

REMARKS BY MR. JAMES H. DUFFY
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CIVIL DEFENSE
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 1960

Mr. President, Governors, and Members of the Conference

I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and to discuss issues as related to military policy. The goal of this meeting is to discuss issues are in accord with the importance of the Defense Department in the area of civil defense.

Several years ago the production of missiles capable of being launched by the Soviet Union created a capability to conduct a strategic attack on this country. So civil defense and its program have been concerned with protecting our people against a nuclear attack. In fact, a nuclear attack could have been carried out only by a small number of warheads if at least a few hours warning of an attack were given. Today we know that the Soviets have a very few intercontinental ballistic missiles. In the next two years they may have a substantial number of such missiles. These missiles can deliver large payloads of warheads to targets which are very distant in about half an hour. The development of missile warning systems is under construction, but no effective defense against ballistic missiles is available some years except our deterrent. It may be that in the years ahead we will have an attack against us. If it comes, it will be by a number of ballistic missiles -- and even with an effective warning system, the time available will be very short.

Ballistic missiles have an extraordinary impact on our civil defense, both military and civil, and are most important to our protection against the Soviet Union. Today, a very small number of Atlas missiles are in operational. These missiles are in production and new sites are under construction -- and they are doing better than we expected. As the Atlas program has progressed, our test firings have on the average been about 10 percent better than we expected. The Soviets have since asserted greater capability in their Atlas program. In the Titan program, since the first test firings were successful, we have encountered a series of difficulties. We are confident that with an early resumption of testing, the Titan program will be comparable with Atlas, Thor and Jupiter programs. In the case of the Titan program, present reliability. Four Polaris submarines have been built and the missile testing is proceeding satisfactorily. The Polaris submarine program should be operational before the end of the present year.

The Soviets may have a medium range ballistic missile program which has been launched missiles during the next few years. Whether these missiles are in numbers comprises a real threat to our security in a number of ways. We are studying these missiles closely. Our conclusions are that the Soviet missile program is

with a surprise attack to destroy or halt our retaliatory forces to support a rational decision of attack. We believe the Soviets must recognize that a nuclear attack against us would bring a retaliation unacceptable damage to their country and people. This confidence is based on the fact that our overall retaliatory power depends not only on our strategic weapons in addition to missiles, upon our strategic reserves, improved warning, and vigilance against the Soviet potential for surprise.

We are determined to maintain peace and strengthen the Free World. We seek to reduce the risks of war and to strengthen our alliance with the Free World. And we seek better relations and understanding with the Communist world.

Today, however, and until armaments can be reduced with adequate safeguards, military power is our best assurance of peace. Our strategy and that of our allies is one of deterrence. Our purpose is to make clear that aggression against us or any ally cannot profit the aggressor. To deter an attack against us we must have long-range striking power that can survive even a surprise attack and perform its mission in any event. To deter aggression against our allies, our strength and credible threat must convince an enemy that we could retaliate with force. To permit doubt as to the reliability of our deterrent would create new dangers to the Free World.

Today the combat readiness of our Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and the forces of our allies, provides strong deterrent power. We must continue strong in the future. And we are sure that a strong defense program will be an increasingly important element of our deterrent posture. Better protection for our civil population will strengthen the reputation and credibility of our firm policy of meeting aggression with force. We must remember that if our policy of deterrence should ever fail, our military power and civil defense are our only means of survival.

We know that in the event of a surprise attack our military forces would play an important part in meeting the wide spread emergency needs that would result.

The primary mission of our military forces is active defense, and this gives us some uncertainty as to exactly which military resources may be available. But we may be sure that if the country suffered a surprise attack, military personnel and other resources would be available.

This is so not only with respect to our active forces, but also true of all Reserve forces. For example, I am satisfied that members of the Air Force Reserve airlift would immediately play an important part in the care of casualties, moving of emergency supplies, and in meeting other ordinary demands for air transport.

We have asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review the size and composition of Reserve forces, including their assistance in support of civil defense.

The military services have a remarkable record of cooperation with civil authority in peacetime disaster relief services and have rendered similar assistance in wartime. The military continue to support civil defense planning. Technical developments and test results important to civil defense planning are continuously reviewed by the Department and are made available to OCDM. Information on the effect of nuclear weapons and offensive procedures is provided. OCDM representatives have access to all nuclear weapons effects studies not related directly to military operations.

The Department of Defense is represented on the National Civil Health Advisory Board which was established to advise and assist the President, OCDM, on emergency medical care planning. Also the Department of Defense provides technical advice and assistance to OCDM in the development and testing certain items of survival equipment.

We have conducted, in cooperation with OCDM, studies toward the development of a single nation-wide nuclear detection reporting system, to include monitoring and reporting of radioactive fallout, nuclear testing, and bomb damage assessment.

Defense, OCDM and the Federal Communications Commission are constantly working to improve the COMINT system which was developed to deny navigational information to the enemy, but which has been useful in providing better dissemination of intelligence information to the general public.

Much has been accomplished under the fine leadership of Governor Hoegh and the leadership in many states. We have learned the magnitude of the effect of radiation on people and animals and food. We wish to provide fall-out protection, and what a small amount of money will do to provide such a program supply, which, if accomplished, will be a most important element in the defense of national survival against nuclear attack.

We know that even in the event of a nuclear attack, the casualties suffered would depend not only on the character of the attack, but also in large extent upon the protective measures planned and carried out by the general population. The self-help shelter plan, with the encouragement of Federal loans, is well conceived. Both the plan and its national implementation must be understood by our people if it is to be an effective defense measure. The Defense Department supports the self-help shelter program as an entire civil defense effort. We are giving attention to practical aspects of the military fall-out shelter program for military personnel and dependents, particularly with respect to what activities would be consistent with the shelter protection program. Some shelter implementation programs are being carried out by the services. One difficulty is that military personnel on active duty and on short tours of duty cannot be expected generally to finance appropriate shelters. Also, the problem of fall-out shelters must be kept in perspective in the overall question.

Today we have the ingredients for a significant public effort. Our problem is one of education and conviction. The task is one of communicating a understanding of the kind of practical protective measures that can be taken, without instilling the idea of hopelessness in the face of a clear attack, or an almost remoteness of possibility that creates complacency. We do not expect nuclear war, but we know it would be a disaster that takes the actions of maintaining an adequate defense, both military and civil. To carry out a civil program will take real understanding and assistance. I believe we are on the right track in providing information and encouragement at the Federal level, and placing primary responsibility on the States to secure effective action by Americans in their communities in implementing the Federal disaster policy. This is something that people can do for themselves, with assistance in credit, and planning and guidance. We should move forward with civil defense in this manner, and apply by example what we have learned as yours. And we may be sure that in time there are new and better assurances of progress towards a more secure and peaceful world. Civil defense will become a matter of national security.

