

# Bring Back Civil Defense

BY KYLE SHIDELER AND TOMMY WALLER



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The ongoing war in Ukraine has reawakened old fears, long dormant and largely unspoken. The specter of war in Europe –with its ever-present social media videos of urban shelling and other horrors, the vision of nuclear-armed adversaries in conflict, together with stories of Ukrainian communities coming together in a spirit of volunteerism amidst hardship–resurrects memories of a past when Americans took seriously the notion that conflicts abroad could come violently home, and in the most catastrophic of ways. This has led some to [harken back](#) to the old “duck and cover” drills and other memories of the civil defense capabilities of the Cold War.

Harrowing, if implicit, Russian threats of nuclear weapons use, together with [growing concerns of cyberwarfare](#)–which provides an additional strike capability together with some plausible deniability–should lead us to readdress America’s capability to protect and secure its citizens here at home.

Shocking supply chain disruptions –begun during the COVID-19 pandemic and now exacerbated–

highlight the impact that conflicts can have on everyday Americans, even absent a direct attack on the homeland. President Biden himself recently [warned](#) that food shortage is “going to be real.”

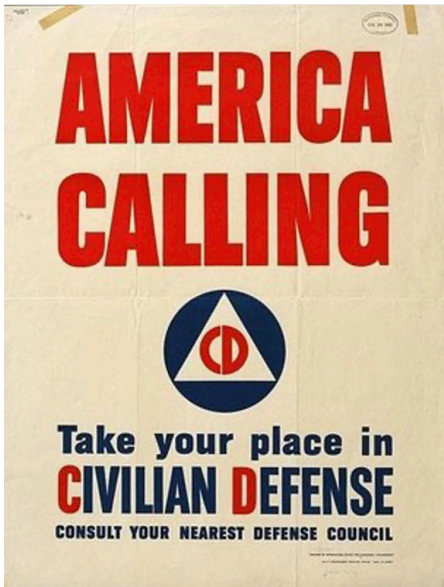
As these threats to the homeland grow exponentially, federal agencies like FEMA and DHS have little to offer families and communities seeking guidance on the impact of a “hot war” with Russia, or any other near-peer adversary – or even the long-term consequences of natural risks such as earthquakes, volcanoes, infrastructure failure, or space weather.

## **All these circumstances call for the revival of Civil Defense**

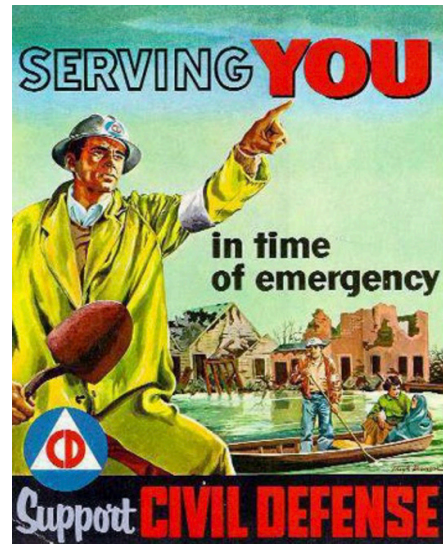
Civil defense [can be defined](#) as the “organization of the people to minimize the effects of enemy action.” The concept of organizing units of civilians to prepare for the consequences of conflict was born out of World War II, as the extensive aerial bombardment of cities brought the reality of total war to the home front, coupled with the increasing impacts of natural and technological risks to a more urbanized society. It

became apparent that the nation with a prepared and resilient citizenry could reduce casualties, stockpile and secure necessary defense materials, protect critical infrastructure and vital industries, and sustain a war-fighting effort better than nations without such community and national preparedness.

– there has traditionally been a strong emphasis on civilian rather than military leadership, in part to avoid the feeling or appearance that free citizens were being asked to live in a “garrison state.” As a result, civil defense efforts also sought to emphasize volunteerism, education, community leadership rather than compulsion, along with organizing to respond to an “all-hazards” environment.



