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THE LAND OF THE FREE

My title for this talk -- "The Land of the Free" -- was, of course, taken from our beloved National anthem. Like yourselves, I have long since memorized its stirring words. And, again like yourselves, I have voiced them countless times. I have stood proudly at attention as you have, and sung them with thoughts of my husband in mind, while he was far away from me in the service of our country. I have listened to the strains of the Star Spangled Banner on the radio early in the morning, and late at night, and wondered what the outcome of the war would be, and when my husband would come home again.

But not until recently has the anthem struck me as having a shocking and up-to-date meaning. Always before, its verses have had a shadowy, historic, old-fashioned feel about them. Not in the lifetime of anyone in this room have we had to consider that "Bombs bursting in air" could be a reality here and now, in our own beloved homeland. Not in the lifetime of any living American has anyone had occasion to ask, of any battle within our continental borders, "Oh say does the star spangled banner still wave?"

After every war that I knew about, our flag was still there. I took its presence for granted.

But now that I have witnessed an atomic bomb test in my official capacity as Deputy Administrator of Civil Defense -- now that I have been briefed by our top defense planners in the Pentagon -- the words of our country's anthem have an entirely new connotation for me. The brief period between the dawn's early light and the twilight's last gleaming has a new sense of urgency and peril. That is true for me even though, at the moment, we have a truce in Korea; and I would like to tell you why.

More than a year ago the man who since has become Chief of Staff of the U. S. Air Force, General Nathan Twining, issued a solemn warning to us all. Russian air power, he said then, had already reached a point where the Kremlin was capable of launching 400 heavy long-range bombers in its first assault on critical target areas in this country.

True, we have an armistice in Korea. But this still could be your last encampment for a decade or more -- at least in great cities such as this. For some months, now, our vital metropolitan areas all across America have been living on borrowed time. The truce in Korea may only have postponed the due date.

Unfortunately we Americans -- accustomed as we are to the security of our sea frontiers -- have found it very hard to grasp the full implications of that statement. Let me demonstrate just how hard it is to comprehend them here in this mid-western city, a continent and an ocean away from Red Square in Moscow.

I think you will find it difficult to visualize here and now, for example, the sudden and complete elimination by enemy action of this room in which we are assembled.

You will find it hard to picture even to yourself the ruthless destruction of the hotel in which you are staying, and the stores where you have been shopping.

You will find it hard to imagine an interruption or stoppage of all the supplies and services upon which you have been depending during your stay here -- the good food in the restaurants, the water in the faucets and drinking fountains, the lights that come on with the flick of a switch, the elevators, the cabs, the telephones.

You will find it even harder to imagine the injury or death of many of the friends you have met here, or the virtual wiping out of their hospitable city, even though you must know by instinct that Milwaukee is high on the critical target list.

And you will find it harder still to picture the destruction of your own home at the hands of an enemy wielding all the terror weapons of modern war -- and wielding them not in Korea, or in East Germany, or in some other far away place, but right in your own dooryard.

All those things are possible at this very moment. Yet there is every reason for finding that sort of visualization difficult to do. We Americans simply are not used to thinking of enemy-caused death and destruction in terms of the big buildings in our home towns, or the schools and stores in our home neighborhoods, or, for that matter, our homes themselves.

Not since the War of 1812, some 140 years ago, has a foreign foe been able to inflict telling damage on American cities. In fact, our continental boundaries have been inviolate for more than four-fifths of all the years of our national existence -- thanks to the oceans on either side, and to the skill and courage of the generations of American fighting men who are remembered here so gloriously this week.

Still, the time has come for taking stock. Today our borders are no longer inviolate, despite our pride in the largest and best-equipped fighting force ever maintained by this country in time of peace. Technological advances in a few short years have shrunk time and space and distance. Miles of ocean vastness can be spanned today in a matter of minutes. Military destruction that once took months to accomplish can be inflicted now in a few seconds. And there has been no change whatever in Russian objectives, truce or no truce.

