

Emerg. Plans.

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North role in martial law plan

From Mark Tran in Washington

Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver North's extraordinary influence at the White House was underlined yesterday with the disclosure that he helped to write a plan to suspend the constitution and place the country under martial law in the event of a national crisis.

Colonel North, who moves to centre stage in the Iran-contra hearings when he takes the witness stand tomorrow, contributed to a scenario whereby control of the US would be turned over to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) and military commanders appointed to run state and local governments under martial law.

He was assigned to the National Security Council in late 1981, and was Fema's contact with the Council and helped the agency to draw up the plan, according to a report in the Miami Herald. Other administration officials have criticised the steps as excessive.

The plan — outlined in a June 30, 1982, memo obtained by the Herald — was a revised version of contingency plans for dealing with nuclear war, insurrection, or military mobilisation. It was written as part of an executive order or legislative package that President Reagan would sign and hold within the National Security Council until a crisis broke.

The attorney general at the time, Mr William French Smith, was alarmed enough to write to the National Security Adviser, Mr Robert McFarlane, in August, 1982, stating his objections, and urging a delay in signing the directive.

"I believe that the role assigned to the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the revised executive order exceeds its proper function as a coordinating agency for emergency preparedness," wrote Mr Smith. "This department and others have repeatedly raised serious policy and legal objections to the creation of 'emergency czar' for Fema."

The Herald said that it was not clear whether the executive order was signed with the proposed martial law plans, although congressional sources reportedly said they believed President Reagan did sign an executive order in 1984 that revised national military mobilisation measures to deal with civilians in a crisis.

The memo outlining the martial law provisions of the contingency plan was written by Mr John Brinkerhoff, deputy to the then Fema director, Mr Louis Guiffrida. The martial law provisions resembled a 1970 paper Mr Guiffrida wrote in which he proposed such actions in the event of a national uprising by black

Colonel North was also said to be at the centre of a "parallel government" that was formed to take action outside of the Iran-contra machinations. The other figures in this cabal, which acted without any formal directive, said the Herald, were the former national security adviser, Mr William Clark, and the late CIA director, Mr William Casey.

The group's initiatives included a 1985 visit to Libya by Mr William Wilson, who was then US ambassador to the Vatican, to meet Colonel Gadafy. Mr Wilson resigned after the visit came to light, saying that he saw the Libyan leader at his own behest.

Other activities undertaken were the alteration of surveillance routes to follow Soviet ships, the launching of spy aircraft on secret missions over Cuba and Nicaragua, a 1981 proposal to provide aid to the Nicaraguan contra rebels, and the leak of information claiming that Soviet MiG fighters were being shipped to Nicaragua. The MiGs subsequently turned out to be helicopters

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Anti-nuclear protest over war exercise

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ANTI-NUCLEAR protesters, led by Labour MEP for Mid-Scotland and Fife Mr Alex Falconer, yesterday picketed 19 Royal Observer Corps monitoring posts in the constituency, which were being used as part of a United Kingdom nuclear war game exercise.

A spokesman for the UK Warning and Monitoring Organisation, which staged yesterday's WARMON 11 exercises, said they were routine operations simulating and monitoring the local effects of radioactive fallout. There are 217 ROC monitoring posts in Scotland, which double as nuclear bunkers, and an estimated 10,000 people were involved in yesterday's exercises throughout the UK.

After visits to the monitoring posts at Cupar and Perth, Mr Falconer arrived at Kippen in Stirlingshire, where the bunker is situated just a few miles from the home of Defence Secretary Mr George Younger.

Three ROC personnel were manning the post, but all questions were referred to the section con-



Mr Alex Falconer: Exercises a sham

Mr Falconer said: "We are not knocking the work done by the volunteers, but we believe the whole exercise is a sham. It is based on the delusion that there is any chance of most of the population surviving a nuclear war."

Mr Halford said later that the exercises had been "fairly satisfactory". The next series of exercises is scheduled for November 1, when the protesters will again picket the monitoring posts.