

1970  
SECRET  
Cabinet secrets

# What will I do with 952,000 dead in Scotland?

## Grisly headache in planning for aftermath of nuclear holocaust

... of nuclear...  
...eddon left planners...  
...gling with the grim...  
...ion of how to cope...  
... predicted death toll...  
... o one million Scots.  
...rts calculated that as...  
... as 2000 people a day...  
... die in Midlothian alone...  
... land was hit by an all-...  
... clear strike, secret Gov-...  
... nt papers reveal today.  
... hile officials had no prob-...  
... essing the scale of the...  
... ust, they could not decide...  
... best way to dispose of all...  
... lies.  
... ish Office files, made public...  
... or the first time in 30 years,  
... blueprints of makeshift mor-...  
... dory racks and photographs of...  
... ncy coffins.

### Bodies

... a Ministry of Health memo in...  
... dmitted: "It is not considered...  
... that the bodies of persons...  
... in mass destruction attacks...  
... er with atomic bombs or HE...  
... (explosive) could be dealt with...  
... nary methods."  
... cials concluded that cremation...  
... use too much fuel, and sinking...  
... dies at sea in the hulks of ships...  
... involve too much handling.  
... one solution appeared to be...  
... burial pits dug with the aid of...  
... employed.

... keeping of official records on the...  
... et was prompted when civil ser-...  
... e-researched an answer to a parlia-...  
... ry question in 1961, when John...  
... ay was the Scottish Secretary. An...  
... nquired who was the "designated...  
... l officer" for the West of Scotland.  
... e interest in the nuclear question...  
... eted fears in the 1960s of the Cold...  
... with the Soviet Union turning into...  
... clear inferno.

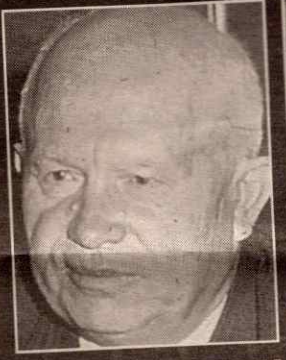
### Abyss

... the world edged to the abyss of...  
... ear destruction in 1962 as the US...  
... red up to the Soviet Union over...  
... plans to install nuclear missiles on...  
... an soil.  
... merican President Kennedy...  
... aked Cuba and demanded that...  
... USSR remove its deadly arsenal.  
... he world breathed a huge sigh of...  
... ief when USSR President...  
... schev backed down.

... was against this background that...  
... Scottish Office asked local councils...  
... onsider how they could cope.  
... cotland, with vital communication...  
... tres, the nuclear submarine base...  
... he Clyde, a naval base at Rosyth,  
... ategic radar sites and RAF air-...  
... rds was sure to be high on the War-...  
... Pact target list for nuclear hits.  
... A 1964 study concluded: "The num-...  
... r of deaths resulting from a...  
... avy nuclear attack with...  
... th ground burst bombs, ...  
... ainly in the central belt of...  
... otland, would be so great...  
... at normal interment would...  
... ot be a practical proposi-...  
... on."



**JOHN F. KENNEDY**  
Tensions rose over his demand to Cuba on Soviet missiles



**NIKITA KRUSCHEV**  
World relief after he backed away from US confrontation



**TONY CROSLAND**  
Doubts about the future of Scotland's three main airports



**JOHN MACLAY**  
As Scottish Secretary, he would have known of doomsday papers

By IAN DOW

irradiated. Re-populating the area could only be considered in the very long term.  
Another 286,000 were

tion and recording of corpses, the removal and decontamination of radioactivity and the disposal of thousands of corpses by burial or cremation.  
They were asked to identify sites which could be used as makeshift mortuaries.

Ayrshire Council was one authority that considered buying 10,000 labels to tag corpses and 10,000 sack coffins. Mass graves dug by bulldozers were reckoned the best way of disposing of bodies.  
The earth on top would be

subject of feasibility studies before the plan was eventually abandoned.  
Scottish Office files show the doubts of the then President of the Board of Trade Tony Crosland about the future of the existing airports - at Abbotsinch in Glasgow,

# I do with 952,000 dead in Scotland?

## Grisly headache in planning for aftermath of nuclear holocaust

RS of nuclear  
eddon left planners  
gling with the grim  
ion of how to cope  
predicted death toll  
o one million Scots.

erts calculated that as  
as 2000 people a day  
die in Midlothian alone  
land was hit by an all-  
clear strike, secret Gov-  
nt papers reveal today.  
hile officials had no pro-  
essing the scale of the  
ust, they could not decide  
best way to dispose of all  
ies.

ish Office files, made public  
or the first time in 30 years,  
blueprints of makeshift mor-  
ody racks and photographs of  
ncy coffins.