And so it is my duty -- as a woman in a top policy-making defense job -- to tell you today that the traditional safeguards upon which we have always relied are no longer enough to save our homes and families from harm.

I want to show you this morning why this is so. And then I want to show you what we women can do about protecting our homes in time of disaster. For make no mistake about one point; there is much that can be done to lessen the effects of enemy attacks on unarmed civilians like ourselves. And to that statement I want to add another and equally important point; the responsibility for doing a great deal of what can be done lies in the hands of the average American woman.

I'd like to repeat that reminder, if I may, because it is important to our security as a nation. It is in the hands of the American housewife and mother that the defense of our home front must lie, in very large part. And, if you'll pardon a personal comment based on long experience in working with American women, I'd like to add that theirs are the most loyal, capable and trustworthy hands to be found anywhere in the free world.

And now for the technological advances that lie at the root of our danger. I have sat in -- with other Civil Defense officials -- on the secret meetings of our security planners, and I am divulging no classified information when I tell you that this is how they appraise our hazard.

To begin with, there have been rapid and devastating new developments in weapons and weapon carriers, not only in this country, but in other countries. For example, 100 aircraft can now carry as much destruction in a single raid as was produced by the whole Allied bombing effort, both British and American, throughout all of World War II. We have the planes and bombs to demonstrate that today. The Russians have them too.

Which brings us to the second new development in what President Eisenhower rightly calls the age of peril in which we live. There is no longer any doubt that our U. S. monopoly of the A-bomb is at an end, and with it a great part of the advantage it gave us. So long as we alone possessed atomic weapons, we had the power of overwhelming retaliation against any aggressor. But, as the Russian stockpiles increase, both our weapons advantage and the Kremlin's fear of retaliation tend to diminish. You can see why.

When the Russians have enough A-bombs to devastate all our principal target areas, for instance, it really will not matter much that we have ten or 100 times as many as they.

Incidentally, I was relieved to discover that extra A-bombs don't deteriorate or spoil in storage. We can always take the leftover ones apart and use their radioactive contents in medicine or industry. I think our thrifty grandmothers would like to know that they won't go to waste, at least, no matter how many of them we lay aside against the possibility of a hard winter.

The next thing to think about is the exposure -- for the first time in history -- of the whole length and breadth of the United States to simultaneous enemy attack. Such attacks are technically possible now. No American city anywhere is beyond the range of enemy bombers on one-way missions.

Furthermore, there is no sure way of stopping most of those 400 attacking planes I mentioned, once they are air-borne. From one-half to two-thirds of them would get through to their targets, perhaps three-quarters of them, if the assault came tomorrow.

It may strike you that our interceptor planes ought to be able to knock down more than three or four enemy planes out of every ten. But let me remind you for a moment of the air defense record in World War II. The British never were able to stop more than nine per cent of the German bombers headed for London -- less than one plane out of ten. The German figure wasn't even that good; they shot down only eight per cent of our bombers on their way to Berlin.

The important thing to remember is that a major portion of an attacking force could and would get through our defenses, despite our best efforts, and that no miracle weapons now in sight can halt them entirely. General Curtis Le May, who heads our Strategic Air Command, has made that fact official. In a recent interview in Los Angeles he said, "Our own air defense system, I believe, is probably the most highly developed in the world today. Yet, I do not think the most optimistic of us feel that it is capable of stopping a determined, well-planned, and coordinated bombing attack at this time."

Nor would we necessarily have much warning of such an attack. We have an extensive radar network, but unfortunately no radar system is foolproof. Radar beams do not follow the curvature of the earth; they sweep the sky and horizon, like the beam of a revolving searchlight. The spaces between our radar installation, close to the ground and below the area where the adjoining beams intersect, are like so many holes in a fence. Thus, low flying attack planes can sometimes sneak underneath our radar beams without being picked up by the detection screens, if their pilots know where to find the holes.

And so, while we would like to have hours and even days of warning, we may not get it if an attack comes. We may have only a half hour's warning, or fifteen minutes, or none at all. And for that reason our defense planners must keep in mind the possible cost, to us, of such an all-out assault as General Le May has described. Today, in terms of human lives, our experts estimate

that a simultaneous attack on our principal cities would leave us with some 11 million civilians -- American men, women and children -- dead or wounded in the course of a few hours.

