



THE HAZARDS OF PROMOTING CIVIL DEFENCE:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE HOME OFFICE'S
NEW 'CIVIL PROTECTION' POLICY

A Briefing Document
Prepared by the National Steering Committee
for the One-Day Briefing Session
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NUCLEAR FREE
LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Purpose of Briefing Document

This document has been written to provide supporting authorities with a detailed critique of the Home Office's new 'civil protection' policy and of its public information programme.

The briefing document is divided into the following sections:

- Section 1 : Introduction
- Section 2 : The Origins of 'Civil Protection'
- Section 3 : The Home Office Public Information Programme
- Section 4 : 'Civil Protection': An Assessment
- Section 5 : 'All-Hazards': An Assessment
- Section 6 : Conclusions

Recommendations

The NSC recommends that:

1. Conference instructs the NSC to write to the Home Office to:
 - (a) press for an explanation of, and justification for the 'all-hazards' approach to emergency planning;
 - (b) explain that the NSC does not find in the 'all-hazards' approach, nor in the powers made available under the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1986, substantive evidence of a genuine commitment by the Government to the promotion of planning for peacetime emergencies;
 - (c) press the Government to introduce legislation which would place a statutory duty on local authorities to engage in peacetime emergency planning and to make funds available to enable local authorities to fulfill these duties effectively;
 - (d) press that in the meantime, Fire and Civil Defence Authorities should be given Section 138 powers under the Local Government Act 1972;
 - (e) inform the Home Office of the NSC's views on the public information materials using the comments in this briefing and demand that the Home Office withdraw the materials with such time as an adequate response is received to points a, b, c and d above.
2. Supporting authorities should:
 - (a) when making arrangements to show the Home Office video ensure that a member or an officer who has read this report and can present the viewpoint expressed is present;

- (b) when showing the video only distribute copies of the Home Office leaflet when an NSC leaflet is attached (to be produced and circulated);
- (c) not allow any distribution of the Home Office booklet and journal in the light of the serious flaws identified in this briefing document;
- (d) ensure that the appropriate Committee receives future copies of the Journal Civil Protection to allow all members an opportunity to comment.

3. Conference instructs the NSC to:

- (a) prepare a shorter version of the points made in this briefing and a leaflet to accompany showings of the video;
- (b) prepare a parliamentary briefing;
- (c) arrange a parliamentary showing of the video;
- (d) formulate a series of Parliamentary questions using the points in recommendations 1(a-d) as the basis.

1.00 Introduction

- 1.01 The British are fond of euphemism. We don't like to say that someone has died. We prefer to say that they have "passed away" or we have "lost" them. Anything to do with death is likely to encounter this custom of trying to soften the blow. Thanks to the successes of Nuclear Free Zone (NFZ) local authorities and the anti-nuclear movement, civil defence is no longer associated in the public mind with tin hats and warm cups of tea, but with something far nastier, in fact death on an overwhelming and catastrophic scale. Civil defence is to do with death. It is no longer nice to use the expression in public.
- 1.02 Not long ago, Civil Defence Officers were officially renamed "Emergency Planning Officers". Civil defence bunkers were renamed "Emergency Control Centres". Then the word went out from Ministers and Home Office officials that the government was adopting an "All Hazards" approach to emergency planning. Not just nuclear war and hostile attack but every type of peacetime emergency was to come within the ambit of the new civil defence policy. Only months ago, when it was proposed that NFZ local authorities should respond to the new government position, it was this new "all hazards" policy which we intended to examine and expose.
- 1.03 However, for reasons which have not yet become clear, "All Hazards" is no longer being given prominence in the promotion of civil defence, and may indeed have been pensioned off. In its place we have a new infant, fresh from the Home Office's advertising agency which is called "civil protection".
- 1.04 The Concise Oxford Dictionary is precise, as it should be, on the definition of euphemism:
- "substitution of mild or vague expression for harsh or blunt one".
- That is precisely what the Home Office have done. In Civil Protection they have substituted a milder phrase for one which seemed harsh. They have also replaced a universally understood concept "Civil Defence" - we all know what that means - but it seemed too blunt, with one which is vague. Perhaps the principal criticism of the new "Civil Protection" package being promoted by the Home Office is that it is very vague.
- 1.05 However, already the Home Secretary is in retreat. He has announced that they dare not issue a new Protect and Survive booklet in case it is laughed at or thrown in the bin. Where are the stocks of any booklet to be held? We haven't been told. How on earth are they to be got out quickly in time of war if County and FCDA Emergency planning teams are not to be trusted with them?
- 1.06 The major public relations programme being marketed by the Home Office under the theme of "Civil Protection" will have £300,000 spent on it. That is a lot of money, but it is only 1 percent of what is being spent on the Government campaign against AIDS and only 0.5 per cent of what was spent on the privatisation of British Gas. No TV advertising, no bill board posters, no commercial radioplugs, not even a newspaper advertising campaign; the public face of British Civil Defence is to be

marketed not by marketing professionals, but by the local authority civil defence network. Emergency Planning Officers will be sent the new pamphlet, the quarterly magazine, the video film and the leaflet and it will be up to them to get them out to the public.

