

NUCLEAR ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE

A booklet by Tim Williams, an electronics design engineer working in the process control industry.

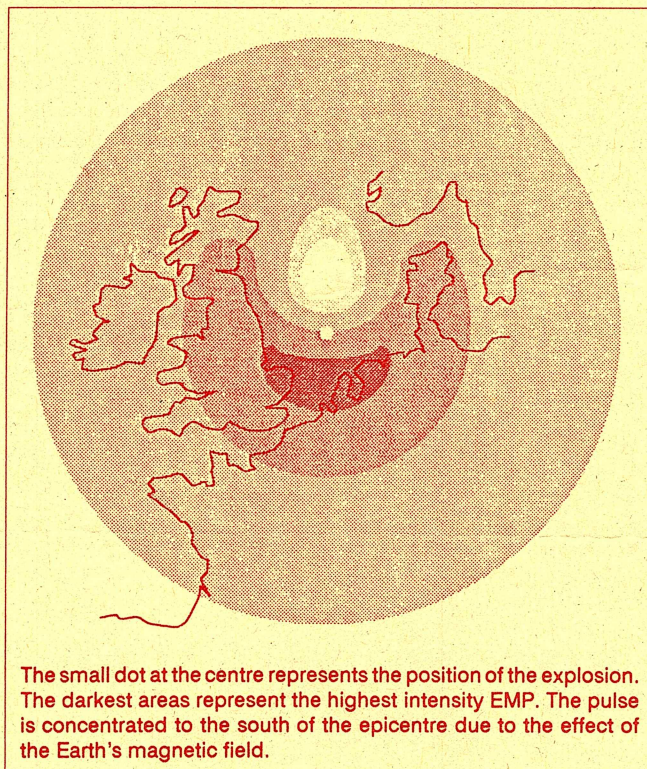
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A nuclear explosion in space, at a height of 400 kilometers above the earth, would produce an intense electromagnetic pulse (EMP) and disable electronic equipment over an entire continent. Electricity supply would be disrupted because it depends on electronic control. Modern communications such as radio, television and telephones would cease to operate, although some of the old-fashioned valve radios might survive. Sparks would be produced in dangerous flammable areas such as petrochemical plants.

The military have attempted to build equipment which is resistant to EMP, although there is considerable uncertainty about how effective this will be. Some items of hardware would survive while others cease to operate. The resulting confusion would place field commanders in a position where they have to make decisions in the absence of supervisory control.

This booklet gives a general discussion of the effects of EMP and gives some quantitative results.

The blast effects from a nuclear explosion in space would be inconsequential.



Thermal effects would be minimal, although people looking into the sky would be blinded.

The effects on electronic equipment would be catastrophic.

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