To view that figure in its proper perspective, we must remind ourselves that it represents many times more casualties, in a single day, than our total armed forces have suffered thus far in all the years of all the wars of our Nation's history, combined.

The loss of property and the damage to our production lines would be equally staggering. Our continental base here at home, from which our armed forces necessarily must operate, could be crippled so severely as a result that our men in uniform would have little left to fight for -- or with. Our civilian determination to get up from our knees, our very ability and will to go on and win, might be paralyzed by such a blow. In that case, we would have lost the war even before our armed might could be brought fully into action.

So much for the grim facts. Now, what do they mean to us? Do they mean that we civilians are helpless? Do they mean that we must inevitably lose another war if it comes? Certainly not! They mean merely that we must take certain precautions in advance against any such outcome. And that is what your Federal, State and local governments are asking you to do through the Civil Defense program.

By associating themselves with Civil Defense, the women of America are accepting proud assignments that are not without dignity, glory and honor. For the first time in our history the defense of our home front is being rated as co-equal in importance

to our military defense. Far from being helpless bystanders, the housewives and mothers of this country have become as one with the wearers of our proudest uniforms, and we are learning fast.

Through such test experiments as Operation Doorstep, which many of you saw televised last March from Yucca Flat, we are learning how to protect ourselves in our homes, and how to get along in a disaster without all the supplies and utilities to which our lives are accustomed.

We are preparing ourselves, steadily and surely, for the day when America may need more first-aid workers, more auxiliary fire fighters and police women, more trained women to feed and shelter the homeless, more rescue workers and communications specialists and transportation experts, more women staff workers and block wardens, than ever before existed. The job is a gigantic one -- but I am confident that it will be done. What's more, I believe it will be done because women want it done -- and not because they are frightened.

Fortunately, we women do not live by logic alone. You may have noticed, as I have, that the coldly calculated prospects of adversity which disturb the menfolk only rarely seem to upset their wives. Women are used to fantastic risks, sudden and unexpected perils, and unimagined threats to their homes and loved ones. If we women took too seriously all the hazards the experts warn us against in our everyday lives alone, there would be no love or marriage, no children to worry about, and no homes to defend.

The hazards of keeping house are far more dangerous than driving on the highway, flying through the air, or enlisting in

the Army, and the National Safety Council has figures to prove it. Military men are fond of referring to what they call the calculated risk. But the average housewife is among the world's leading authorities on calculated risks -- she accepts them every day. It was not for nothing that the American poet, Joaquin Miller, once wrote, "The bravest battle that ever was fought . . . was fought by the mothers of men."

And so I believe, as Deputy Administrator of the Federal Civil Defense program, that we can count on the women of America to do those few simple things which must be done to safeguard their homes, and to do them without hysteria or foreboding, as rapidly as they realize the need. I think our housewives and mothers already have been among the first to recognize that Civil Defense is merely a prudent extension of existing protective services for the safeguarding of their families. And I know that American women have the spirit of neighborly helpfulness that is needed for the success of any community activity such as Civil Defense.

In fact, I saw all these things for myself in Worcester, Massachusetts, which I visited in my official capacity on the heels of one of the worst tornadoes ever to strike a heavily populated section of this country. There I talked to many mothers who, acting calmly and using what they had learned about self-protection from Civil Defense, were able to save their children's lives in the midst of sudden and terrible destruction.

Now, what does that prove? It proves that women -- who are full-time custodians of our homes during the dangerous daylight attack hours -- can be depended upon to reduce the problems of Civil Defense to manageable proportions, and to deal with them

sensibly and promptly in time of trouble. The important thing is to get away from those overwhelming figures, and down to home facts.

The most intimidating things about the threat of atomic attack are its size and scope and complexity. All of us can be forgiven a feeling of helplessness in the face of a nationwide disaster that might number millions of victims. But reduce that threat to a single household and we see at once how we must act. None of us will falter at doing what can easily be done to save our own homes, our own children, and perhaps the lives of the family next door.

