

1. REPORT BY THE NET EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE  
(NSC Actions Nos. 1260, 1330, 1430, 1463 and 1532; NSC 5605)

Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Council's Net Evaluation Subcommittee, introduced General Gerald C. Thomas, Director of the Subcommittee Staff, who outlined briefly the approach taken by the Subcommittee and its Staff in preparing the 1956 Net Evaluation. He indicated that pursuant to the Subcommittee's terms of reference the Staff prepared two hypothetical Soviet war plans based on the following concepts: (a) An assumption of "Strategic Surprise", and (b) an assumption of "Full Alert in the United States". In these plans the USSR was credited with capabilities as estimated in pertinent National Intelligence Estimates. An operational analysis group was established to war-game the hypothetical Soviet war plans against hypothetical U. S. war plans, and this analysis group concerned itself with such tasks as (a) battle analysis; (b) assessment of damage to U. S. military forces and installations; (c) provision of data for further U. S. damage assessment by agencies directly concerned; (d) provision of data for assessment of damage in the Soviet bloc to the extent required by NSC 5605; and (e) estimation of residual military capabilities on both sides.

General Thomas introduced Colonel S. D. Kelsey, USAF, who covered in some detail the Subcommittee's findings under the assumption of a Soviet achievement of "Strategic Surprise". Colonel Kelsey thereupon introduced Captain W. B. Stevens, USN, who briefed the Council on the general impact and effects on U. S. national resources of the Soviet attacks perpetrated under the concept of "Strategic Surprise".

Colonel W. L. Kindred, USA, then briefed the Council on the findings of the Subcommittee based on the assumption of "Full Alert", and he in turn introduced Mr. Ludwell Montague, of CIA, who briefed the Council on the Subcommittee's findings with respect to the clandestine threat under the assumption of both "Strategic Surprise" and "Full Alert".

General Thomas next invited the Council's attention to the variable critical factors involved in the preparation of net evaluations of this type, noting that variations in any one or more of the factors could substantially alter the Subcommittee's evaluations. He indicated that these variable critical factors involve such vital subjects as (a) the size and make-up of the Soviet nuclear weapons stockpile; (b) the future size and composition of the Soviet long-range air force; (c) the number of Soviet guided missiles of various types expected to be operational in 1959; (d) actual and potential Soviet electronic countermeasures and counter-ECM capabilities; (e) the status of U. S. forces in 1959, etc.

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General Thomas indicated that, despite the variable factors mentioned above and the lack of sufficient information concerning several of these critical areas, the Subcommittee believed that its basic data were adequate to support the following conclusions: (a) In 1959 a nuclear war initiated by the USSR would result in the mutual devastation of both the United States and the USSR, and neither side could expect to destroy the nuclear capability of the other or to be able to defend itself adequately against nuclear attack; (b) in 1959 the USSR will have the net capability of delivering a nuclear attack which could kill approximately 40% of the U. S. population, seriously injure another 13%, and disrupt the political, social, and economic structure of the United States; (c) if the United States should fail to maintain adequate alert nuclear forces that cannot be destroyed by surprise attack, the USSR by nuclear attack on the continental United States will emerge as the dominant world power in 24 hours; (d) the massive nuclear retaliatory capability of the United States is an indispensable deterrent to Soviet attack, but if the USSR were nevertheless to attack, this capability could not prevent catastrophic destruction in the United States; (e) with the advent of long-range ballistic missiles, the present concept of the military and civil defense of the United States against nuclear weapons will require extensive revision in view of the drastically reduced amount of warning time available against "Surprise Attack".

Following the completion of the formal presentation by the Subcommittee Staff, Admiral Radford stressed the following points concerning the 1956 net evaluation: (a) The evaluation was based upon an immense effort by the Subcommittee Staff and by member agencies of the Subcommittee, which effort he was sure warranted commendation; (b) in the preparation of the report each of the members of the Council's Subcommittee acted only within the area of responsibility of his own agency, and members of the Subcommittee did not participate in, nor judge the validity of results of, the military operations analysis which is the basis of the 1956 report; (c) certain of the information in the report is highly sensitive in nature and therefore necessitates the exercise of special security precautions in the handling of the report and the ancillary submissions on which it was based; (d) the report indicates a very detailed study of the U. S. Air Defense system and highlights weaknesses in that system; (Admiral Radford indicated that a committee has been set up to restudy and to report by next July on the Air Defense system) (e) the assumptions on which the report is based can vary widely, as emphasized by General Thomas, and as a consequence the Net Evaluation Report of 1956 should not be considered as a factual report. (Admiral Radford said that if the United States were subjected to a nuclear attack, the results might be along the lines indicated in the report; on the other hand, they might be either considerably worse or considerably less severe.)

The President indicated that the Subcommittee's presentation prompted several observations on his part. He queried as to why we should put a single nickel into anything but developing our capacity



to diminish the enemy's capacity for nuclear attack. Rather than worry too much about the submarine menace, protecting shipping on the seas, etc., the United States should continue to concentrate on producing a force that is so good and so well distributed that the Soviets will not attack; and if they do attack, we should have also concentrated on our defenses so that we will be capable of knocking the enemy down.

