

If War Comes . . .

WHAT BUSINESS CAN EXPECT

Martial Law—Rationing—Price, Material Controls

Businessmen who worry about “stand-by control” for the next war are in for a shock.

“Control” isn’t the word for what is now planned.

If bombs drop on U.S. cities, a dictatorship will take over.

Martial law, nation-wide, will be invoked. Government will give orders, force people and businesses to obey. Nothing like it ever has been seen in U.S.

A military dictatorship, swift and complete, will take hold at the very moment of any big atomic attack on American cities.

This is the word from top official sources in Washington following “Operation Alert,” the civil-defense exercise just ended.

The old idea of “standby controls,” which has been worrying some businessmen, no longer has any place in official planning.

Instead, the President will simply take control—of businesses, banks, goods, prices, wages, just about everything—and worry about legal authority later.

Martial law will be clamped on the entire country. This will be the President’s first official act after bombs start falling.

With that act, the President will assume almost unlimited war powers. Dictatorship from Washington, or from the President’s nearby hideaway, will be backed by military forces.

At once, the nation will go on a war footing.

Rules already written. Businesses will be blanketed by regulations, already written and ready for issue. Raw materials will be rationed. Tools, trucks, supplies will be subject to seizure.

Banks will be given orders by Government. Money will be rationed. Depositors, if necessary, will be limited in how much they can draw out of the bank.

A moratorium, very probably will be ordered on debts, contracts, legal responsibilities of various sorts. This order will remain in effect until more normal conditions are restored.

Workers will be ordered not to strike, or change jobs without permission.

Prices and wages will be frozen. Rents will be controlled.

Goods will be rationed. Censorship will be imposed at once. Credit will be controlled.

Trains, trucking lines, airlines and ships will be permitted to carry only priority passengers or freight.

Factories will be told what to produce. Industry will be ordered to expand some facilities, abandon others. Electric power will be shifted from non-essential uses.

Farmers, under martial law, may see their livestock, land and crops commandeered for military use.

Doctors and hospitals might have to give up medical supplies, and take orders from Government.

In bombed-out areas, martial law will bring strict discipline, enforced by gunpoint by whatever armed forces are available. The Federal Civil Defense Act will come into full effect, empowering authorities to requisition property, including private homes and automobiles. In these areas, people will be subject to draft for whatever labor is needed.

Suspension of rights. Individual rights and privileges will disappear for the time being. Habeas corpus, which protects a citizen against imprisonment without due process of law, will be suspended. So will freedom of speech. Spreading rumors might get a person into trouble.

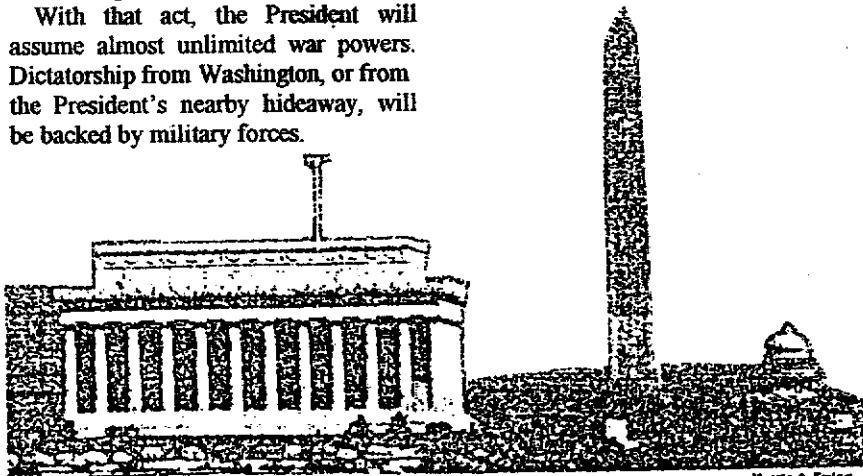
Outside of disaster areas, the plan is to apply martial law more subtly. Civilian agencies, rather than military authorities, will carry out the usual controls, including rationing, restrictions on travel, draft of manpower and anti-hoarding orders.

Under national martial law, as the thinking goes, there will be no time for haggling over federal authority, or for people or businesses to balk at what they are told.

Once the dust begins to clear, Congress will be asked to ratify the emergency measures ordered by the President.

No President of the past has the sweeping authority now planned under an atomic emergency. Abraham Lincoln imposed martial law during the Civil War, but only on certain sections of the country.

Says one defense official: “Lincoln was a pioneer in use of the Presidential extraordinary powers. But the President who has to cope with atomic offensive will make Lincoln look like a piker.”



ONE VIEW OF WASHINGTON

Also in the picture: almost unlimited war powers

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