

FREDERICK COMBINED CIVIC CLUBS  
FRANCIS SCOTT KEY HOTEL

October 8, 1941

Frederick

**B**ECAUSE of the gravity of the world situation today, and in deference to the unusual gathering of serious-minded men and women before me, it occurs to me that this is the time and the occasion to discuss seriously with you several topics of pressing interest that should challenge the attention of leaders of thought and action everywhere.

Undoubtedly, many millions of Americans and many thousands of people in our State are interested, in greater or less degree, in the fact that Nazi Germany has unleashed a history-making assault of 3,000,000 men in an effort to capture the key Russian City of Moscow before the dread Russian winter sets in.

The more imaginative among you can picture vividly in your minds the dreadful sight of thousands of German planes devastating that great city with their bombs. It is so frightful a development of the calamity known as modern warfare that it over-shadows completely a defense undertaking in Maryland that deserves far more attention from our people than I believe it is receiving. I refer to the first air raid warning tests in Maryland, scheduled to begin tomorrow morning and to continue until Thursday of next week.

To the many patriotically-minded citizens who have volunteered their services as Air Raid Spotters at the observation posts, the significance of these tests apparently has been brought home most definitely. However, among the great majority of our people, we might think this week of tests will cause but the slightest ripple of interest, further indicating the lack of general appreciation of our National situation that seems to be prevailing this Country.

Unfortunately, there is still too great a tendency among us to belittle the idea of the possibility of any situation that would require activities such as the Air Raid Warning Service or of some of the other functions that have been or are being organized under the leadership of the Maryland Council of Defense. Simply because there is an ocean between us and the havoc in Europe is no assurance that we will be spared attack, particularly when we realize how little space means to the bombers and combat planes that are being developed in constantly improved fashion as the weeks roll by. There is another danger which comes very much closer to us, and that might well affect the lives of the great majority of the people of our State.

When the sirens sound, in the air raid warnings, they may not be heralding the approach of enemy planes, but to anyone who thoughtfully and conscientiously studies the National situation today, they might well sound warning of a different type of "blitzkrieg" than that which some day may be threatened from the skies.