

DEC 80 Newsletter

# New war games

## ELIZABETH ALLEN reports on the civil defence revival

The first major civil defence exercises since the cancellation of Hard Rock ('Hard Luck') in 1982 are scheduled for the end of November.

One is being held in the south-east of England (Home Defence Region 6), and the other in the north-west (Region 10). The two exercises are testing different aspects of the civil defence plans.

Local authorities in the south-east are at a more advanced stage of civil defence preparedness, and have started training programmes. Hence, in this area, the November exercise (code name VIREG) will test the County and District Council's plans. In an attempt to keep the exercise low-key it will involve only the chief officers of the relevant local government departments.

### Pre-war scenario

In the north-west, the exercise will test the Regional Emergency Committee, composed of representatives from government departments, military police, police and members of civil organisations such as British Telecom and the Post Office.

The REC is the liaison between central government and local authorities. Emergency planners in the north-west have been asked to take part in the exercise.

In addition to the period of international tension prior to the onset of hostilities, the scenario for the north-west will include the outbreak of conventional war.

### Purpose of civil defence

The purpose of civil defence, as set out by the Home Office, is to secure Britain against any 'internal threat' and to ensure smooth preparation for war.

The framework for this has already been laid down. The necessary Emergency Bills have been prepared, so that they can be put before Parliament when and if the need arises.

### Emergency legislation

There are three such bills. The first will declare Ground Defence Areas around key installations such as military bases. Everything within these areas will be subject to military law.

This is the stage at which the 20,000 or so 'subversives' on MI5 files would be interned. This task would fall to the REC.

The main aim of the second Bill is to guard American and British lines of communication. Military law

rest of the country.

The third Bill would be passed when a nuclear attack was thought to be imminent. Control of the country would pass from elected representatives to a group of Regional Commissioners stationed in bunkers.

### Opposition to the war game

CND groups and nuclear-free zone authorities are not letting this exercise pass unopposed. Major campaigning events are planned in both areas.

In the south-east, a series of local actions is being co-ordinated by South-East Region CND. Sympathetic councillors are putting forward resolutions opposing the exercise.

Manchester City Council, and NFZ authority, is leading

the opposition in the north-west. They have produced information for the public and have organised a delegation of councillors to hand in a letter of protest to the chairman of the REC during the exercise.

CND groups in the north-west will be keeping a round-the-clock vigil outside the REC headquarters in Manchester and are hoping to maintain a phone blockade of the REC.

### Government strategy

Government strategy on civil defence is clearly to pick off isolated areas and get them to test selected parts of the civil defence plan, rather than mount a comprehensive national exercise like Square Leg. Eventually, when all the parts have been tested, a national exercise would be held.

Although the events in the south-east and north-west of England may seem distant to us, it is vital that Scottish groups are aware of what the Government is doing. They may try the next civil defence exercise in Scotland!

## Join Scottish CND!

You won't be alone. Many countries are acting to prevent nuclear war:

- Canada has removed its nuclear weapons.
- Bulgaria and Romania have refused Soviet nuclear missiles.
- New Zealand has banned nuclear weapons.

122 countries have called on Britain, France, America, Russia and China to begin nuclear disarmament.

Millions of people all over the world are working to end the arms race.

### Why not join them?

Yes, I would like more information about Scottish CND

And I'd like to join Scottish CND:

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- Unwaged adult or pensioner £2
- Student £3
- Youth (21 or under) £1

I enclose a donation of £.....for Scottish CND's work

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