*WWII Era U.S. Government Civil Defense Poster*



*Civil Defense Poster circa 1956*

## Where Has U.S. Civil Defense Gone?

In the United States, Civil Defense began with the Council of National Defense (established 1916, reestablished 1940), continued through other civil defense iterations and was codified in the 1950 Federal Civil Defense Act. The locus of responsibility for conducting civil defense activities has always been local and state governments, while federal efforts had emphasized education, funding through grant programs, and coordination. And although civil defense has an inherently military context –the definition cited above emphasizes “enemy action”

Beginning with the Soviet acquisition of the atom bomb in 1949 and accelerated by the development and adoption of Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and the development of the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), questions of U.S. civil defense eventually became inseparable from disputes over U.S. Soviet and nuclear weapons policies. Support or opposition to civil defense programs fluctuated with the advent of policies like détente, arms control, and missile defense.

[Arguments over civil defense](#) preparations became immersed in questions like the survivability of a



*U.S. Government Car Bumper Sticker Advertisement for Civil Defense circa 1963*

general U.S.-Soviet nuclear exchange, the feasibility of evacuating versus sheltering for the vast majority of the population and whether civil defense preparations would be considered provocative by the Soviets.

Meanwhile, local and state authorities were being encouraged to prepare for an incident of national significance while the federal government remained largely unwilling to commit substantial national resources to the effort. Local and state governments began to agitate for the ability to use civil defense preparations to address growing non-military needs, such as natural disasters. With the creation of FEMA in 1979 the notion of “all-hazards preparedness” began to win out over a rigidly defined civil defense.

Despite an attempt under President Reagan to reverse this trend, based on the belief that civil defense and anti-ballistic missile development were jointly crucial to nuclear deterrence and necessary to [counter a Soviet nuclear doctrine](#) which did include civil defense, Congress never really warmed to the idea, and U.S. civil defense continued to dwindle.

But it was the Clinton administration which would be the death knell of U.S. civil defense efforts. As Quinton Lucie addresses in his 2019 Homeland Security Affairs

journal article, “How FEMA Could Lose America’s Next Great War”, Clinton’s FEMA Director James Lee Witt deliberately took not a scalpel but a hatchet to what little civil defense focus remained in FEMA. Lucie writes:

*“Witt had driven a stake through the heart of [the remaining civil defense] programs and buried it in the sunlight of an office of one that reported directly to him. He had killed a vampire that had been sucking resources to prepare for a nuclear war that would be too horrible to ever recover from or would never happen. The long running conflict over the allocation of resources between Civil Defense, national mobilization, and the response to natural disasters was over.”*

The “all-hazards” approach came to mean “all-hazards” EXCEPT those caused by enemy action. Witt would go on to lead a charge to eliminate the 1950 Federal Civil Defense Act, solidifying the bureaucratic victory over civil defense. As a result, the focus shifted away from “threats” which must either be deterred or hardened against, to “risks” which are managed, mitigated, or insured against.

## Risks can be mitigated, threats must be defended against

As a result, one finds oddities in the types of hazards that are addressed and those that are ignored. One notorious example is the insistence [that squirrels are a greater danger](#) to the national electric grid than the possibility of an electromagnetic pulse (EMP), cyber, or physical sabotage attack conducted by the country's enemies.

While pesky arboreal rodents may be a more common "risk", they are not the greater "threat." Unlike squirrels, America's enemies publish their threat doctrines, articulating how and where they will strike in the event of conflict. Most of the country's adversaries have the [nation's electrical grid, and the critical infrastructure](#) which relies upon it, squarely in their crosshairs.

Growing terrorism concerns culminating in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks changed this mindset only slightly. The lessons derived from 9/11 were predominately not about the need for "organization of the people," but rather an emphasis on ensuring the inter-operability of existing government resources. While this has led to positive developments in the incident command system and cooperation among agencies, which is commendable, it has also come to imply a deference of state and local agencies to federal authority (in exchange for substantive homeland security grants) and an expansion of federal power which likely would be unimaginable to those debating civil defense in the '50s and '60s.

