

New horror turns defence plans upside down

By MALCOLM REID

THE horror of a nuclear winter adds a new dimension to the disarmers' fears of a holocaust.

All persons scenarios about life after nuclear war have been thrown back into the melting pot by the theory. Even Ronald Reagan is worried enough to have ordered top-level research.

And, in the light of the nuclear winter theory, the government's advice on civil defence is now hopelessly naive, say the disarmers.

The Scottish group of Scientists Against Nuclear Arms have criticised the Government's planning assumptions heavily on several counts — principally failure to

mention the nuclear winter theory in any depth at all.

They also say that its contention that it could be safe to leave fall-out shelters after 14 days is "utterly unrealistic" and attacks the circulars sent to local authorities that suggest storing one litre of water per person per day when, they maintain, the commonly-accepted minimum required is 4.5 litres.

ATTACK

More than two dozen Scottish councils have declared themselves nuclear-free zones and are committed to having nothing to do with civil defence measures.

Councillor Ian Leitch, Dumfriesshire district planning convenor and a member of the steering committee of the Association of Nuclear Free Zones Councils, said authorities needed to know much more about the assumed attack

patterns and the local effects of a nuclear strike.

"If we are to judge what to do we must have a reasonable assumption of what the Government expects to happen," he said.

However, I believe the Government will do everything in its power not to give realistic assumptions, because if it did the public would be aware that their street or community would be destroyed.

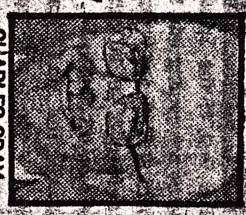
Many claim the Government's warning system has many flaws. A spokesman for the Nuclear Protection Advisory Group said: "The Government hopes it will be able to broadcast survival information in the hours before we

are attacked. If war seems unavoidable, but events may overtake this plan.

For example, simple nuclear explosion detonated high over western Europe would create an electromagnetic pulse, called EMP, that would destroy the power and electronic communication systems throughout an area that would encompass the U.K.

"This means no electricity, no telephone and no radio or television. Before any bombs exploded on this country we may therefore not even be able to hear our Government's advice, let alone carry it out.

"Few people know how to protect themselves from nuclear weapon effects and there are no plans for training the public in nuclear war survival skills.



CHARLES GRAY

They say that without this information they are incapable of making proper preparations.

But what worries many even more is the effectiveness of the terms of local government officials who would be expected to leave their homes and families to go to special operations bunkers.

From there, they would be expected to control everything from the monitoring of fall-out to organising gas, electricity, water, and medical services. One official admitted: "I can see this being the Achilles heel of the whole civil-defence movement."

Smoke would shut out the sunlight

WHAT exactly is the cloud form an unbroken "nuclear winter" which, according to opponents of atomic weapons, would prolong the horrors of all-out war?

It would result from the dust and smoke which would clog the atmosphere from extensive urban and forest fires.

Edinburgh research biologist Dr Alan Longman, Scottish spokesman for Scientists Against Nuclear Arms, says: "If predictions are correct, the sunlight reaching Scotland could be reduced by as much as 95% for weeks or months, depending on how many weapons were used. The dust and smoke

evacuation from towns and cities, not faces the dilemma of not knowing where would be safe or how to look after food, water and medicine in numbers of evacuees.

Evacuation also raises the problem of international detection. Soviet space satellites would be able to monitor massive shifts in population and might interpret this as Britain heading on a war footing at a time when the West might be desperately seeking to defuse any potential crisis through diplomatic channels.

Depending on the scale of any attack, Stan Openshaw, Philip Steadman and Owen Greene in their book *Doomsday* — Britain After Nuclear Attack, predict up to 82.7% of the population of Strathclyde would die within two weeks of an attack, up to 82.62% of Central Region's population, and 83.49% of Lothians.

OZONE

"A nuclear winter could be created by only a 1% negative exchange. Freezing temperatures — as low as minus 22degC — could be created.

"Dark days" would disrupt plant growth, and altered weather patterns would seriously reduce world crop production.

DEFENCE NETWORK COMES UNDER FIRE

FRANKS about the effectiveness of Scotland's civil defence network have grown in recent years.

Emergency planning officials have privately ridiculed the Home Office's booklet *Protect and Survive*.

It suggests, among other things, sheltering under a table surrounded with furniture, sand, earth, books or clothing.

If central government was unable to operate in the event of a nuclear attack, Scotland would come under the control of a Scottish Commissioner — a Government Minister supported

by another Minister, officials and people with relevant skills.

Scotland would be divided into north and south zones. The commissioner would have emergency powers, his main function being to co-ordinate survival operations.

PROPER

Local government officials, who would be part of the home defence network after a nuclear attack, desperately want more information from the government about assumed attack patterns and the local effects of a nuclear strike.

They say that without this information they are incapable of making proper preparations.

But what worries many even more is the effectiveness of the terms of local government officials who would be expected to leave their homes and families to go to special operations bunkers.

From there, they would be expected to control everything from the monitoring of fall-out to organising gas, electricity, water, and medical services. One official admitted: "I can see this being the Achilles heel of the whole civil-defence movement."