

33-76
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1954

REPLY BY AVAILABLE

Dear Mayor Hofheins:

Thank you for your recent letter to the President regarding the civil defense program.

On several occasions recently the President has made clear to the American people the danger of atomic warfare and the importance of civil defense. In his speech before the High Conference of Mayors on December 14, 1953, the President stated the problem:

"For the first time in history, cities have become principal targets for an enemy seeking to conquer our Nation. The city has moved from a position of support in the rear. It has moved out in a distinct way into the front line."

Then, in the State of the Union Message last January, the President stressed the critical importance of civil defense:

"An indispensable part of our continental security is our civil defense effort. This will succeed only if we have the complete cooperation of State governors, mayors and voluntary citizen groups. With their help, we can advance a cooperative program which, if an attack should come, would save many lives and lessen destruction."

In his Budget Message on January 21, 1954, the President emphasized the new major course of action for civil defense. He stated when he said:

"This budget reflects a new concept of civil defense which takes account of the destructive threat of modern weapons and which emphasizes improved warnings of impending attack and planning for the dispersal of the population."

of potential target cities in advance of enemy attack.
Much planning, organization, and training remains to be
done, however, to make this strategy of civil defense
fully effective at all levels of government.

These statements, as well as the release of the film "Operation
Ivy," have pointed up the "sheer necessity" of intensified civil
defense preparations. You may be certain that the President will
continue to give civil defense his strong support.

Sincerely yours,

Hilton B. Persons
Deputy Assistant to the President

The Honorable Roy Hofhefer, M.
Mayor of Houston
Houston, Texas

Drafted by Civil Defense Administration, Houston