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# Defense Report

AUSA



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## Civil Defense: Tipping the Strategic Balance?

Protection of the U.S. civilians against nuclear attack either actively or passively receives very little official attention in our country, and for that matter is little on the mind of the average American citizen.

Not so in the Soviet Union.

According to an insertion in the May 4th Congressional Record by Senator E. J. Garn (R-Utah), the current all-out Soviet CD program "threatens to destabilize" the strategic relationship between the U.S. and the USSR by minimizing industrial damage in a nuclear war and reducing civilian casualties to about 10 million. This would considerably reduce the deterrent effect of the U.S. strategic nuclear forces and take nuclear war out of the "unthinkable" category from the Soviet standpoint.

Some highlights of the Soviet CD Program:

—72,000 full-time personnel are involved, mostly military operating in hardened command posts. CD commanders in the 15 Soviet republics are major or lieutenant generals, and active duty officers command each of the subordinate 120 "oblasts."

—Civil Defense troops are on a par with Red Army and other Soviet military services. If the U.S. gave CD equal priority, its commander would be a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

—For at least 10 years, Soviet urban and industrial planning has been based on civil defense considerations. During this period, 75% of industrial construction has been in dispersed rural sites; alternate plants have been constructed, many underground; industrial machinery (as opposed to buildings) has been hardened to resist nuclear blast and heat; important buildings within cities have been well dispersed.

—Civilian evacuation plans are well thought out and rehearsed, to include pre-planned, permanently staffed assembly areas preassigned for each 2-3,000 civilians and rapid mass evacuation to pre-planned locations on collective farms with preassigned jobs in work brigades.

—Every Soviet citizen must receive at least 41 hours in CD training; students at the 2d, 5th, and 9th grades and at the college level have mandatory CD instruction.

The late Marshal Grechko, Soviet Minister of Defense, said the Civil Defense has become a matter of "strategic significance." These words provide food for thought for Americans who rely entirely on assumed nuclear parity to prevent nuclear war.