

# IF WAR CAME CLOSE WE WOULD HAVE NEW MASTERS

**An unprecedented secret UK-US agreement means that in a crisis Britain would give priority to American military requirements. US forces would have the right to enforce martial law and would be provided with impressed civilian labour, reveal DUNCAN CAMPBELL and PATRICK FORBES**

A TOP SECRET 1983 agreement between Britain and the United States reverses a longstanding NATO policy — that each ally should provide its own logistic resources to its forces in Europe. Details of this agreement, given to the *New Statesman* this week, have made senior defence planners ask whether Mrs Thatcher's government may have sold out British national interests.

The new pact is called the US-UK Lines of Communication Agreement (USUKLOC). It covers the supply routes along which reinforcements, ammunition and equipment would be moved from the rear 'Zone of the Interior' (the United States itself) to the Forward Battle Area (West Germany and Norway). Britain is 'indispensable', according to US planners, as the main staging post for hundreds of thousands of troops who would travel on air and sea routes between North America and continental Europe (see map).

Within Whitehall, the agreement is controversial for three reasons. First, it overturns a 30 year old 'basic tenet' of NATO policy on logistics. According to the official publication, *NATO Facts and Figures*, 'each nation is responsible for the continuing support of its forces'. Neither the USUKLOC change, nor the reasons for agreeing to it, have been mentioned in Defence White Papers, or reported to or debated in Parliament.

Secondly, all the costs of the new agreement would fall on the UK. The USUKLOC plan dramatically extends the arrangement whereby Britain already provides over a hundred military bases and facilities to the Americans free of charge in its role as the US's 'unsinkable aircraft carrier'.

Under the terms of the agreement, Britain would use special Emergency Powers Laws (see *NS* last week) to provide US forces with impressed British civilian labour; requisition and hand over civilian supplies, including food, fuel, building materials, transport and construction equipment; and empty NHS hospitals of their patients to prepare for US military casualties.

The Ministry of Defence admitted this week that the USUKLOC Agreement exists, but refused to discuss its terms beyond saying that the agreement 'covers the logistic arrangements to support the US requirements in the event of the need to reinforce Europe.'

Since the basic Memorandum of Understanding on USUKLOC was signed,

US-British working parties have been developing detailed plans to implement the agreement. More than 7 major plans and 30 subsidiary technical understandings have already been 'agreed and distributed ready for use. The plans set out exactly which British resources will be supplied to meet a detailed list of US requirements, submitted in 1984, for the main 60-day reinforcement period. It covers everything from cooking equipment to tank engine maintenance.

Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll, formerly the Joint Director of Military Operations for the US European Command and now Deputy Director of the Washington-based Centre for Defense Information, told the *New Statesman* this week that impressed civilian labour was a major requirement in US joint logistic planning. He explained: 'My understanding was that there were . . . work allocations, quotas to be met by the host nation'. The quotas specified groups who would be sent to shipment centres, to storage sites, or to maintenance facilities.

The special labour force would not be an

orthodox military reserve, Admiral Carroll explained, but ordinary civilians. Depending on political decisions to be taken by the British government, he explained, unemployed people and ordinary workers could be conscripted at employment offices. 'You are obviously going to have a measure where people are taken out of activities like football matches and arcades . . . [and directed into] what is laughingly called constructive efforts, helping with the war'.

MOST IMPORTANT of the plans which have followed the signing of the USUKLOC Agreement is the 'Joint Logistic Plan' (JLP). It describes how specific civil airports, seaports, army camps and requisitioned civilian transport resources will be made available to US forces. These include bus and truck fleets and their drivers.

A separate, earlier agreement says that twelve major Royal Air Force bases will also be turned over to the US Air Force. This 'Colocated Operating Base (COB)' Agreement is now linked to the USUKLOC plan. The MoD said this week the 'we're prepared to acknowledge that [the COB Agreement] exists. It's a confidential arrangement.'