Each of you can prove that for yourself in a brief conversation with the next woman you meet. I know, for I have done it many times. When I tell a housewife that certain very simple shelter precautions in her home will double her chances of saving her children -- and herself as well -- even quite close to an atomic bomb blast, I get an instant response. I know she is going to get the Civil Defense booklet on the subject and find out more about home protection. And I know that her husband is going to hear about it, too.

When I tell a housewife that fire is a great danger after atomic blast -- but that she can put out small home fires as well as the next one, if she knows how -- I have always had an interested listener. My audience of one may be thinking of all her nice things that would need saving, rather than of the firestorm that might result if her fire merged with others to wipe out a whole section of a city -- but she listens, and she learns.

When I tell her that she can get the materials needed for a disaster first aid kit for just a few dollars at her nearest drug-store, and that she can learn quite a bit about emergency actions to save lives from a 5-cent Civil Defense booklet, I usually sense a promise of action to come.

If she's really interested, I remind her that her local Red Cross Chapter will gladly give her a revised first aid course, adapted to the atomic age, at no cost to her except her time. That seems to appeal even to busy women -- at least, Red Cross first-aid trainees have doubled and redoubled in the past two years.

When I tell a doting mother that she can easily keep a three-day supply of food and water on hand to make sure her children will be well-fed in any emergency, I invariably catch her ear. Drinking water, which is even more necessary than food, is an absorbing subject too. Some of the ways of finding safe drinking water in a damaged home are very ingenious, and I find that most women like to know about them, and to pass them on to their neighbors.

When they do that, of course, we have the first beginnings of a successful neighborhood Civil Defense organization -- and not until then. The fact is that one well-informed woman can always interest her friends more completely than any amount of official data. First she passes on what she has learned to her neighbors on either side, then to the woman across the street, and then to the other wives or mothers in the block.

When interest begins to run high, some woman with leadership qualities usually is suggested for the job of block warden. Soon there's a real crusade under way to enlist every family in the

neighborhood. Next, the idea spreads to the school and church groups, and the womens clubs. After that its surprising how quickly the men catch on.

To me, that is Civil Defense ~~at~~ its best. Admittedly, it is not possible to protect the whole complex entity of our entire Nation from all foreseeable harm. We can be hit as a nation, and hit hard. But it is possible to alert, to arm against the worst effects of aggression, a very large part of the 30 million homes which make up our national entity. And from those alerted and forewarned homes of ours will come the strength, I believe, to preserve and restore our body politic after any attack.

In that connection it is worth-while to think for a moment about the true sources of our freedoms. Where do we house the well-springs of our liberties? Not in the Capitol in Washington, or in the Supreme Court building, or in the crypt in the Archives building where the original copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are preserved for posterity.

Not in the 48 State capitals, or in the 3,000 county court-houses of this country, or in the city halls and mayors' offices of our towns and villages. And certainly not in the Pentagon, or the various armories of the National Guard, invaluable protectors of our freedoms though the military may be.

No, the tide of liberty rises first and strongest in the homes and hearts of individual Americans -- and it would take 160 million casualties to destroy all its sources in this country. And so I say that enough homes prepared against disaster, enough calm wives and mothers ready for whatever may come, enough trained women

workers ready to go to the aid of neighbors in time of need, enough feminine faith and courage, and a determined belief in the future of our own homes and our own communities, are the best guarantees that ours will continue to be for all time "the land of the free."

The attack weapons to be used against us and our homes may seem new and deadly, as indeed they are. But the defenses against those weapons are as old as our first homesteads -- and their use has been learned at every American fireside, in every nursery, in every schoolroom, and on every playground. Our defense weapons include love of family, loyalty to country, aid to others, faith in God, a fierce regard for freedom -- and the will to work together in the traditional American way.