Terrorist attacks, even on a scale of 9/11, are more like natural disasters than not, in the sense that they are predominately short-term one-off events which occur with minimal warning. There is a presumption

that neighboring agencies –first local, then state, and eventually federal– will be able to flood the zone following an incident and quickly reestablish stability. A core assumption to the associated homeland security planning is that not all regions will be impacted at the same time and therefore local and state governments may rely on "mutual aid" from unaffected regions, which decreases the capacity needed at the local and state levels. As a result, the priority is on interoperability among first responders.

The logic of civil defense runs counter to this view. It presumes federal authorities are engaged in a national struggle with a determined enemy and that the consequences of enemy action may be extensive, spread across geography and domain. Unlike a natural disaster or terror attack, an incident which necessitates a civil defense response would be of a protracted nature that risks overwhelming governmental institutions absent a broader mobilization of the populace. A civil defense mindset requires an approach which says crucial "mutual aid" is unlikely to be forthcoming in the short or medium term, and that both national and local authorities will only have available to them those preparations made in advance, and which are sufficiently resilient or redundant to withstand enemy action.

Unlike in the Cold War however, the possibility that it is American civilians who will face the brunt of a conflict is [no longer "unthinkable"](#), if it ever truly was. Consider this scenario, proposed by two Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) colonels in the 1999 doctrinal work [Unrestricted Warfare](#) – a book that has inspired and guided the thinking of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ever since:

*"[I]f the attacking side secretly musters large amounts of capital without the enemy nation being aware of this at all and launches*

*a sneak attack against its financial markets, then after causing a financial crisis, buries a computer virus and hacker detachment in the opponent's computer system in advance, while at the same time carrying out a network attack against the enemy so that the civilian electricity network, traffic dispatching network, financial transaction network, telephone communications network, and mass media network are completely paralyzed, this will cause the enemy nation to fall into social panic, street riots, and a political crisis. There is finally the forceful bearing down by the army, and military means are utilized in gradual stages until the enemy is forced to sign a dishonorable peace treaty.”*

In this scenario the primary line of attack is against systems and networks such as the electrical grid, telecommunications network, and financial system, which would predominately impact American civilians, and only subsequently does it involve conventional attacks against military targets.

Additionally, the initial impact would disproportionately fall upon local and state authorities (who are responsible for addressing the civil unrest caused by “social panic” and “street riots”) and on the private sector companies who own and operate 90% of all critical infrastructure systems. And of course, an attack which crippled the electrical grid would rapidly produce knock-on effects throughout all [16 critical infrastructure sectors](#), several of which (such as wastewater treatment and emergency services) are often local government responsibilities with private sector partners. Organizations and agencies which rely primarily on mutual aid agreements and cooperation to surge resources will find neighbors and partners struggling with the same issues and unavailable to provide assistance, as clearly demonstrated during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

## **A return to the civil defense approach**

What would a civil defense approach look like, and how would it differ from the current “all-hazards” approach?

At a local community level, a civil defense-based approach might begin with a survey of what assets and capabilities are necessary to ensure a community’s continuity and sustain it over time. Plans would emphasize hardening vulnerable assets, as well as building redundancies and contingencies into necessary systems. Sufficient stockpiles of materials necessary to operate these assets would be stored and maintained. It would also involve determining what assets or capabilities a community does not have, where it relies upon neighboring governments. How will those capabilities be sourced if they suddenly become unavailable or are overwhelmed?

For example, if a city relies upon imported water from a far-away source and if those services are cut off (by enemy action or a natural disaster) how will water and wastewater services be provided? If the closest available hospital or trauma center is located in another town, even if it successfully maintains continuity of operations, it may be out of reach if transportation networks collapse. Being able to muster not just the services that the community currently provides, but all necessary essential services would be a mainstay of a civil defense approach.

