

CUMBERLAND ROTARY CLUB

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Cumberland

THE one topic that must be given first consideration in any gathering of American citizens in these critical times is that of National Defense, for it must be apparent to every thinking person by now that only the successful completion of an adequate defense program can assure our future national security.

Last week there was held in various parts of Maryland the organization meetings of the District Councils of Defense. These groups, representing sections of the State, and working in conjunction with the Maryland Council of Defense, are charged with the important task of coordinating the defense plans in the various counties. Among other functions is that of helping to stimulate defense production, as well as promoting all the various activities that are necessitated today in a completely rounded defense program.

The State is fortunate in that leading citizens of Western Maryland, for example, are willing and ready to devote their time and energies to the solution of the many vexing problems that are sure to arise in connection with defense planning. Indeed, the very fact that, in each of the 48 States of the Union, the Governors have been able to elicit such whole-hearted cooperation from so many outstanding men of ability and patriotism, is a heartening indication of the spirit of the people.

The enemy who might wish to invade and subdue the United States of America will reckon well with the fact that each of our 48 States actually is a complete unit to itself, with its own defense organization and resources. The very fact that one of more states in any one section were overrun would have no deterring influence upon the remaining states, but rather would strengthen their determination to resist to the utmost.

As an instance of the unity of spirit evidenced by the people of our State, I might cite the fact that when I invited 100 persons on the Councils of Defense there was immediate and general acceptance. That this unity of spirit is tremendously important now, possibly more so than at any time in our long and eventful history, needs no emphasis when we look about us in the world today.

Yet, with full knowledge and realization of all this, there are still people in this Country, many of them honest and well-intentioned, who think that we have no concern with the present world struggle, and who honestly believe that we can achieve peace and security by refusing to interest ourselves in their defense.

Fortunately, our responsible public officials, and responsible businessmen and women of America know that this is a delusion.