1.07 As usual with Civil Defence, the Government has not given its supporters enough resources to do the job they would love to do. Civil Protection must be examined closely by NFZ local authorities, its validity as a planning concept strongly challenged - but it seems, almost before we start, as if the Home Office is pulling back. Shortly, we may predict - if major changes are not made in its legislative basis and the resources devoted to it - then civil protection will go the way of all flesh, it will pass away.

2.00 The Origins of 'Civil Protection'

2.01 The concept of 'Civil Protection', which is central to the Government's recently launched publicity campaign, has a lineage which extends back to the disastrous publication of the pamphlet Protect and Survive, and has emerged from a debate that has raged within the Civil Defence Community, and in government circles, about how best to present nuclear war preparations to the public.

2.02 In Britain, Civil Defence is intimately related to the Government's nuclear defence policy. During the 1950s the growth of nuclear weaponry had effectively made traditional methods of public protection obsolete. This gave rise to the running down of the Civil Defence System, and in 1968, the Civil Defence Corps was disbanded and Civil Defence placed officially on a 'care and maintenance' basis.

2.03 In the early 1970s Civil Defence re-emerged with a new name - home defence. This military style name reflected the new character civil defence had gained as the nuclear age progressed: rather than a public protection measure, it was primarily an apparatus for maintaining the 'machinery of government' in war, or in a period of international crisis. The Home Office Training Manual for Scientific Advisors, published in 1977 and still current, states:

"No defence policy based on deterrence can be convincing if it fails to include an element for home defence. A potential attacker must be persuaded that the nation is ready to accept and survive an attack' at least to the extent of being able to retaliate".

2.04 The Government clearly feel that Civil Defence plays a key role in maintaining the "credibility" of the nuclear deterrent. How is this achieved? The answer lies in the form of nuclear deterrence strategy called "flexible response" adopted by NATO in the early 1970s. This strategy is based on the belief that "limited" wars can be fought, and that levels of destruction can be controlled. The "credibility" of the deterrent lies in the ability to maintain control while "raising the stakes" in any conflict. Maintenance of the "machinery of government" and therefore implementation of home defence preparations, assumes an important role.

- 2.05 'Civil defence' had changed dramatically from forms of public protection during the Second World War such as air raid precautions (ARP), that had received popular support. It had become a subordinate, but key component of a nuclear defence system aimed primarily at protecting the machinery of the state.
- 2.06 Recent developments regarding agreements between the Government and the United States on the use of Britain as a 'staging post' for US troops during an escalating crisis in Europe have undoubtedly made increased demands on the Government to implement its civil defence plans.
- 2.07 Following the election of a new government in 1979, the next 18 months saw three key developments. First, in 1980, the publication of Protect and Survive. Ridicule rained down on this document, which amounted to a re-written form of a previous booklet, issued in 1963; both being reminiscent of publications from the pre-nuclear era. To the chagrin of the Government, Protect and Survive became utterly discredited, ending its days as a topic receiving the attentions of popular comedians.
- 2.08 In August, the then Home Secretary made a major statement on civil defence to parliament. Civil defence was described as an "important element of our defence strategy", and, in announcing an expanded civil defence programme, he described it as "both prudent and necessary to achieve an appropriate balance in our defence capability".
- 2.09 The following month, in combination with the Crusader series of NATO exercises, the Government staged a civil defence exercise entitled Square Leg. A number of official documents describing the exercise found their way to the press. They revealed plans for a nation in crisis: disorder, 'subversion' and conflict - with military and police assuming such tasks as "control of selfish and disgruntled minorities", "support and protection of special courts" and "execution of sentences". Attention then focussed on the home defence apparatus (re-named "civil defence" in the 1980 Review) that had been developed during the 1970s. The nature of this new form of "civil defence" with its close relationship to public order and other state contingency preparations became apparent to many; and the notion of a civil defence that was a "con" and of a highly coercive nature was seized upon by a reactivated and vibrant peace movement that had grown enormously since 1979. Civil defence had become politically contentious again.
- 2.10 Local authorities received copies of the Home Secretary's August Statement the following Spring, incorporated into the Circular ES1/1981 Civil Defence Review. During this period the newly-born nuclear-free zone (NFZ) movement had experienced remarkable growth, with over sixty authorities following the lead of Manchester City Council. Civil defence quickly became a target of the NFZ movement leading to more difficulties for the Government.
- 2.11 In County Emergency Planning Officer (CEPO) circles, it became known that by March 1981 the Government "had shown concern at adverse opinion" and, from the CEPOs point of view, "what was really needed was a statement from people of stature to counter the information". In response, a government official informed CEPOs that with the object of "countering false information" talks were taking place between the Home Office, Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office.
- 2.12 How would the Government respond? Even at this early state, it is possible to detect glimmerings of what was to follow. Whilst the Government pamphlet Civil Defence - why we need it, published in

