

TAY HOME AND DIE

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Duncan Campbell explains why the GLC has launched a major study of nuclear war — and reveals what the government secretly knows about Britain's fate in nuclear war

TOP AMERICAN military commander and senior intelligence chief will be the senior member of a Greater London Council jointed 'Royal Commission' to study how nuclear war would affect London. Newly re-elected GLC leader Ken Livingstone announced the appointment this week. Admiral Lord Gayler, formerly US Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, and Director of the US National Security Agency (the big brother to Britain's HQ) has agreed to be one of six expert members of the 'Greater London Area War Risk Study' (GLAWARS) Commission.

Livingstone announced that the council would be spending nearly £500,000 on detailed studies of nuclear targets, bomb effects, and proposed 'civil defence measures'. Much of the £100 million will go to finance new scientific and strategic research at British universities, including work on the recently raised spectre of 'nuclear winter'.

GLAWARS is a response to the continuing government demand that local authorities prepare plans for so-called 'civil defence' — which the GLC, in common with more than 100 other 'Nuclear Free Zone' authorities, regard not merely as futile but as an explicit confidence trick intended to delude the public into tacit acceptance of nuclear war risks.

Livingstone also revealed this week that the GLC has obtained leaked copies of suppressed NATO and Home Office documents, which detail the expected fate of British cities in war. The papers show that the 'stay-put' policy for civilians, espoused in the notorious 1980 Home Office 'Protect and Survive' pamphlet would, in any type of nuclear attack, cause millions more deaths than a policy of dispersal. In an attack including cities, according to Home Office figures, three times as many people could die immediately, if the population obeyed official 'stay-put' advice.

The suppressed NATO papers were presented in May 1977 to a private seminar of experts from the NATO Civil Defence Committee, held at the Home Defence College, Easingwold, Yorks. It was intended to explain to NATO allies how Britain was preparing for a nuclear attack. The Home Office's planning assumptions for nuclear attack were explained in a document entitled 'The Post Strike Scene: UK', presented by Air Marshal Sir Leslie Mavor, then the Principal of the Home Defence College and now the Home Office's 'Co-ordinator of Voluntary Effort in Civil Defence'.

Mavor's official presentation dismissed entirely the possibilities of either conventional or limited nuclear war, which the present government frequently uses in an attempt to justify civil defence planning. 'The question of whether hostilities start with a period of

conventional operations,' said Sir Leslie 'is not relevant' to serious Civil Defence planning.

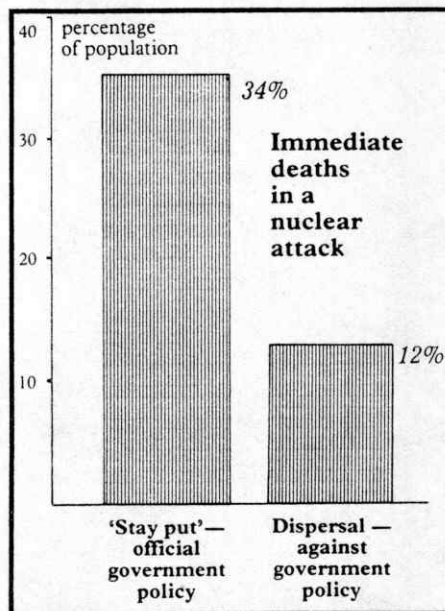
Any attack would be an all-out nuclear onslaught, the NATO experts were told:

The enemy's aim will be to put us out of the reckoning by destroying [us] militarily, politically, and industrially... What we foresee is a disabling attack targeted on our strike bases, certain other military facilities and centres of government, of population, and of industry including some of our seaports.

'To achieve this aim', government scientific and military planners had calculated, 'the enemy will plan to hit some 80 targets with a total of about 180 Megatons... all done within 48 hours. Anything else than this weight of attack might not achieve his object and anything more would represent wasteful overkill which his nuclear armoury would not support,' said Sir Leslie.

Some 32 of the 80 officially expected targets are known to be in the Greater London area. The combined nuclear explosions in the attack pattern would 'blanket all the main urban areas in the country'. Describing large cities like London as 'our most bomb-worthy target complexes', Mavor added that: 'We know that the big cities will be high on the enemies target list'.

THIS OFFICIALLY expected nuclear attack would, he said, destroy 80 per cent of British



Civil defence will kill, if carried out according to official government policy. A Home Office computer study showed that the type of attack described to the NATO seminar would, if aimed at British cities, kill nearly three times as many if people obeyed official advice to 'stay put' in their own homes.

industry and flatten beyond salvation the urban areas of Greater London, the Midlands, the North East, Central Scotland, South Wales, and Belfast.

The main target areas will be so badly knocked about as to be beyond effective self-help: they will have to be more or less discounted... Such an attack would lay waste the city complexes by blast and fire...

Despite this, Mavor revealed that 'under the stay-put concept, no arrangements are being made to move people from likely target areas'. He explained that, instead of evacuating city dwellers away from target areas, they would be encouraged to stay put and 'sit tight' by a radio, newspaper and TV 'mass information campaign'. In this private forum, Air Marshal Mavor acknowledged that the expected attack pattern would indeed make civil defence operations in any large British city quite futile.

The secret NATO papers contain some information that the GLC has been seeking since 1982. In October 1982, the GLC asked the Home Office for assistance on 27 detailed aspects of war planning. The GLC questionnaire listed 30 possible targets of attack which would affect Londoners. But the Home Office failed to answer any of these questions, even the most trivial. Three months afterwards, the Home Office Permanent Under-Secretary told the GLC that its questions were 'complex' and were being dealt with. A month later, however, officials wrote that they could not provide any 'specific response'. They have remained silent since.

A similar silence met GLC requests for copies of the NATO papers, now leaked to Ken Livingstone. The papers were 'private', Home Office Minister Patrick Mayhew wrote to GLC chairman Ilyd Harrington in March 1983. They would 'not help clarification and discussion of current civil defence issues'.

Apart from Admiral Gayler, the GLAWARS Commission includes Dr Stuart Horner, one of the authors of the British Medical Association study on the effects of nuclear war; US physicist and arms control specialist Professor Frank von Hippel; United Nations disaster relief specialist — Dr S William Gunn; Professor John Erickson, a Sovietologist and Professor of Defence Studies at Edinburgh University; and Dr Peter Scharfman of the US Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, who directed the preparation of the official US study on 'The Effects of Nuclear War'.

The Commission will examine the military threat to London, and look at 'scenarios... expected to give rise to an attack affecting the Greater London area'. Attacks using chemical, biological and conventional weapons will be included. Subsequent studies will look at the 'cost, suitability, and potential effectiveness of putative alternative major civil defence strategies including evacuation, and the provision of mass communal shelter'. Finally, when the effects of nuclear or other attacks have been estimated, the Commission will look at whether any civil defence proposals could ever work to protect the citizens of London, or any other 'bomb-worthy target complex'.

Duncan Campbell is a co-opted member of the GLC, and the Council's civil defence policy adviser.