Many needs and services which are not immediately relevant in an emergency situation become essential over a longer duration. Unfortunately, community emergency preparedness guidance from FEMA recommends only emergency supplies for 72 hours after an emergency and currently most federal government sources provide little consideration

beyond the first 30 days of an emergency, after which reconstitution and recovery operations are presumed to be underway. But what if an emergency lasts 60 days? 90 days? 2 years (as was the case with the recent COVID-19 pandemic)? Organizations which are not traditionally viewed as having a “disaster response” role suddenly become relevant. Local food banks, garden co-ops, agricultural education programs and other community assets should be invited to participate in planning discussions to coordinate establishing longer term services.

## Lessons Learned

- Participants noted the benefits of developing more formal protocols and agreements and coordinating with private partners, federal, regional, state, local, academic, and non-governmental organizations.
- Current planning does not include any contingencies for very long term or extremely wide spread power outages.
- A loss of electronic based communications capability would make maintaining situational awareness difficult at best. Public Information and Warning is heavily dependent on electronic based media.
- We are a highly interdependent society.



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### *Lessons Learned from FEMA 2018 National Preparedness Symposium*

The key to success in civil defense – or emergency management – is the planning process. Developing the community profile, identifying the risks facing the community, and then agreeing upon the needed capabilities in the right capacity to provide a safe, secure, and resilient community give the people a roadmap to plan, organize, equip, train, and exercise those capabilities.

One good way for a community to exercise their civil defense plan is to start with a Tabletop Exercise (TTX). One such tabletop exercise is available in Appendix B of [\*A Guide to Developing a Community-Based Civil Defense Organization in your Community\*](#), published by Civil Defense VA. Exercises should progress in complexity with workshops, drills, and full scale (or field) exercises to practice and improve their emergency plans.

A civil defense focus would also emphasize mobilizing volunteer units of trained and prepared community members to fulfill necessary roles to supplement first responders and emergency personnel and minimize a dependence on outside agencies or organizations which may or may not be available.

One good example of how this can be done is through Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) managed by local Emergency Management organizations in most States. FEMA’s [Ready.gov](#) provides information on establishing and training a CERT and training can be provided by your local Office of Emergency Management (or Emergency Services). A civil defense-minded community would make sure that their CERT or other civil defense organizations are properly integrated into the overall plan, based on a realistic assessment of community assets and threats. They should be made aware of what roles they will be asked to support and be prepared to carry out those functions.



## Emergency Preparedness for Disasters, Power Outages or the Zombie Apocalypse.

Presented by the Souhegan and Derry Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).



### Power Outages, Pandemics – What Do You Need To Know?

*Civil Defense expert Michael Mabee presenting on Emergency Preparedness for his local CERT*

This includes having a communication plan in place and training alongside the agency or organization they will be supplementing. Consider the possibility that those may be non-governmental or private sector organizations. Additionally, in a prolonged event what plan does the community have for accepting and organizing the likely increase in available volunteers? A CERT, or civil defense organization with a surge capacity - one that is able to train and provide additional members over time while continuing to conduct operations - would be extremely valuable. This is a proper “mobilization of the people.”

At the political level, local town or county governments should consider passing a resolution to express the community’s willingness to commit to a civil defense effort and urging citizens to adopt virtues of preparedness and resilience. Funding should be obligated to the local Office of Emergency Management to provide planning support to organize, equip, train, exercise, evaluate, and sustain CERTs (or similar teams) in each neighborhood, such as the

successful CERT-based models in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sunnyvale (CA), Portland, Seattle, New York City, and many other local communities.

Leveraging experts within the CERT network is a good way for local leaders to promote better preparedness at the individual, family and community level. For example, Michael Mabee – a retired U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major and author of [\*The Civil Defense Book\*](#) – served as a member of the Souhegan and Derry CERT in New Hampshire. Local leaders leveraged Mabee’s expertise by asking him to provide numerous briefings to the local community and to develop emergency preparedness recommendations that can be executed at the individual and household level.



