

January 21, 1958

White House Conference on Fallout Protection

Statement by Special Committee
on Civil Defense of the Government for Citizens

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

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 for our American citizens, in the event of a nuclear attack against us, is a possibility but is a requirement of national policy.

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 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 for 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 and security, 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 country is to survive, if we are to be some aggressor should he be unthinkably and unreasonably upon us, then, for each of the reasons stated, fallout protection for our citizens is imperative.

We believe, based on the progress 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, reasonable, believable and attainable to the reach of our people and national resources. We believe that the Federal Government should participate in the program by providing leadership, the financial support and the administrative which must be provided for an effective program of fallout protection for all our people to be achieved in the near future.

Regardless, however, of the extent of the Federal Government support and inducements that may be provided, we believe that it is our feeling keenly our own responsibility to take the following steps:

- (a) to educate the public as to the nature and means of protecting itself;
- (b) to help our citizens to take prompt shelter and to 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, among men.

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