The JLP would be activated after Britain had mobilised and British troops had moved out of Army camps to West Germany — itself a gigantic manoeuvre, twice exercised recently. But the next stage has never been exercised — the arrival of more than 100,000 Americans within ten days. The main US arrival areas



Joan Ruddock, CND chair, called last week on the British nuclear weapons factory at Burghfield to ask how she and other neighbouring residents would fare under secret emergency powers

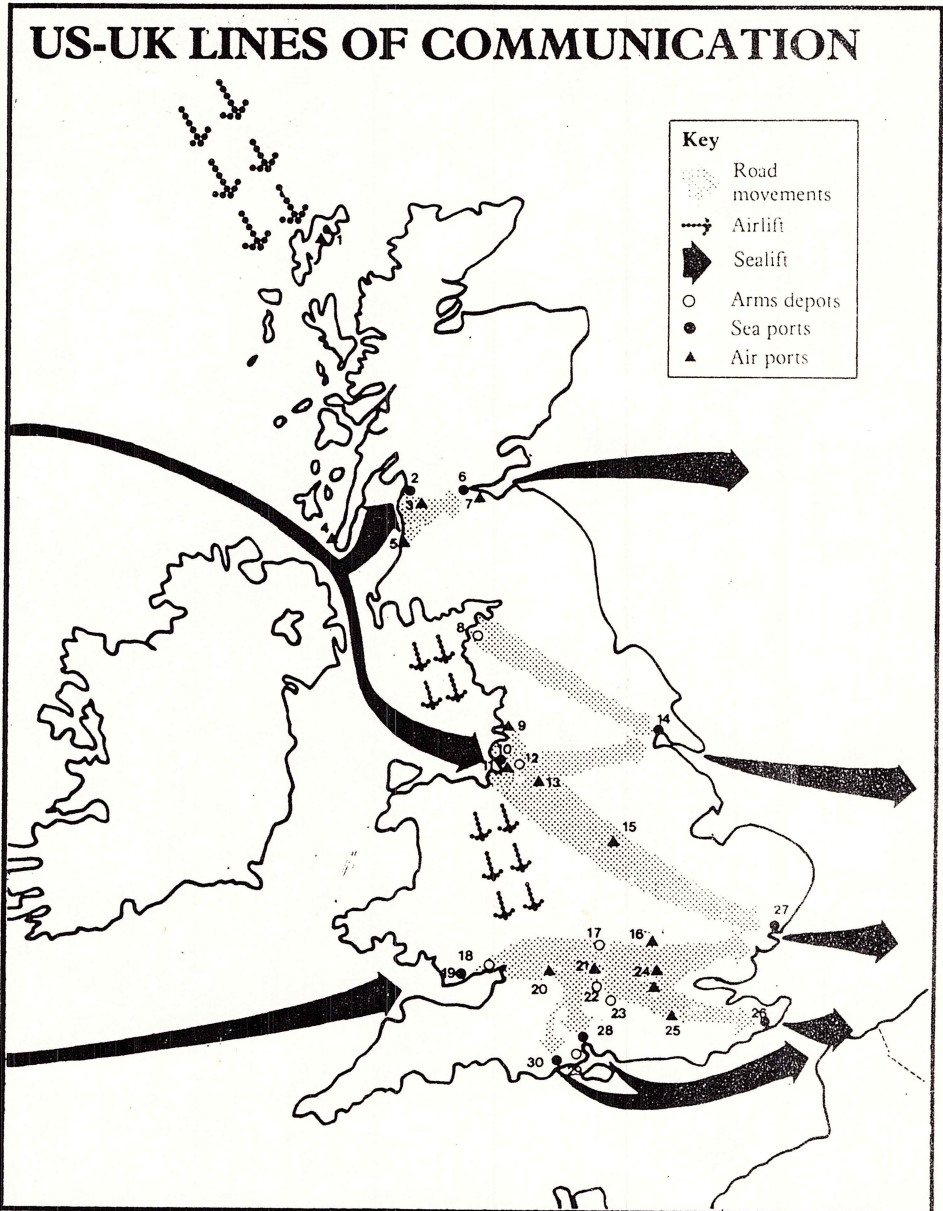
would be Barry and south Wales, Liverpool and the Mersey, and Greenock and the Clyde.

After mobilisation, munitions would be moved eastwards from depots like Caerwent, Bramley and Broughton Moor. From east coast ports, they would be shipped to the continent, or loaded on board US warships.

Some US troop transports would fly straight to Germany, but most would stop at least temporarily in the UK. European airfields cannot receive the hundreds of daily requisitioned Boeing 747 flights required. For example, an entire reserve division — 18,000 men — will arrive in the Merseyside area. The division's complete equipment is stockpiled at Burtonwood nearby.

According to one senior RAF officer, the planned scale of US reinforcement operations is 'enormous'. He identified some of the civil airports to be used by United States forces: 'Prestwick, Turnhouse, Manchester Ringway, Blackpool and Liverpool Speke, to name but a few'. The newly built and NATO-funded airport at Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides would provide additional staging facilities.