# Souhegan CERT - Emergency Preparedness Tips

## The Survival Subjects

In a long-term power outage or national scale disaster, the federal government says that we could be on our own for a long time – perhaps weeks or months. These are the items that both family and community preparedness plans must cover. We need backup plans for:

1. Food
2. Water
3. Shelter
4. Security

## Food

Backup plans:

1. Store Food
  2. Produce food
- Canned goods (rotate in pantry)
  - Non-perishable boxed or bagged goods like pasta, beans, rice (rotate in pantry)
  - Non-perishables stored in Mylar bags with oxygen absorbers can be good for decades
  - Learn to garden and grow food
  - Learn to preserve food from garden.
  - Buy seeds in the fall instead of the spring. Seeds will store in freezer for up to:
    - 1 year: onions, parsnips, parsley, salsify, and spinach
    - 2 years: corn, peas, beans, chives, okra, dandelion
    - 3 years: carrots, leeks, asparagus, turnips, rutabagas
    - 4 years: peppers, chard, pumpkins, squash, watermelons, basil, artichokes and cardoons
    - 5 years: most brassicas, beets, tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, muskmelons, celery, celeriac, lettuce, endive, chicory



## Water

(Note: You need a minimum of one gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation). Backup plans:

1. Store Water
2. Identify Alternate Water Sources
3. "Bailer Bucket" (water from well off-grid)

### Methods to purify water

- Boiling for at least 1 minute
- Microfiltration system
- Plain Bleach

Volume of Water	Amount of 6% Bleach to Add <sup>†</sup>	Amount of 8.25% Bleach to Add <sup>†</sup>
1 quart/liter	2 drops	2 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	6 drops
2 gallons	16 drops (1/4 tsp)	12 drops (1/8 tsp)
4 gallons	1/3 tsp	1/4 tsp
8 gallons	2/3 tsp	1/2 tsp

<sup>†</sup> Bleach may contain 6 or 8.25% sodium hypochlorite

- Granular calcium hypochlorite (pool shock).
  - 1) Make a chlorine solution by adding one heaping teaspoon (approximately ¼ ounce) of high-test granular calcium hypochlorite (HTH) to two gallons of water and stir until the particles have dissolved.
  - 2) To disinfect water, add one part of the chlorine solution to each 100 parts of water you are treating (2 ½ TBSP per gallon).
- Iodine. Five drops of 2% per quart of water.

## Security

"We are not preparing for the world we live in; we are preparing the world we find ourselves in." Home and community security plans are critical.

## Shelter

- Generator w/ sufficient fuel (stabilized)
- Solar Generator w/ battery charger
- Solar Lawn Lights
- Cold Weather Sleeping Bags
- Camping Stove / Fuel
- Lighters / Matches
- Alternate Heat source w/ sufficient fuel (Wood, propane, pellets, etc.)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Battery operated CO and smoke detectors
- Fire Extinguishers
- Flashlights, LED lanterns, extra batteries
- Medical and first aid supplies
- Extra prescription medications and glasses
- Plastic sheeting, dust masks and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Sanitation supplies: TP, plastic bags
- Personal hygiene items / Feminine items
- Local maps
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash (w/ some small bills and change)
- Emergency reference books such as a first aid, homesteading skills, edible plants, etc.
- Extra tools & homesteading supplies
- Home security items

More Info: <https://SouheganCivilDefense.org/>

*Emergency Preparedness Flyer produced by Souhegan CERT*

At the State level, State leaders should consider that in a typical natural or technological emergency the Federal government is available to surge resources and funds to affected areas. But in a war-time scenario, the flow of resources may be reversed. The Federal government is likely to be a voracious consumer of resources and manpower, seeking to direct them towards national priorities either elsewhere in the United States or even abroad. If a State emergency plan relies heavily on assets from National Guard forces or specialized national teams, there is a significant probability those assets may be Federalized to address the national war effort. Additionally, many National Guardsmen are frequently first responders or otherwise vital emergency personnel in their civilian roles. There is a risk of force "cannibalization," as each level of

government calls away manpower resources from the levels below it.

