

Wiry Brigadier General Louis O. Giuffrida, Federal Emergency Management Agency Director, proudly runs a tight ship. A tough Marine Corps officer in World War II and the Korean conflict, an international terrorist authority and a staunch Reaganite, the feisty Californian occupies one of Washington's prime hot seats. Currently he is being castigated both for doing too much and for doing too little to promote an upgraded American civil defense. The fact remains that for the first time in two decades civil defense has become a public issue, is getting healthy media attention and is flirting with unprecedented budget increases over the next five years. Giuffrida stands today at the targeted CD helm as the storm begins to blow.

FY 1983: A CD LIFTOFF?

(An interview with FEMA Director General Louis O. Giuffrida
conducted by Walter Murphey, editor of the *Journal of Civil Defense*.)

WALTER MURPHEY: General Giuffrida, we appreciate very much the time you are giving us for this interview, especially because it is being accorded during a hectic schedule of Washington hearings which demand your full attention. Our March *TACDA Alert* featured an interview with TACDA President Frank Williams that called for coordinated support of your enhanced civil defense program, and this issue of the *Journal of Civil Defense* also calls for grassroots action in support of that program. To begin with, could you give us a broad-brush idea as to what the proposed \$252 million budget will mean, if passed, for civil defense and for the American people?

GENERAL GIUFFRIDA: Well, the majority of that money, Walt, will be going out to states and locals. Its purpose obviously is to make a substantial increase in the number of U.S. lives that would be protected in the event of a nuke war. It is in fact a part of the total national preparedness program that gives additional substance to the President's statements about deterrence, because a protected population and an industrial base and strategic materials are all parts — in concert with the military — of a national preparedness effort. This is what we are talking about. And as a continuing plus, on almost a daily basis, it improves the ability to deal with disasters caused by natural hazards or technological hazards.

MURPHEY: Sort of an across-the-board shot-in-the-arm then?

GIUFFRIDA: That's exactly right. Precisely that. To give a shot-in-the-arm. If we were to express the civil defense program in a single thought it would be: To protect the lives and the property of the American citizen — the basic function of government.

MURPHEY: Are there in the eyes of FEMA any anticipated support roles for civil defense organizations and publications?

GIUFFRIDA: Yes, I think there's a support role for all the interested groups like yours and the publications that you describe, as well as for the total national populace. This is in fact not simply a FEMA program. This is a *national* program. As a matter of fact it's the first time we've had a *program* proposed by an administration rather than simply a *plan*. In the past there has been straight-line a hundred million or so dollars with no start and no stop. The administration's plan, the Reagan plan, has a definite start and life-span identified at 7 years with achievable realistic goals. And it deserves the support of all the people.

MURPHEY: So the *Journal of Civil Defense* for instance could take its cue from what you've just said in trying to give support to your new program.

GIUFFRIDA: Yes, I think the *Journal of Civil Defense* and other publications can go back to examine the basic purpose of government. That *specific purpose* of government is to protect the lives and property of its citizens.

MURPHEY: In the March issue of the *TACDA Alert* you were quoted as saying: "We must now bury the many disputes and obstacles of yesteryear." Could you give us some of the examples of these disputes and how we might go about eliminating them?

GIUFFRIDA: Well, I think that within both the private sector and the organizations that have a special interest in civil defense and the various echelons of government there have been problems of definition. There has been less than a consensus on who should be calling the shots, in which direction the program should go. There are many of what I call "civil defense fundamentalists" who feel that the only solution is blast shelters for the entire population. And while that would be desirable, Walt, that is absolutely unattainable. So what I was suggesting in my comment was: we now have a finite program, we have a datum around which we can together build a program which will begin to fill this great void in America's national preparedness. There's enough here for us all to be proud of. We've more than doubled the amount of money for the program. We are going as fast as we can in enhancing the ability of this nation to deal with these problems. And while it doesn't meet everybody's requirements it is something that all of us can honestly support. And that's what I was referring to.

MURPHEY: The *New Yorker* recently ran a three-part exposure of nuclear war impact on the United States, with strong defeatist overtones. Civil defense stories appear to be breaking out on a wider and wider front. How does FEMA look at this new interest?

GIUFFRIDA: Well, unfortunately, Mr. Schell in his *New Yorker* article wasn't completely accurate in the way he interpreted data and he was not in my judgment totally objective in the way he presented these data that he had misunderstood in the first place. He refuses to acknowledge that there is any possibility of strategic warning. I don't agree with that. He assumes that the Soviets have perfect execution of their nuke attack on the United States if that should ever happen. And I don't agree with that. He doesn't appear to have researched thoroughly enough the great backlog of scientific studies which prove that something can in fact be done to protect against high blast overpressures and mass fires. While I agree with his suggestion that you can't provide such protection at ground zero all studies show that it is practical to provide it away from there. Our studies at the national level prove to us at least that the casualties can be dramatically and substantially reduced by an effective program of relocation and so on. He in his article refuses to acknowledge that there's any value in evacuation from high-risk areas. You know you don't even have to be a scientist to figure out that if there's going to be a blast at the corner of 1st and A street and you can get to the corner of 30th and F street you're more protected. Follow me?

MURPHEY: Yes, sure.