### Bodies

a Ministry of Health memo in  
dmitted: "It is not considered  
that the bodies of persons  
in mass destruction attacks,  
er with atomic bombs or HE  
explosive) could be dealt with  
nary methods."

icials concluded that cremation  
use too much fuel, and sinking  
dies at sea in the hulks of ships  
involve too much handling.

one solution appeared to be  
burial pits dug with the aid of  
employed.

keeping of official records on the  
et was prompted when civil ser-  
researched an answer to a parlia-  
ary question in 1961, when John  
ay was the Scottish Secretary. An  
quired who was the "designated  
l officer" for the West of Scotland.  
e interest in the nuclear question  
cted fears in the 1960s of the Cold  
with the Soviet Union turning into  
lear inferno.

### Abys

he world edged to the abyss of  
ear destruction in 1962 as the US  
ured up to the Soviet Union over  
lans to install nuclear missiles on  
an soil.

merican President Kennedy  
aded Cuba and demanded that  
USSR remove its deadly arsenal.  
he world breathed a huge sigh of  
ief when USSR President  
schev backed down.

was against this background that  
Scottish Office asked local councils  
onsider how they could cope.

otland, with vital communication  
tres, the nuclear submarine base  
the Clyde, a naval base at Rosyth,  
ategic radar sites and RAF air-  
lds was sure to be high on the War-  
y Pact target list for nuclear hits.

A 1964 study concluded: "The num-  
er of deaths resulting from a  
avy nuclear attack with  
th ground burst bombs,  
ainly in the central belt of  
otland, would be so great  
at normal interment would  
ot be a practical proposi-  
on."

In the worst-hit areas, the  
ead would either be inciner-  
ed or buried under rubble.

In the west of the country it  
as estimated there would be  
22,000 casualties in such  
reas, 60,000 in the east and  
3,000 in the north.

There would be no attempt  
orecover corpses from nearest  
he centre of the blast point  
ecause the bodies would most  
ikely have been completely  
estroyed and the area heavily



**JOHN F. KENNEDY**  
Tensions rose over  
his demand to Cuba  
on Soviet missiles



**NIKITA KRUSCHEV**  
World relief after he  
backed away from  
US confrontation



**TONY CROSLAND**  
Doubts about the  
future of Scotland's  
three main airports



**JOHN MACLAY**  
As Scottish Secretary,  
he would have known  
of doomsday paper

### By IAN DOW

irradiated. Re-populating the  
area could only be considered  
in the very long term.

Another 286,000 were  
expected to be killed by radia-  
tion in the 15 days after the  
attack, with a further 21,000  
deaths in the following weeks.

Conventional bombing was  
expected to kill thousands  
more. A 1000-ton bombing raid  
on an area like Clydeside could  
kill another 11,000.

A conference in Dundee  
identified three problem  
areas in coping with such a  
huge death toll.

There was the identifica-

tion and recording of corpses,  
the removal and decontamina-  
tion of radioactivity and the dis-  
posal of thousands of corpses  
by burial or cremation.

They were asked to identify  
sites which could be used as  
makeshift mortuaries.

Civil servants suggested dis-  
used railways stations, bus sta-  
tions, barns and open fields.

### Disposal

They also examined disposal  
sites such as disused quarries,  
disused mines, mass graves in  
open grounds and burial at sea.

Sea burial was a last resort  
because of the distance and  
problems of finding areas with  
suitable depth and a satisfac-  
tory way of sinking the bodies.

Ayrshire Council was one  
authority that considered buy-  
ing 10,000 labels to tag corpses  
and 10,000 sack coffins. Mass  
graves dug by bulldozers were  
reckoned the best way of dis-  
posing of bodies.

The earth on top would be  
soaked with engine oil to cut  
the risk of contaminated dust  
blowing around.

Other papers released show  
Scots airline passengers could  
now be jetting in and out of  
Slamannan International air-  
port if a scheme dreamt up 30  
years ago had gone ahead.

Land near the small village  
of Slamannan in Stirlingshire  
was mooted as a possible site  
for a new airport and was the

subject of feasibility studies  
before the plan was eventually  
abandoned.

Scottish Office files show  
the doubts of the then Presi-  
dent of the Board of Trade  
Tony Crosland about the  
future of the existing airports  
- at Abbotsinch in Glasgow,  
Turnhouse in Edinburgh and  
Prestwick.

### Airport

Crosland wrote to Scots  
Secretary Willie Ross: "Will  
Scottish development be ade-  
quately served by, and will  
international business looking  
at Scotland regard as ade-  
quate over the next 20 years  
the present pattern of three  
airports, none of which by