In both World War I and World War II, the Federal government's demand for National Guard manpower resulted [in the creation](#) of State Defense Forces (SDF, also known as State Guards and including State Naval Militia). Authorized by Congress, SDFs are wholly under the control of State governments and cannot be Federalized. While many states have established SDFs, they are almost uniformly under-resourced and under-developed and would be unable to fulfill the role that would be left vacant by fully activated and deployed National Guard.

In some cases, the size of the State Defense Force is

constrained by legislation. In the case of Michigan, the Michigan Volunteer Defense Force may [not exceed 15%](#) of the Michigan National Guard. In practice, most SDFs do not exceed more than a few hundred individuals. In some cases they may not currently be able to fulfill state authorizing legislation, which may require that they be “[ready and able](#)” to provide defense to the state in absence of the National Guard. States should consider how they can expand this asset and ensure it is capable, both of operating alongside the National Guard fluidly and effectively, as well as being able to operate in their absence. Governors or their Adjutants General should consider how best to build in SDF surge capacity, to be able to train and expand this state asset rapidly should need arise.

At the Federal level, the primary agency with civil defense responsibilities remains FEMA. But FEMA remains largely unable or unwilling to fulfill statutory civil defense requirements due to targeted Congressional appropriations and legislation. Lucie proposes FEMA “revive and incorporate” FEMA’s civil defense responsibilities back into its all-hazard approach. He writes:

*“This focus would be on the protection of the American populace and critical infrastructure and responding to attacks upon them utilizing the current paradigm of protect, prevent, mitigate, respond, and recover. Lines of effort could include: (1) mitigation of the effects of attack on the civilian population and supporting a sustained response and recovery campaign in the face of repeated attacks, (2) the identification, preservation, recovery, and sustainment of critical infrastructure supporting the civilian population, the defense industrial and manpower base, and key economic output, (3) sustainment of a resilient national economy while under attack, (4) protection of political institutions by indirect and direct influence and attack, and (5) continued planning and execution of [Continuity of Government/Continuity of Operations] activities.”*

Even within the limited scope of FEMA’s emergency management approach, the organization has long [faced substantial criticisms](#) of inefficiency and incompetence. Its all-hazards approach has led the organization to be “[historically over-committed to smaller disasters](#)” even where local and state resources have not been overwhelmed, leaving them unavailable when major disasters struck. FEMA has also become notorious for its rigid top-down approach and bureaucratic heavy-handedness. As Professor Russel S. Sobel of the Citadel noted in an article about Hurricane Katrina entitled “[Why FEMA Fails](#)”:

*“FEMA’s command and control approach requires that both demands for relief and offers of supply be communicated first to the agency for approval and allocation...FEMA turned away generators needed by hospitals, refused Amtrak’s offer to evacuate victims, and wouldn’t return calls from the American Bus Association. Sheriff Dennis Randle of Carroll County, Indiana, who had a team ready to help, was never able to navigate FEMA’s approval process to enter New Orleans. FEMA failures caused millions of pounds of ice to be shipped mistakenly to Maine and Arizona, and firefighters and rescue squads to be sent to areas where they were of little help. A mobile communications unit with a chartered private plane sat in Germany for nine days because FEMA didn’t return its calls. FEMA confiscated medical supplies for Methodist Hospital and fuel purchased by Jefferson Parish, and even prevented the Red Cross from entering New Orleans. The day before Katrina, Coca-Cola needed no permission to deliver Dasani bottled water to New Orleans, so why would anyone want to erect hurdles preventing those deliveries when they were needed most?”*

While some might argue that FEMA learned its lessons from Hurricanes Katrina, Hugo, Sandy, and Ike, it’s 2017 response to the Puerto Rico disaster [raised many](#) of the same complaints. However, at the foundation of these response challenges is the severe gaps in local emergency management capabilities due



Mar. 17, 2020 Fox News Interview of former FEMA Administrator Brock Long

to an overall lack of well-resourced, well-supported professional emergency management organizations with a comprehensive “whole community” basis for “all-hazards” readiness. If the local community is unprepared, then no amount of State or Federal “assistance” can mitigate the resulting consequences that the local community will have to endure during the initial days or weeks after a large-scale emergency or declared disaster.