November of that year, contained no mention of peacetime disasters, just a month before, Home Office minister Patrick Mayhew had issued a press statement claiming that civil defence planning went wider than (war) and much of it was equally relevant to peacetime emergencies, a fact that its critics were seldom prepared to acknowledge.

- 2.13 As 1982 began, the Government's concern over the unpopularity of civil defence, and their thoughts on how to tackle the problem, were revealed in a remarkably candid letter sent to the CEPO president by Home Office Minister Patrick Mayhew:

"The Government is very conscious of the damage being done to local civil defence planning by the nuclear disarmers, the Peace movement and the anti-civil defence lobby ... the case for civil defence must be separated in the public mind from the issue of nuclear disarmament ... Civil defence seems in danger of ceasing to attract all-party support. It is in part for that reason that the Government is emphasising the relevance of civil defence to conventional attack and to peacetime emergencies ... Civil defence policy is now both comprehensible and reasonable. Our problem is to persuade sceptical local politicians that the arguments hostile to civil defence are misconceived, and we are working on this".

- 2.14 This concern was reflected in the Civil defence community. The Spring of 1982 saw CEPOs exchanging letters containing claims such as: "many of us are on a CND hit list ...". A group of CEPOs from one region wrote to the Home Office in anger and despair:

"I have never known such an eroding of confidence and growth of pessimistic gloom ... if only some of the purposeful intent with which Government is persuing the Falklands crisis were to be directed towards the support of Civil Defence and County Emergency Planning Officers, backed by realistic statutory powers ..."

- 2.15 The situation experienced two important developments later in the year. First, the Government failed to stage a national civil defence exercise, to be called 'Hard Rock', in which it was intended that local authorities would be involved in a major way, testing their civil defence plans against the background of revised NATO and Government defence policy. Many authorities regarded the exercise as futile and wasteful, and declined the offer to participate. The embarrassed Government were forced to cancel the exercise indefinitely because of the local authority boycott and the general "inadequate preparation" by authorities, stating that to press ahead "would do more harm than good".

- 2.16 The cancellation was announced in a key speech to the Association of Civil Defence and Emergency Planning Officers by Home Secretary William Whitelaw. He went on to announce new legislation that the Government intended to introduce in order to coerce local authorities into extensive involvement in civil defence preparations. The speech also contained the first official appearance of the "all hazard" concept, with Whitelaw claiming that civil defence is as useful in dealing with a flood or snowstorm as it might be in the event of nuclear war. Before the year was out, a draft version of Whitelaw's legislation had been circulated to local authorities. The Civil defence (General Local Authority Functions) regulations came into force late the following year.

2.17 September 1982 brought much discussion of "all hazards" at the CEPO Society annual study. The contribution by Alan Howard, then of F6 Division at the Home Office provides a great deal of insight into the "all hazards" concept.

He began:

"First let me go back to the "all hazards" theme of the last two days. I have an open view about this. I know that contrary views have been taken during this Study about the points of contrast and of similarity between contingency planning for peacetime disasters and planning for Civil Defence in war".

He went on:

"In F6 Division we recognise that we need good plans for peacetime disasters and also good plans for war. Certainly we have no intention of departing from the doctrine that County emergency planning teams should devote part of their time to assisting the Local Authority in making its plans for peacetime disasters providing that adequate progress is made in the primary task of ensuring that Local Authorities have adequate plans for war".

He then moves on to an assessment of 'all hazards". The exact wording is dependent on whether one refers to the original copy of the speech that was distributed, or to the subsequent version despatched with a request to destroy the original. This leads to a disagreement whether he said:

"Ministers certainly want any public appraisal of civil defence to develop this connection between peacetime emergencies and civil defence" (original).

or

"Ministers wish to develop this pragmatic connection between peacetime emergencies and civil defence" ('edited version').

However, there is agreement that he subsequently stated:

"There are, also, presentational advantages for civil defence in that we are likely to achieve greater political credibility and public acceptance and support if it can be seen that work against the admittedly remote contingency of war has a peacetime application against the various forms of disaster that can occur; and, accordingly, that the money can demonstrably be seen not to have been wasted against some distant contingency".