The President said he believed that if there is a general alert and a general mobilization in the USSR, as envisaged under the "Full Alert" concept, the clandestine threat will disappear and we will terminate diplomatic niceties and go through the Soviet Embassy and other USSR installations in this country to ascertain if they do contain clandestine nuclear weapons. The President added, however, that he derived little comfort from this thought.

The President stated that in considering the magnitude and gravity of the problems covered in the Net Evaluation study, we come to the point of asking how much can or will the United States stand. He thought that the picture of the terrific destruction resulting from a nuclear attack warranted taking a look at the whole matter in terms of determining how much destruction the United States and its people can absorb and still survive.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed the annual report for 1956 of the Net Evaluation Subcommittee, pursuant to paragraph 4 of NSC 5605, as presented orally by the Director and other members of the Subcommittee Staff.

2. FY 1958 LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE FEDERAL CIVIL DEFENSE ADMINISTRATOR

Governor Peterson initiated FCDA's oral briefing on the subject by reading the highlights of pertinent sections of the FCDA report entitled "Civil Defense Legislative Program" (copy filed in the minutes of the meeting; other copies to be distributed to the Council members in accordance with the oral request made by Governor Peterson at the time of this presentation).

After covering the highlights of the report, Governor Peterson introduced Mr. Jack Greene, who gave an oral briefing on the effects of exposure to radioactive fall-out. He pointed out that the destructive results from radioactive exposure are extremely severe, and that the solution to this problem may be found only in "evacuation, meaning distance, or shelter, meaning shielding." He indicated that the FCDA studies reflect that evacuation is not practicable as the primary solution to the problem, and as a consequence the FCDA has



concluded that it must look to a greatly enlarged shelter program if the U. S. population is to be protected against the devastating results which will otherwise accrue from radioactive exposure.

Following Mr. Greene's briefing, Governor Peterson introduced Mr. Gerald R. Gallagher, who made a detailed analysis of the shelter program being considered by FCDA, which analysis in the main proceeded on the assumption that 20-megaton nuclear weapons would be employed against the United States and that 30-PSI blast shelters would be employed to provide reasonably adequate protection for the personnel sheltered therein. Mr. Gallagher stated that in FCDA's approach to the problem it believes that special study should be given to locating shelters in such manner as to give protection from both blast and fall-out to a maximum number of people. According to FCDA's present thinking, fifty million individuals will require shelters at a total estimated cost of \$32.4 billion, \$28.6 billion of which represents the Federal Government's portion of this cost.

Governor Peterson emphasized that the evacuation concept is not being abandoned by FCDA; that evacuation should continue to be encouraged; that in FCDA's judgment the primary civilian defense of the population against nuclear attack was to be found in a greatly enlarged shelter program. Accordingly, Governor Peterson recommended, in sum, legislative modifications (a) to provide for the initiation of a civil defense shelter program; (b) to permit greatly increased Federal support and financial assistance to the states and their political subdivisions in order to enable them to adequately develop their defense capabilities; (c) to vest larger civil defense responsibility in the Federal Government in order to make civil defense the joint responsibility of both Federal and local governments, etc. Governor Peterson indicated that FCDA's proposed legislative program envisaged amendments to its organic act to authorize a Federal Public Shelter Construction Program to provide the population with a substantial degree of protection against the effects of modern weapons, as well as amendments to appropriate Acts "to provide financial incentives for home shelter construction by individuals by (1) making available Federal mortgage insurance covering loans up to \$2500 for such construction; and (2) providing an income tax deduction up to \$2500 for such expenses."

Governor Peterson indicated that a greatly enhanced Federal program of leadership is required in the civil defense field and that much more Federal participation, as well as leadership, is essential in all important aspects of the civil defense program.

Secretary Wilson said that he did not see how we can do all of the things referred to by Governor Peterson and at the same time limit ourselves to a 35-hour work week, as has been proposed. Secretary Wilson thought that rather than decreasing the number of hours in our work week, we should go the other way.



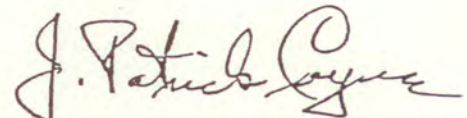
In response to the President's inquiry, Governor Peterson advised that suitable home shelters have already been designed.

The President inquired as to how the air in these shelters is screened to eliminate radioactive particles. Governor Peterson responded that in the smaller shelters charcoal, fiberglass, glass wool, etc., provides sufficient screening, but that the shelters housing larger groups would necessitate more elaborate screening and air-conditioning equipment.

Admiral Strauss indicated that, without disparaging FCDA's report, he thought it was essential to point out that, so far as we know, there are no 20- or 60-megaton weapons in existence, although the FCDA report was apparently based, at least in part, on the assumption that weapons of that magnitude would be employed in a nuclear attack on the United States. To this, Governor Peterson responded that the problem becomes even more aggravated if one proceeds on the assumption that smaller nuclear weapons would be employed in such an attack.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed a report by the Federal Civil Defense Administrator, explaining his FY 1958 legislative recommendations for strengthening and modernizing the civil defense program, with particular reference to the recommended initiation of a shelter program.



J. Patrick Coyne  
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