Despite its institutional biases, FEMA continues to provide valuable educational resources for individuals, families, and organizations, and to promote coordination and collaboration among state and local governments, which are important federal civil defense functions. Without abandoning its existing all-hazards educational activities, FEMA materials should incorporate scenarios relevant to a sustained conflict with potential near-peer adversaries into their approach. Recommendations for resilience and continuity should extend substantially beyond the current 3- to 30-day window and into “for the duration” planning. FEMA-managed grant programs should strengthen their emphasis on “whole community” readiness instead of Congressionally mandated focus on providing grant money primarily

to the law enforcement and public safety communities.

It is also vital that FEMA leadership follow the example of former FEMA Administrator Brock Long, who has [promoted](#) the idea of America building a “[culture of preparedness](#)” both from his position as head of the agency and consistently since then. During Brock Long’s tenure as the FEMA Administrator, he shaped the FEMA Strategic Plan to focus on preparing the Nation for catastrophic incidents and transitioning smaller-scale emergencies and declared disasters to be managed at the State and local government levels. The recent revision of the FEMA Strategic Plan by the Biden Administration has significantly changed the agency’s strategic emphasis away from building a culture of preparedness. Rather, FEMA’s 2022–2026 [Strategic Plan Goal # 1](#) is: “Instill Equity as a Foundation of Emergency Management.”

The President’s National Infrastructure Advisory Counsel (NIAC) reinforced the need for a culture of preparedness with its 2018 [report](#) *Surviving a Catastrophic Power Outage: How to Strengthen the Capabilities of the Nation*:

*“People no longer keep enough essentials within their homes,*



## Surviving a Catastrophic Power Outage

*Screenshot from 2018 NIAC report*

*reducing their ability to sustain themselves during an extended, prolonged outage. The nation needs to improve individual preparedness. Most preparedness campaigns call for citizens to be prepared for 72 hours in an emergency, but the new emerging standard is 14 days. For example, Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii have a standard recommending that individuals have enough food and water to support themselves for 14 days. These efforts could serve as a model for federal and state preparedness resources, campaigns, and training.”*

### What Congress Can Do

While it is likely that Congress will remain essentially hostile to funding substantial civil defense efforts, one thing it could do is authorize the transfer of relevant excess defense articles to state defense forces. Presently SDFs [are forbidden by statute](#) to receive federal funds for “pay and allowances, subsistence, transportation, medical care and treatment” and [current regulation](#) forbids “use of Federal equipment for activities with the primary purpose of training or otherwise for the support of SDFs.” Concurrently, FEMA and DHS grant programs actively encourage and fund the fielding of Federal (or similar) equipment to local and

State government law enforcement and public safety agencies, even mandating that 25% of the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant program be obligated to law enforcement or information sharing activities. Thus, UASI grant money could be used by a community for “information sharing activities” geared toward building the needed “culture of preparedness” and recruiting SDF and/or civil defense personnel. And while obviously not all defense articles are appropriate for a civil defense mission, a program which allowed the transfer of useful materials to SDFs, which would otherwise be given away to foreign country militaries, might be politically palatable, while not drawing away resources from any existing DOD programs or units.

