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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William P. Durkee
Office of Civil Defense
Department of Defense

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Unclassified Summary, Soviet
Civil Defense

REFERENCE: Memorandum on Soviet Civil Defense, from Mr.
William P. Durkee, dated 2 November 1961

1. In accordance with the referenced memorandum and your wishes expressed during a conference with the CIA analyst concerned, I am transmitting herewith a short unclassified paper entitled Soviet Civil Defense.

2. It is our understanding that this paper will not be generally released for publication, nor will it be attributed to CIA. It may be used freely, however, within the US civil defense structure for briefing or answering questions on Soviet civil defense.

Assistant Director

Enclosure:
Unclassified Summary,
Soviet Civil Defense
(2 copies)

Soviet Civil Defense

1. Since World War II, and especially since 1955, the USSR has developed and maintained a substantial civil defense program. The ultimate goal of the USSR appears to be the incorporation of every citizen and all available materiel and equipment into the civil defense system.

2. Although the Soviet leaders have stated that they no longer consider war to be inevitable, they do not rule out the possibility of major conflict. If war should occur, they have said it would be characterized by the "use of air forces, many types of missiles, and various means of mass destruction such as atomic, thermonuclear, chemical, and biological weapons." A Soviet civil defense manual has stated the case quite simply: "The possession of atomic, chemical, and bacteriological weapons by the imperialists and the threat of their use forces us actively to prepare for civil defense."

For a number of years Soviet strategists have emphasized the importance of the defense of rear areas. In the Soviet view, heavy attacks would be concentrated on strategic areas and on administrative and economic centers during the first stage of a major war.

3. The mission of civil defense is stated in one Soviet publication as: (a) timely warning of the population; (b) organization of maximum possible protection from the "means of ordinary and mass destruction" for civilians, factories and service installations, the national economy, and material objects of value; (c) rapid medical aid to casualties; and (d) "liquidation" of the effects of air attack in the shortest possible time.

4. The organization of Soviet civil defense includes a staff structure formerly subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), but since early 1960* probably under the Ministry of Defense. Civil defense headquarters (or "staffs") exist at all administrative levels from the national to the city.

The forces that are supposed to be available to the urban civil defense authorities may be classed into the following four main types: (a) "services," consisting generally of employees of city government departments; (b) units recruited from the personnel of various factories and similar establishments; (c) "self-defense groups," composed of individuals in nonindustrial organizations, such as schools or apartment houses; and (d) units of militarized personnel.

* The MVD was abolished at the national level in January 1960.

The "services" and the factory units are to construct shelters, warn the population of the danger of an attack, and see that the necessary orders are observed if alarms are sounded. After an attack, these groups are to rescue and evacuate victims, provide first aid, extinguish fires, repair damage to the electric, gas, telephone, and other municipal systems, carry out decontamination in case of atomic, poison gas, or biological attack, and dispose of unexploded bombs. Other duties include directing the partial evacuation of the area and the provision of necessities to civilians who have lost their homes.

Self-defense groups are organized in nonindustrial enterprises, such as office buildings, educational establishments, apartment houses, and collective farms and are responsible to the heads of the respective establishment. Thus, the manager of an apartment house has control over the self-defense groups in the building, groups composed of residents and maintenance personnel. The head of each self-defense group has a staff consisting of a property officer, a liaison officer, and a political deputy. He also has as many as eight teams of specially trained personnel, including the following: a team of six men charged with the maintenance of order and observation, a team of seven fire fighters, a seven-man team of anti-chemical defense workers, a six-man rescue squad, two first-aid teams of four men each, a shelter team of five, and, in rural areas, a veterinary squad of five men.

5. Training of the Soviet population for civil defense has intensified since 1955. Although nominally voluntary, widespread public training indicates that the USSR has held all able-bodied adults over 16 years of age liable for civil defense service.

6. The Soviet civil defense program is semi-secret and is seldom mentioned in the Soviet daily press, and foreign visitors rarely see evidence of this type of activity. Until recently, the air broadcast radio was not used to disseminate civil defense information in the USSR. However, publicity and instructions have reached the Soviet public through lectures; through special manuals, newspapers, and periodicals; and through several civil defense courses (which are designed to give training to the entire Soviet population).

7. In the USSR, the Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Air Force, and Navy (DOSAAF) is responsible for training the public for civil defense. This society, with more than 30 million members, maintains civil defense schools for instructors and conducts training programs for the public through its primary organizations, which are organized in factories, institutions, schools, on farms, and in dwelling areas. Since 1955, DOSAAF has conducted three training courses for the general public totaling 46 hours

of instruction. The organization has now engaged in a fourth course of 18 hours, which stresses practical work and exercises. This course includes 2 hours of instruction in the purpose and function of the civil defense organization, evacuation, and methods of protecting the population; 3 hours in the use of air raid shelters and shelter equipment, rescue, and repair work in disaster areas; 2 hours of fire fighting and rescue methods; 4 hours of methods of searching for casualties, first aid, and evacuation of casualties; 4 hours of detection of radiological, chemical, and bacteriological contamination, behavior in contaminated areas, and decontamination methods; and 3 hours of practical and theoretical examinations.

8. Claims of the extent of civil defense training should be discounted to some extent. For example, the first course of civil defense training (after 1955) was said to have been completed by 85 percent of the population. No figure was published for the second course. Concerning the third course, it was announced that most DOSAAF units had completed the task satisfactorily. The fourth course is still in progress. Soviet schools routinely give the students civil defense instructions.

9. Although the USSR ridicules the preparation of air raid shelters abroad, their value to the public at home for protection from the effects of atomic, chemical, and biological weapons is vigorously stressed. Soviet civil defense manuals depict a variety of shelters -- large, heavy, concrete bunkers; underground galleries, or tunnels; basement shelters in masonry buildings; as well as what might be termed improvised shelters -- trenches that are lined with wood (or other locally available material) and covered with 2 feet or more of earth. Publications in the USSR also point out the value of subways as shelter.

10. The USSR has attempted to conceal the extent of its shelter construction program, denying it even exists when faced with a foreign audience. Their own civil defense pamphlets however, speak of "special" shelters and state that, "In Soviet cities, the most widespread type of shelters are those located in the basements of masonry buildings." According to Soviet publications, fully prepared basement air raid shelters must be heat-resistant, able to withstand the complete collapse of the building above, filter-ventilated and gas-tight, and supplied with first aid and emergency equipment. Soviet citizens are told they may have to remain in shelter for many days.

11. The character of postwar urban construction in the USSR (largely masonry apartment houses) has presented the USSR with the opportunity of providing fallout shelter space in the basements of dwellings that accommodate about half of the 100 million urban population. Basements that are not fully prepared as air raid shelters could be adapted for use in an emergency. The several floors in new Soviet apartment dwellings should reduce fallout radiation effects by a factor of about 1,000.

12. Additional Soviet shelters are provided in the form of subways and detached public shelters that have been built in open areas. Deep-level subways are operational in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev. The Moscow subway alone should be able to accommodate as many as 2 million persons in the lower levels.

13. Civil defense literature and instruction indicates that covered trenches, or field-type shelters, will be ordered prepared in an emergency situation.

14. In general, the Soviet civil defense system has been designed with the assumption that some warning time will be available. Since 1958, Soviet civil defense planners have placed increasing emphasis on partial strategic urban evacuation. In a period of tension, they hope to be able to move school children, the aged, and other nonworkers to small towns and rural areas where they would be resettled. Such a procedure, however, would require several days, according to Soviet instructions.