

From the Office of
Citizens for Humphrey Committee
1625 Hennepin Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Federal 9-0521

For Release: Thursday p.m.'s
Sept. 22, 1960

HUMPHREY CITES U.S. CIVIL DEFENSE LAG

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey said today that the United States is "not even in the running" with the Soviet Union in the field of Civil Defense.

The Senator, addressing the National Civil Defense Conference in Minneapolis, declared that America "must wake up to the need of stronger civil defense programs."

"Our military force is our first and most important deterrent to war," Humphrey said. "But the security of our people in a nuclear age cannot be safeguarded without adequate civil -- or non-military -- preparedness."

He warned that it would take "less than an hour for a missile to travel from Moscow to Minnesota" and added:

"We must do everything in our power to avoid nuclear war-- diplomatically and militarily. But if the missiles should come, our people must be ready."

Humphrey left no doubt that he felt American cities and communities are not ready, but that the Soviet Union is.

"The Russians have made Civil Defense training compulsory," he reported. "Every able-bodied Soviet citizen must serve a required 22-hours a year in Civil Defense training."

"Humphrey said the Soviet Union has also learned many of the methods of effective civil defense "by actual experience -- under bombings -- in World War II" and that Soviet industry has been widely dispersed over "the largest land mass in the world."

"We cannot match the Soviets for actual wartime civil defense experience," Humphrey said. "And we should not try to imitate their undemocratic impressment of citizens into civil defense training."

"But we can and should devote more of our energies and resources to the task of building civil defense programs which would provide real protection for the lives of our people."

"Each community, each state and the Federal government must wake up to the need. Civil Defense is common sense."

Remarks of
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
at the
9th Annual Conference
U.S. Civil Defense Council

Thursday, Sept. 22, 1960
Minneapolis, Minn.

Gov Hough

When our country is in a hot war, Americans
always work hard -- they sacrifice willingly --
they put heart and soul into the defense of
their country.

But the American people need the right
kind of leadership to respond properly in
the time of Cold War crisis. They need
leaders who will tell them the hard facts
-- that we face many years of tough
competition from a cocky Communist empire.

America has tremendous physical and
spiritual strength to meet the challenge of

protracted conflict with aggressive Communist
imperialism.

What a tragedy it will be if our great
strength is dissipated, untapped, unused!

↳ We have a vigorous, dangerous opponent
who will take advantage of any kind of
weakness we may show. (I met him)

That is why I am so deeply concerned
about our civil defense program.

I do not need to tell you experts in
this field about the general apathy on this
subject. (~~only you keep up the spirit!~~)

↳ You meet it every day. You know only
too well how people shrug their shoulders
when you plead for help. You have heard people
say only too often "I am sorry. It is too much

trouble. What difference does it make?"

And you know at first-hand that civil
defense work gets little applause and little
gratitude. (General Practice

Just two years ago, as Chairman of
the Reorganization Subcommittee of the Senate
Government Operations Committee, I held
hearings on the plan which resulted in the
merger of the Federal Civil Defense
Administration and the Office of Defense
Mobilization into what we christened the Office
of Civil and Defense Mobilization.

Since that time I have worked hard to
get more adequate funds for civil defense.

It is shocking and discouraging to realize that the federal civil defense budget is only ¹/₁₀ one-tenth of one percent of the total Defense Department budget.

But even more important than the need for more money devoted to civil defense is the need for more Americans to understand the value of civil defense planning and civil defense efforts.

It is time for Americans to realize that we are not even in the running with the Soviet Union in terms of civilian preparations against military attack.

It is time for America to wake up to the need for stronger civil defense programs.

Our military force is our first and foremost deterrent to war. But the security of our people in a nuclear age cannot be safeguarded without civil -- or non-military -- preparedness.

In ^{minn}Minneapolis we are in the heart of America. But it would take less than one hour for a missile to travel from Moscow to Minneapolis.

We must wake up the American people to the implications of this fact.

Of course we must do everything in our power to avoid nuclear war -- diplomatically and militarily. But if the missiles should come, our civilian population must know what to do.

What are they doing about civil defense
in the Soviet Union?

The Russians have made civil defense
training compulsory. Every able-bodied
Soviet citizen must serve a required 22 hours
a year in civil defense training. Civil
defense in Soviet Russia is a semi-military
organization in which every man and woman
is compelled to serve.

Furthermore, the Soviet Union has
learned many effective civil defense methods
by actual experience -- under bombings --
in World War II, and the Soviet leaders
have dispersed their industry over the largest
land mass in the world.

We cannot match the Soviet Union for

actual wartime civil defense experience.

And we should not try to imitate their

undemocratic impressment of citizens into

civil defense training.

But we can and we should devote more of

our energies to the task of building civil

defense programs which would provide real

protection for the lives of our people.

Each community, each state, and the

Federal government must wake up to the need.

Civil defense is common sense.

My experience as Mayor of Minneapolis

helps me to understand some of the problems

you are facing as civil defense officials.

I have seen disasters when this city ~~was~~

and other cities were
struck by blizzards and floods. I have been

concerned about the problems of traffic,
health and administration of a city in time
of crisis.

And I recognize the tremendous
responsibilities imposed upon you -- and
the meager, inadequate resources given you
to do the job.

Fortunately, the ¹¹ natural disaster
relief activities ⁴ of our civil defense
system offer a proving ground to
demonstrate the value of civil defense
preparations.

Hurricanes, floods, tornadoes,
drought, blizzards, fires and accidental
explosions cause terrible loss of life and
billions of dollars worth of property losses.

Where there has been strong civil defense,
many lives have been saved and much property
damage has been prevented during such disasters.

It is indeed fitting that in most states
the civil defense agency is authorized by
law to handle these emergencies. And of
course, the Office of Civil and Defense
Mobilization operates at the federal level
to coordinate disaster relief.

Many of you have seen the "Federal
Disaster Relief Manual" prepared by my
Senate Government Operations Subcommittee.

Thousands of copies of this manual have been
sent to State and local civil defense
officials. It is a comprehensive listing
of all matters pertaining to federal disaster
relief, and I think it fills a desperate need

to set forth the resources available for help when disaster strikes.

↳ We must be realistic. There is no absolute military defense. But it would be foolish recklessness to throw up our hands and say "nothing can be done, so why bother."

↳ On the contrary, an effective civil defense program can save millions of lives.

And even more important, a good civil defense program will convince the missile-waving leaders in the Kremlin that the American people will never be bluffed or frightened into submission or surrender of our leadership of the Free World.

This is the message you must take back to your own states and your own local communities.

↳ The lives -- and the freedom -- of 180 million Americans may depend on the success of our civil defense program.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org