

Nuclear leaflet shelved Over 'fear of ridicule'

Andrew Veitch, *17/1/86*
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Plans to publish a new version of the Government's nuclear war leaflet, *Protect and Survive*, have been scrapped because people would make fun of it, the Home Secretary, Mr Douglas Hurd, said yesterday. Instead, he launched a 4,000 public relations campaign, revealed in *The Guardian* yesterday, to convince the public of the benefits of "civil protection" against all hazards, ranging from a chemical spill to nuclear war.

The centrepiece of the campaign is a video narrated by Peter and broadcaster, Mr Ian Pettifer, includes shots of the Lincolnshire branch of the Women's Royal Voluntary Service cooking beans and mash for 100 refugees on a demolition site and a Norfolk vicar explaining how to prop up buildings with timber.

The new *Protect and Survive* leaflet would be kept back until a crisis is imminent and issued during the build-up of hostilities, which the Government expects will give it a seven-day warning of a nuclear attack. Mr Hurd.

If new material was issued, everyone would throw it into the wastepaper basket or make fun of it as they did with *Protect and Survive*, he said. "I don't think there's a sensible pose in it."

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament yesterday challenged the Government to publish its civil defence plans.

Its chairman, Mr Paul Johns, said: "The Home Office has refused to make public its updated version of *Protect and Survive*, as promised by the Prime Minister, because it is frightened of the public ridicule which would greet its publication. But no amount of PR packaging will make people believe the unbelievable."

The leaflet, demolished by the British Medical Association in its report on the medical effects of nuclear war, advised people to whitewash windows and build shelters from doors.

Mr Hurd was at pains to stress yesterday that the publicity campaign was not a party propaganda exercise but was a result of pressure from civil defence professionals and volunteers.

He said that he would continue to put pressure on local authorities to implement the Government's 1983 civil defence regulations, strengthened by this year's Civil Protection in Peacetime Act.

Some £16 million has been sliced off local authority funds; they only get it back if they appoint civil defence officers and draw up war plans.

Two local authorities, South and mid Glamorgan, have had

funds withheld by the Home Office, and 170 have declared themselves nuclear free zones. Councillors on local authorities who are denied grants because of their policies could face legal action for failing to fulfil their duties.

Mr Hurd has launched a three-year project to monitor the way authorities are implementing the regulations.

The Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, whose 4,000 members include many of the doctors who have been told to implement the war plans, said the campaign would increase pressure on doctors to toe the line and operate plans for civil protection against all emergencies, even though they considered the nuclear war aspects unworkable.

"By fudging the distinction between planning for nuclear war and planning for civil emergencies, they are misleading the public," said Dr David Josephs, a district medical officer and member of the group's civil defence working group.

The "all-hazards" approach linking plans for peace-time disasters with those for war emergencies has been criticised by Sir Leslie Mavor, a former head of the Home Office Easingwold civil defence college, as an "attempt to give civil defence a more generally acceptable face."

Ad agency paid £300,000 for PR campaign

Nuclear war plans given new look by Home Office

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The Home Office is paying an advertising agency £300,000 in the first year of a three-year campaign to give its nuclear war plans a new image, according to a confidential document passed to the *Guardian*.

The campaign, described in the document as a public relations exercise, will be launched today by the Home Secretary, Mr Douglas Hurd.

It appears to mark a sudden tactical switch by the Government: plans to publish a rewritten version of its much-criticised pamphlet, *Protect and Survive*, seem to have been scrapped.

In the new campaign, the words "civil defence" are ditched in favour of the phrase "civil protection." Nuclear war plans are subsumed under plans covering all civil emergencies, including floods and chemical explosions.

agency Planning Officers' Society earlier this year. The minutes of it have been passed to the *Guardian*.

The Home Office civil defence adviser, Mr Eric Alley, told the society "of the Government's intentions to mount a civil defence public relations exercise," the minutes say.

"The campaign would provide advertising, a film of high standard for local use and for TV, a new booklet and literature, and a portable display unit.

"There would also be a quarterly magazine for circulation in civil defence circles and an attempt to develop a corporate identity linked with an all-hazard approach and probably bringing in the blue triangle international sign."

The advertising agency chosen for the campaign, named by the Home Office yesterday as Waldron, Allen, Henry, and Thompson, was

protection public information material."

Mrs Thatcher said in a Commons answer last month that new material to be launched in December would replace *Protect and Survive*, but the Home Office said yesterday that the pamphlet was not being changed.

Civil defence sources, confirming a report in the *Daily Telegraph* this month, said the pamphlet had been rewritten, but the Government had decided not to publish it for fear of increasing public anxiety about nuclear war. Instead, it would be issued "in a time of crisis."

Dr David Josephs, the district medical officer for Bedford, who chairs the civil defence working party of the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, MCANW, said that if the new campaign was realistic it would increase public pressure for nuclear disarmament.

Anti-protest bye-laws for RAF bases

Byelaws which the MoD have just introduced at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire could be a preparation for stationing nuclear weapons there, according to local peace campaigners. The byelaws are similar to those brought in at Greenham Common and Molesworth, and provide among other things for a maximum fine of £100 for entering the base, distributing leaflets on it, or fixing any object to the perimeter fence.

The new byelaws were announced on December 13th - the same date as similar regulations were applied to two other bases, RAF Menwith Hill and HMS Forrest Moore in Yorkshire. 28 days were allowed for objections to be lodged, but an MoD spokesman admitted to the *Lincolnshire Standard* (10/1/86) that objections would have no effect as the decision had already been made.

Why RAF Waddington? The MoD spokesman explained that the base was one of half a dozen that had been selected for the new regulations because they either had been, or were likely to be in the future, the focus of CND protests.

Menwith Hill and the nearby Forrest Moore are key submarine communications centres, and there is a peace camp at Menwith Hill. But as far as is known there is no nuclear-related or controversial military activity at Waddington, and no protests at or around the base.

It is known that the ex-Vulcan base is equipped for storage of nuclear weapons, and is allocated to the USAF for this purpose should they require it. British nuclear weapons used to be stored there. Paul Brizot, a local peace campaigner, feels the imposition of the bye-laws may be a pre-emptive strike to deal with future protests over a new, controversial role for Waddington.

Paul, a member of Lincoln Green Party, fears that "This could mean the reintroduction of nuclear weapons on Lincoln's doorstep."

• John Milner Feb 86