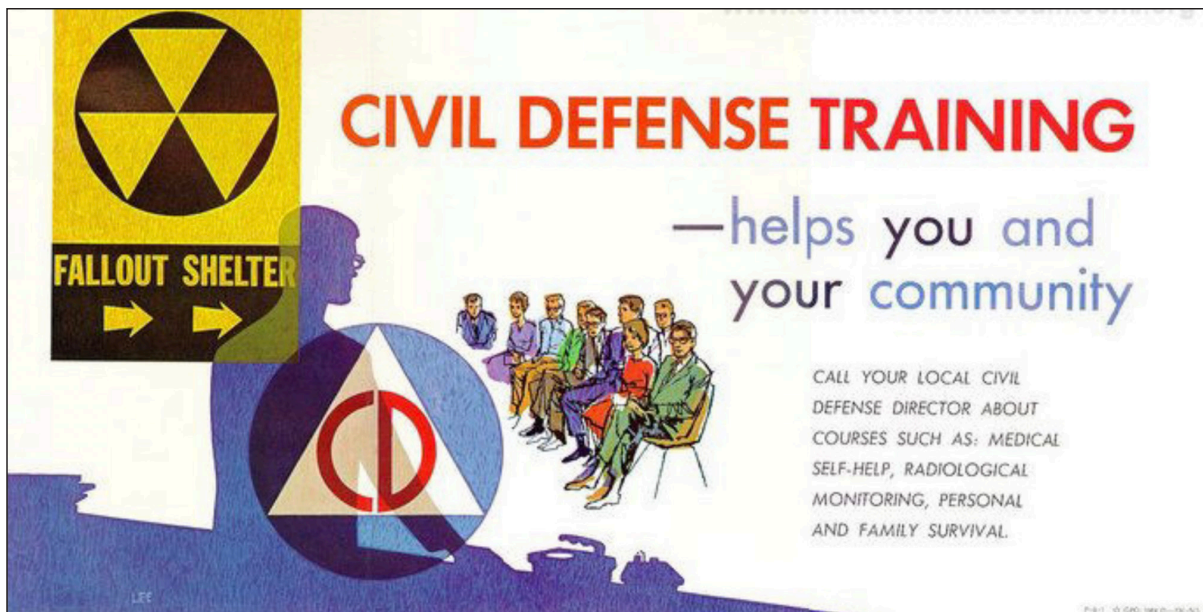
Additionally, a Congressional statement of support for community-based civil defense efforts would be invaluable for reinvigorating local efforts. This support will be vital to aligning appropriations and legislation to support the planning, organizing, equipping, training, and exercising of civil defense capabilities and capacity by local and State emergency management organizations.

## Conclusion

While the Ukraine crisis may have created what seems like the sudden reappearance of nuclear threats and cyberattacks, in fact the existence of such threats is neither sudden, nor a reappearance. The U.S. decision to abandon civil defense after the Cold War, as it had done after both World War I and World War II, did not in turn reduce its necessity. On the contrary, innovations in both strategy (such as *Unrestricted Warfare*) and development of cyberwarfare and other capabilities makes the prospect of a conflict impacting the American people more, not less, likely. Unlike in the Cold War, these developments mean that opponents of civil defense cannot hide behind the (always spurious) claim that the prospect of total nuclear annihilation makes any such effort irrelevant. Instead, the future homeland “battlefield” may more

closely resemble that of World War II, where the emphasis is on preventing sabotage (both physical and cyber), hardening and sustaining critical infrastructure, preserving vital defense industries, and ensuring a resilient, capable, and mobilized population that can outlast its adversaries.

While civil defense is likely to remain largely in disfavor at the Federal level, local community capabilities and capacity remain central to the civil defense approach. That means communities enhancing their resilience by adopting a civil defense outlook will still represent a substantive improvement. While it may be ideal for Congress to reauthorize and heavily fund a civil defense capability nationwide, every community which develops its own efforts will be contributing to the defense of the whole nation.



*This 1964 U.S. Government Civil Defense advertisement is as true today as it was in 1964*



This report was produced by the Center for Security Policy, a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) institution focusing on national security policy issues.

It was made possible by generous contributions from the Center for Security Policy's supporters. All views, positions, and conclusions expressed in this publication should be understood to be solely those of the author(s).

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