

In speaking of and working for the public safety, I would be remiss if I did not include civil defense in my actions and thinking. This fine structure would be but an empty shell if it did not have adequate and trained personnel to use it in emergencies. Therefore, I am most happy to say that the State's finances this year allowed us to grant to the Maryland Civil Defense Agency the largest operating budget in its history. Also, I am pleased to salute Sherley Ewing, its director, who has won such high esteem among his colleagues that he now has the great distinction to be serving as president of the National Association of State and Territorial Civil Defense Directors. Mr. Ewing heads a fine and professionally trained cadre of civil defense leaders.

It gives me great satisfaction to read the monthly reports of the State agency and to learn that its staff is carrying the civil defense message out to the people of the State. Mr. Ewing told me that it is his policy, and he has so instructed his staff, to be of all possible assistance to the civil defense leaders of our counties and to Baltimore City. This is a policy that I endorse enthusiastically. I want no civil defense staff smug in its ivory towers of headquarters. They must, and they are, getting their work done in the field.

It is obvious that communications must be one of the bases of emergency operations and I can envisage no emergency so taxing on communications as an enemy attack. You may recall that early in my Administration I instructed the interested State agencies and the staff of the Civil Defense Agency to pursue preliminary planning vigorously for a statewide microwave communications system. This they are doing, and we were fortunate that the General Assembly granted us funds in the capital improvements program to start the first phase of this system this year. In keeping with the policy of this Administration to effect all possible economies, we are engineering this system so that it will also serve the peacetime needs of all agencies that are in need of emergency communications or electronic communications on a daily basis.

I am happy to see that our ladies are now taking an even greater interest in civil defense with the greater part of their energy being devoted to civil defense home preparedness. I was extremely pleased when Mrs. Tawes, cooperating with the Maryland Federation of Women's Clubs, earned the Home Preparedness Award by preparing Government House, our home in Annapolis. This program, incidentally, was one that was conceived by clubwomen of our own State and then adopted as a national program.