

increasing awareness of their emergency preparedness responsibility. Many of the department heads are with us tonight and they are to be congratulated for their endeavors in the field of civil defense.

Most important of all, however, tonight we are paying special honor to our county and Baltimore City civil defense directors. These are the men, and of course one Southern Maryland lady, who, through thick and thin, prepare their local communities for both wartime and peacetime disaster. Many times their work is of an unpleasant nature and often they are subjected to unwarranted criticism by persons and groups who do not believe in the civil defense program. But the devotion and patriotism of these directors continue.

There is no doubt in my mind but that the civil defense program is a vital one in the total national defense picture. We cannot waver; we cannot be forced from our path of making our nation the strongest in the world. Freedom throughout the world depends on the strength of the United States. We must have peace through strength, not war through weakness.

Tonight we pledge ourselves to continue this vital work in our offices, in our homes, communities and institutions. Yes, we are doing important work and we must not falter. I thank you for inviting me to be with you this evening and I look forward to hearing the results of the Director's work session tomorrow.