to say to you that I, as a civilian soldier who is happy and proud to be a member of our Armed Forces, have a tremendous respect for everybody in the American military. I don't

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think that there is any disrespect shown by joking a little with you and prodding you a little bit, as you in turn on some occasions unofficially prod others. Thank you.

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