NEGOTIATIONS TO HAND over these extensive resources to the US military, even before war had been declared, have been underway for almost 10 years. The first US requests were for ammunition storage depots. As a consequence, in about 1978, two major British ammunition dumps were emptied of British stocks. Comprehensive new demands



- 1: Stornoway; 2: Greenock; 3: Abbotsinch; 4: Machrihanish; 5: Prestwick; 6: Grangemouth;
- 7: Turnhouse; 8: Broughton Moor; 9: Blackpool; 10: Liverpool; 11: Speke; 12: Burtonwood; 13: Ringway; 14: Hull; 15: East Midlands; 16: Luton; 17: Bicester; 18: Caerwent; 19: Barry; 20: Lyneham; 21: Brize Norton; 22: Welford; 23: Bramley; 24: Heathrow; 25: Gatwick; 26: Dover; 27: Felixstowe; 28: Marchwood/Southampton; 29: Hythe; 30: Poole

## NATO EMERGENCY POWERS

BRITAIN and Denmark alone of Nato's member states do not have some form of 'emergency powers legislation' either on their statute book, or written into a constitution.

**West Germany:** The Notstandsgesetze (Emergency Legislation) provide a comprehensive list of measures that a German government may take in a time of crisis — covering civil defence, control of utilities and civil liberties. These measures were agreed in 1968 under the CDU/SPD Kiesinger-Brandt government.

**Netherlands:** The Dutch Parliament in the 1984/5 session provided for 4 national 'emergency states' to be proclaimed by a Royal Decree in the event of a crisis — Increased Vigilance, Exceptional Circumstances, War and the Siege.

**Norway:** In 1950 Parliament passed a series of 'Special measures for warlike situations'.

**Canada:** The War Measures Act of 1914 comes into force when 'war, invasion or insurrection real or apprehended exists.' As originally drafted, it gave the government power to make regulations on a wide range of issues without reference to parliament, but a modifying bill was passed in 1960

and this right is now conditional on the Canadian parliament accepting that any of the above emergencies exists.

**Belgium:** There is no exact peacetime counterpart to the British legislation revealed in last week's NS, but there is a complex set of regulations already on the statute book providing for wartime.

**Greece:** Article 48 of the 1975 constitution allows the President (via decrees countersigned by the Prime Minister) to suspend certain clauses of the Constitution relating to civil liberties in times of war, mobilisation, or any serious threat to public order. Parliament must be convened within 30 days to ratify his actions.

**United States:** Legislation codified in 1976 ensures that when the President declares a national emergency, or Congress declares war, all subsequent significant orders of the President must be transmitted to Congress promptly and a record kept of them by the President.

**Portugal:** The 1982 constitution (Clause 141, item 1) states that the President may not declare a state of siege or emergency without first obtaining the consent of the National Assembly, or its

standing committee if the Assembly is not in session.

**Iceland:** Article 28 of the Constitution allows the President to issue exceptional laws in time of crisis.

**Spain:** Article 116 of the 1978 Constitution states that 'organic law' shall regulate the varying states of alarm, emergency, and siege. The law, passed in 1981, ensured that both the Congress and the Cabinet would ratify this state of emergency, specifying the areas of Spain so affected, and that this state could last for only 30 days.

**Turkey:** The State of Emergency Laws (1980) govern the period of transition between normal law and martial law. A decision to introduce a State of Emergency rests with the National Assembly.

**Italy:** As with Belgium, there are no formal equivalents to the British laws. However, Article 77 of the 1948 Constitution allows the government to introduce decrees which have the full force of law for 60 days (prior to ratification by parliament) in 'exceptional cases of urgency'.

**France:** Article 36 of the 5th Republic's constitution allows the Council of Ministers to declare a state of siege, which may not last longer than 12 days. Article 35 provides for the declaration of war by the President.

**Luxembourg:** Provision for emergencies is made in the constitution.

were made in 1980. The United States wanted Europeans to provide direct support for US reinforcement plans and started negotiating in each NATO country for 'Wartime Host Nation Support' (WHNS) Agreements.

A WHNS Agreement was signed with West Germany on 15 April 1982. Reaching agreement with the British took a bit longer. A Congressional committee was warned in March 1983 not to probe too closely into the 'sensitive and fluid' negotiations.

