

January 27, 1958

White House Conference on Fallout Protection

Statement by Special Committee
on Civil Defense of the Government

This meeting today with President Eisenhower and the majority and civilian leaders of his Administration was of major and historic significance. We wish all Americans could have participated.

The statement of the President this morning and the reports of the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, of the Secretary of State, of the Under Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Director of OCDM, conclusively established that fallout protection is possible for all citizens, in the event of a nuclear attack against us, but is a requirement of national security.

General Twining assured us that fallout shelter is a program which is "essential" to our military defense and to our policy of deterrence through deterrence of nuclear attack. Secretary Herter, also, emphasized the direct relationship between a fallout shelter program and the successful conduct of a foreign policy as well as our national strength and survival. He expressed his earnest hope that we will make prompt and substantial progress toward individual protection of our people.

We are satisfied that, if our foreign policy is to be successful in our foreign negotiations are to be successful in assuring peace, that military deterrence is to be effective, our military strength is to be meaningful, if the American people are to have the strength and ability to resist nuclear blackmail, if our national security is to be assured, if some aggressor should do the unthinkable and unleash nuclear war upon us, then, for each of the citizens, fallout protection of our citizens is imperative.

We believe, based on the progress which we have been making, that fallout protection for our people is essential, that, while there are many problems, a very high degree of protection from fallout can be achieved, that it is achievable, and that, if it is to be achieved, the reach of our people and nation. We believe that the Government should participate in a program of fallout protection, the financial support and the technical assistance which may be required for an effective program of fallout protection for all citizens can be achieved in the near future.

Regardless, however, of the extent of the Government's financial support and inducements that may be required, we believe that we are feeling keenly our own responsibility for the protection of our people.

- (a) to educate the public as to the nature and extent of the means of protecting itself;
- (b) to help our citizens obtain the fallout shelter which will enable them to survive fallout in the event of a nuclear attack on our country,

(c) to provide fallout protection in state owned facilities, and

(d) to establish a protected seat of state government to assure government leadership and function both during and after any possible attack.

Our immediate task as Governors is, in cooperation with federal officials, to allocate among federal, state and local governments the various responsibilities for a program which will make fallout protection for all our citizens a prompt reality.

We understand that it is the policy of the United States to encourage on a Federal-State partnership basis:

(a) Training of all citizens in personal survival under presently prevailing conditions.

(b) A survey of existing facilities for utilization as fallout shelter;

(c) Construction of home and community type fallout shelters;

(d) Providing such shelters with adequate food and water plus necessary communication and other facilities; and

(e) Participation by citizens in the development and execution of these plans.

We welcome the designation today by President Eisenhower of Governor Hoogh as his personal representative to work with us in agreeing upon a joint program and allocating the necessary responsibilities for its fulfillment.

We are confident that fallout protection for all our citizens can be achieved with vigorous and constructive leadership by federal and state officials working effectively together.

To this task we shall now turn with a confidence that, by discharging this responsibility successfully, we will be making a significant contribution to our nation's quest for a truly meaningful peace -- a peace founded on liberty and justice, and trust, an objective:

Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, Chairman
Governor Edmund G. Brown
Governor George E. Clyde
Governor Ernest W. Holling
Governor G. Mennen Williams