GIUFFRIDA: What he's saying is that nuke war is a horror that has to be avoided. I certainly agree with that.

MURPHEY: General, Crisis Relocation Planning hinges, of course, on what the Soviets do. In a March interview in *Survive Magazine* Leon Goure says this about the Soviets: "They certainly have multiple options. They can evacuate, go underground or a combination of both. I suspect they'll do both, with their evacuation limited to a small percentage of their population being moved only a short distance from their homes." Does this dovetail with the FEMA concept of Soviet evacuation?

GIUFFRIDA: Yes, I agree that they have multiple options. They've been in the business of civil defense preparations for a good number of years, and they are a totalitarian state. They can impose requirements that are totally foreign to our American traditional system of doing things. Even in the construction of their METRO system they factored in civil defense. So, yes they do have options. I don't have any quarrel with what Leon says.

MURPHEY: What about blast shelters in America?

GIUFFRIDA: We are obviously, in our total civil defense program, putting aside money to do research on blast sheltering and to work closely with engineering and architectural experts. There's a good portion of that industry trying to stay current with the civil defense program. So, we are in the "fact-finding" stage of that. This is not a new venture, because it has been done in the past. We're simply trying to cull out those things that were proven to be unsuccessful and to enhance things that appear to be profitable. And we acknowledge, Walt, right up front in this whole civil defense program that we don't pretend to have all the answers. Civil defense was never funded adequately enough to seek answers in the past. And I would urge you when you discuss this thing, Walt, or when you talk about it in your publication, that I said it does not purport to be a panacea, that there are still many questions that need to be answered better.

MURPHEY: When you say "panacea" you're referring to —

GIUFFRIDA: The total civil defense program. We acknowledge that there are a great many questions that need to be answered. And frankly, Walt, I'm not sure that we've even asked all the proper questions yet. But for the first time, with the Reagan program, we're putting money into it so that we can go through with that, answer the questions, and uncover any additional questions, and come out with feasible programs and elements of the total.

MURPHEY: Good. Along that same line of new possibilities, what's your opinion of General Graham's new "High Frontier" concept?

GIUFFRIDA: Well, General Graham was simply rearticulating — reiterating — the theory, the old classic military high-ground concept. You know, it's hard to argue against the high ground. If you're up there looking down a guy's throat, historically that gives you the advantage.

MURPHEY: Here at The American Civil Defense Association and the *Journal of Civil Defense* we note that people are becoming much more interested in civil defense, in protective measures. And there are questions on how to construct shelters and the equipment that goes along with shelters, like blast valves — and we frankly have been somewhat at a loss for good answers. We're wondering if, down the road, somehow FEMA might provide a clearing house for such questions. Is that possible?

GIUFFRIDA: Yes, I think we're already working in that direction. I've got the staff now putting together an honest series of questions and answers that will go out to regions and the states and interested groups that will take the logic for the programs that have been identified, studies that have been done and specific questions that hopefully will shed some objective light on some of the allegations that are being made by those who are opposed, not to civil defense in my judgment, but to the idea of a nuke war. And I'll tell you, Walt, maybe you can do there what I've been doing here, and I use my family as a sounding board. I've got five kids. I've got two teenagers and a 21-year-old at home — 16, 18 and 21. They probably have a higher consciousness of civil defense because they hear me beating my head against the wall. But in a real sense I think they're representative, as is my wife, of what the typical American citizen knows and feels. They don't know a hell of a lot about civil defense. They share with you and me a horror of any suggestion that there should be a nuke war.

MURPHEY: So Eugene Wigner's idea of education at the high school level — civil defense education — is compatible with what you are saying.

GIUFFRIDA: That's been my idea for a long, long time as well as Gene Wigner's, Walt. My feeling is that what we must ultimately do is teach people in the United States that, irrespective of any emergency, or the type of emergency, that there is a predictable effective response that they can call upon where the government — each echelon of government — has taken the lead, that we have already proven through the years that school children and others taught to respond to a fire signal will not panic, will in fact do what they've been trained to do: exit in an orderly manner from the high-risk area to a safe area. That's what we're talking about in civil defense. If you say "Suppose we had 100% assurance that we will never be attacked," then obviously we would not need a civil defense program. For that matter, would we need a defense department? But the chance of war is much greater than zero. Even if there's only a 1% chance that the country might be attacked, then for the government and the people to fail to take a reasonable and prudent precaution would be in my judgment immoral. Nobody wants to contemplate war. I think of it, and I work with this every day, and when I see these massive numbers of casualties and the incredible concentrations of destructive force that man could visit upon us it boggles my mind. And I too agree that we should be doing everything we can to avoid nuclear war. All of our efforts should be to avoid nuclear war, not just in the United States, but throughout the world. But at the same time — who in 1920 would have anticipated Hitler? Thousands of years ago who anticipated Caligula? There are always "crazies." Some of the "crazies" head up governments. And some of the governments headed by "crazies" have access to nukes.

MURPHEY: That philosophy of yours is pretty much down the line what our emergency medical expert Dr. Max Klinghoffer contends in countering the Physicians for Social Responsibility. And with the Federal Government now asking that hospitals set aside beds for possible overseas casualties the remnants of the packaged disaster hospitals and other resources seem to be of

continued on page 20