The eventual USUKLOC agreement has been kept highly classified. In marked contrast, the US-German WHNS agreement was immediately published. Copies were given to the press — including TASS, the Soviet news agency. An appendix promised the US the services of some 93,000 civil and military personnel, plus unspecified further impressed civilian transport resources.

A Belgian-US WHNS agreement was signed — in October 1981. The Dutch-US agreement followed in August 1982. The Norwegian and Danish governments have refused to grant US forces such sweeping rights. But, after a lengthy public and parliamentary debate, a limited US-Norwegian 'pre-positioned storage agreement' was reached in October 1982. Only the UK has kept its agreements entirely secret.

UP TO 30 LARGE HOSPITALS would be ordered to discharge their patients in order to receive US military casualties. We have established that they are general hospitals with between 400 and 1000 beds each. At least three of them are in Scotland; and at least six in the north of England.

Health department officials do not deny the hospital emptying plans. They say that 'plans are being made to deal with such events, should they ever arise. But we can't go any further'. In London, the DHSS said that 'There's not much I can tell you. It's not our policy to reveal what these plans are.' According to our sources these plans are 'desperately politically sensitive'. Medical staff and hospital administrators have until now been unaware of their provisions.

The plans have also been kept secret from health service civil defence planners, whom the government insisted be appointed four years ago. Their task was to convince doctors and public alike — despite the findings of a major BMA report on the effects of nuclear war — that a medical response to a future war is worthwhile. The revelation that the government has been deceiving its own emergency planners about its intentions in time of crisis is likely further to reduce the credibility of government civil defence plans.

It has not yet been finally resolved whether draft Emergency Powers regulations should be written to compel doctors and nurses to stay at their posts to deal with US casualties. The alternative is for US medical reservists to be flown in from hospitals in the United States.

THE USUKLOC AGREEMENT and accompanying JLP facilities are a highly sensitive subject inside Whitehall. Senior officials argue that, once mobilisation has taken place, there will be 'three times as many American forces as British' in the UK. There would be 'no time to argue' about mistakes. Challenged that their criticism might be

primarily anti-American in spirit and tone, they say that Whitehall's experience of negotiating with US military officials in the UK has done little to allay prejudices that might have been held about 'gum-chewing rednecks'.

In a developing crisis, US control over logistic resources would be strengthened, as reserves were flown in from the United States. Guards in 'Ground Defence Areas' around US bases would be expected to deal with local British residents who were unwilling to leave the area or hand their homes over for military use or demolition, as required. Protesters and anti-war demonstrators would be 'swept off' any roads that they attempted to block.

The strength of the US Air Force Security Police in the UK is planned to double to 3650. They would 'assume air base defense duties in time of crisis' — including 'off-base defensive positions', according to US Congressional hearings in 1982.

The USUKLOC Agreement also provides for emergency amendment to the US-British Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), extending the legal powers and immunities of US service personnel. We have not been able to obtain details of the agreed alterations, but a draft NATO-area emergency SOFA, prepared by US European Command, would give US troops extraordinary powers:

Should the US military commander consider that the [UK] Government does not possess the capability of quelling [disorders which may materially affect the mission or security of the US forces] effectively or in time, the US Forces may take such action as the US military commander deems necessary, either unilaterally or in co-operation with the Government . . .

No civil action shall be brought in the courts against any member of the US Forces . . . The authorities of the US shall have the exclusive right to exercise criminal jurisdiction . . .

US National Guard forces are also included in reinforcement and guard plans for Europe. Although these units are organised by the individual US states in peacetime, they can be mobilised as part of the Federal US Army reserves by Presidential executive order. Official permission was given for some 840 National Guards to conduct exercises in Britain last September. More will be back in Britain later this year. But the 1984 National Guard exercise was given no official publicity, in striking contrast to this week's home defence exercise, Brave Defender. The MoD admitted six months later that the Guardsmen had been rehearsing 'NATO war roles'.

Inspecting manoeuvres during exercise Brave Defender last weekend, Secretary of State Michael Heseltine did not dispute that new Emergency Powers, allowing the grant of special rights to US military commanders, had indeed been prepared. They were 'legislative options', he suggested, which would be a 'matter for Parliament and the government of the day to consider'.

But Liberal Front Bench spokesman Paddy Ashdown said that although 'if we stay in NATO we must play host to some American forces', he was 'alarmed. We are allowing US troops and their commanders unheard of powers.' Labour Front Bench spokesperson Denzil Davies said that 'the matter should have been put before Parliament. We are after all an adult democracy.' □