I realize that I am speaking here this morning to women who know how to use those weapons well. I am going to ask you to muster your forces again -- and in a very special way. Obviously, Civil Defense needs more volunteers -- there are only a few more than four million Civil Defense workers in the whole country at present, and the experts feel that we will need perhaps 17 million people on a full mobilization basis of whom some 60 per cent should be women.

I am going to ask you to go home and acquaint yourselves personally with the problems of civil defense in your own cities, if you have not already done so. I am going to ask you to find out for yourselves just what your communities need, and how those needs can best be met.

I think you will find, as I did, that it is all but impossible to be passive about this business of Civil Defense, once you have

familiarized yourselves even slightly with the problems involved. When you know about those problems, you can't help but do something about them. I'm counting on that, because I know the great record of your membership in civic affairs.

You also will find, however, that I am letting you in on one of the most absorbing developments of our time. Civil Defense promises to be with us for a long while to come -- 10 years, 20 years, 50 years. Certainly it will be with us as long as the world dangles precariously, half slave and half free, on the slender thread of a peace that is no peace at all, but only an absence of open conflict.

And already our growing Civil Defense is adding a new and important dimension to community life in our time, a new concept of neighborly helpfulness and national security that bridges all barriers and brings out the best of local leadership. It is a great civic force, a great regional force, a great national force for peace. And it does not need a war to prove its value. Flood and storm and fire call for the mobilization of our State and regional resources, too, and demonstrate anew each week the need for organized disaster training.

Finally, it is an exciting and challenging thing to be associated with an organization whose purpose is to help the American people adapt to, and survive, the new age of peril in which we live. That is why Civil Defense offers special incentives to women of proven organizational ability. I consider it an honor to meet such women, as here this morning, and I shall look forward to seeing many of you again in the months to come in connection with my official duties.

For the one thought I want to leave with you today is that many things can be done to meet the dangers that confront us -- and that women can do them as ably as men. What's more, in doing those things through Civil Defense, women are helping to raise a permanent shield against aggression. For Civil Defense is one of the great deterrents of enemy attack, simply because it increases the price an enemy must pay for success.

If adequate Civil Defense can cut in half the possible casualty list in any great industrial center -- and the experts assure us that it can -- it doubles the number of enemy planes and bombs necessary to knock out our defense production in that area. Carrying this argument to its logical conclusion, a strong, highly organized civil defense can make the complete devastation of any area far too costly for the Kremlin to attempt. In that fashion the weak points on our home front become strong points, and all Americans are so much the safer thereby.

My remarks this morning began with a quote from General Nathan Twining, new Chief of Staff of our Air Force, who warned us a year ago that our cities were open to enemy assault. It is only fitting to conclude this talk with what General Twining had to say very recently to the military high command at Quantico. Briefly, he warned that the United States today is still rated more vulnerable to air attack than to any other form of direct attack. And General Omar Bradley, retiring Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, added that he feels the danger of war is as great as ever.

War has touched my family, as it has touched your families. My husband has served in two World Wars, my brother in the first World War, and I know very well -- as you do -- what war means

to women. Anything we can contribute as wives and mothers to ward off its ghastly effects must surely come first in the hearts of all women's organizations, and particularly in the hopes of veterans' auxiliary groups such as this one. Only those who know the anxiety of battles between armed forces that are oceans and continents away -- as every woman in this room has known them -- can appreciate what it would be like to have to defend our door-steps against the slaughter of innocents.

Does anyone in this room want to wait for such an attack before safeguarding her own home? In case of an enemy assault there would be millions of volunteers for Civil Defense within a few hours. But do any of you believe that those willing hands would be of much use without preliminary training, without medical supplies, without engineering equipment with which to clear away the rubble, without experienced direction, without emergency feeding arrangements, without rescue trucks and first aid teams and mobile support columns from untouched areas?

Think over the figures the experts use in calculating our hazard. Appraise for yourselves your families' chances for survival in your local communities at this moment. Then, as the wives and daughters and sisters of veterans, I think you will want to take the leadership in your own home neighborhoods in establishing or supporting a Civil Defense organization which will help to keep America truly the Land of the Free.

Thank you.