

Government reveals plans for nuclear war

DUNDEE'S PARKS could have been transformed into mass graves for up to 90,000 people killed in a nuclear holocaust, government records from 30 years ago have revealed.

During the Cold War military powers of the west and east threatened each other with their arsenals of mass destruction and councils all over Britain drew up contingency plans to cope with the effects of nuclear attack, according to official documents made public on New Year's

Day at the National Archives of Scotland.

The files, which include information from as far back as 1948, show that senior council officers were occupied with the sensitive issue of how many people would be killed from a nuclear bomb blast and the resultant radiation, and where they should be buried.

Secret communications flowed between local authorities and the Scottish Office. One study suggested that nearly one million Scots

would be killed, and the Scottish Office held plans for makeshift mortuary body racks and emergency coffins.

Expert advice was received that in areas of heaviest damage the dead would either be incinerated or buried in rubble, and these zones would have to be closed off.

In areas of lighter damage there would be a need to collect the bodies of people who had been killed and dispose of them to prevent the risk of disease spreading.

The official files show that

disposal of the bodies by way of cremation, although efficient, was ruled out because it would use up too much fuel.

The options of disposing of bodies in pit-shafts or loading them on to hulks and floating them out to sea were also ruled out because they would have involved a great deal of handling of bodies.

A more viable solution to emerge was the creation of mass burial pits, dug by earth-moving equipment with the help of unemployed people.

In towns and cities parks were identified as the most suitable locations.

The records show that in 1970 Dundee's chief defence officer John Gorman wrote to the Scottish Office for guidance on the issue after the city's director of parks had raised "this difficult subject."

The Scottish Office official noted that the discussions with Dundee did not get beyond "the sort of useful but inconclusive thinking" expressed in a previous

document which estimated numbers of casualties.

Mr Gorman was told that there was no official guidance but common sense principles that the Dundee officer would have heard applied.

A note in the 1970 file from an army brigadier informed officials that there was no specific data for Dundee "but they advise that the worst and most extravagant bomb in Dundee might result in 90,000 casualties (dead and dying, excluding wound-