2.18 It was in 1982 that "all hazards" came to be recognised as a concept by the civil defence community, and by the Government, as a means of "selling" civil defence to unconvinced local authorities although critics of the idea remain within the civil defence community. Indeed, this is the very term used by Eric Alley, the Home Office Civil Defence Adviser, and then the Humberside CEPO, in a letter to a fellow CEPO, written in the following Spring:

"With regard to the question of 'selling' civil defence to reluctant authorities, there may be some merit in this. Most of us are selling

along the lines of the 'all hazards' approach but I would also be interested to learn if anyone can 'sell' this product solely on the 'war' ticket".

- 2.19 Some resistance to "all hazards" was encountered within the civil defence community. Such opposition kept a very low profile with the notable exception of Sir Leslie Mavor, one time Principal of the Easingwold Civil Defence College, who wrote in 1983 that:

"... I have said and written so much about the so-called 'all hazards' approach to emergency planning that I need hardly voice again my unease about this attempt to give Civil Defence a more generally acceptable face".

He went on to say:

"We know also that the connection between planning for recovery from peacetime disasters and war emergency planning is tenuous in the extreme, and that to overlay it is conducive to bad practice and to ambiguous and inappropriate procedures and systems of control".

In discussing the implications of "all hazards" for his particular responsibility, the organisation of volunteer effort, his concerns about the dangers of adopting the new policy become clear:

"... if things continue to move in the threatened direction a different concept will emerge - and do we really want among our Civil Defence volunteers those who are eager enough to help in blizzard or flood but will draw the line at supporting your emergency plans in war?"

- 2.20 Mavor's efforts were fruitless. Over the next few years "all hazards" grew in strength and ministers regularly used references to peacetime disasters in statements on civil defence. For example, Leon Brittan in November 1984:

"In some ways the problems faced by local authorities in planning to alleviate the effects of war are the same as those which they face in coping with a peacetime emergency".

- 2.21 What of the legislative basis for this approach? After all, the 1948 Civil Defence Act refers exclusively to plans for "hostile attack". Change arrived with the announcement in the 1983 Conservative Party general election manifesto that it was intended to "amend the Civil Defence Act 1948 to enable civil defence funds to be used in safeguarding against peacetime emergencies as well as against hostile attack".

The following year, Home Office Minister Giles Shaw commented:

"The legislation will also reinforce and illustrate the humanitarian purpose of civil defence and it will be interesting to see the reaction of those authorities who are at present opposed to civil defence planning".

- 2.22 The Government made it clear that it would be difficult to find Parliamentary time to introduce this legislation, and invited it to be taken up as a private member's bill. Sir Nicholas Bonsor obliged, and the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act finally came into force in June 1986.

- 2.23 The Bill was drafted at the Home Office and, during its course through Parliament, the National Council for Civil Defence, a pressure group with which Bonsor is associated, ran a campaign based on the need to "de-politicise civil defence" and "restore consensus" by adopting the "all hazards" approach.
- 2.24 Local authorities were officially encouraged to adopt this approach in the ES1/1986 Circular, issued in October 1986, which stated:
- "The Government encourages local authorities to adopt an all-hazards approach to emergency planning. The practical consequences of disasters can be very similar no matter how different their causes ..."
- 2.25 Two months later the Government launched their "Civil Protection" publicity campaign. 'Civil Protection' has taken the "all hazards" line one step further in presentational terms, to the extent of making war planning appear almost incidental to peacetime disaster preparations. Seen through the distorting lens of 'civil protection', all emergencies fall within the ambit of a united system combining Police, Fire, Ambulance, Emergency Services, Government departments and agencies, and community volunteers; all of which are co-ordinated by the local County Authority. Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards (CIMAH) Regulations are, for example, seen as an integral part of this united whole.
- 2.26 Of course, in reality the introduction of the "civil protection" public relations package has not been accompanied by such unification of services; nor has it led to local authorities being enabled to undertake serious emergency planning for peacetime disasters. The resources available to them are still determined by the requirements of nuclear war planning.
- 2.27 In the press, perhaps the brightly-coloured balloon of 'civil protection' was best despatched by the Financial Times, who wrote about "a £300,000 campaign to make the public more aware of the need for Civil defence which the Government calls Civil Protection"

3.00 THE HOME OFFICE PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAMME

- 3.01 On 16 December, at a Press Conference in London, the Home Secretary launched the latest attempt by the Home Office to promote Civil Defence. On display was:
- (i) a video film "Should Disaster Strike: Civil Protection in Action", extracts from which were shown to the meeting
- and also - all with the same title "Civil Protection" -
- (ii) a glossy 28-page colour-printed booklet
 - (iii) the first 12-page issue of a new quarterly magazine; and
 - (iv) a folded leaflet for distribution at showings of the video.
- 3.02 It had been expected that the long-promised revised version of the "Protect and Survive" booklet, which gave advice to householders on how to prepare for nuclear attack, would also be available. However, the meeting was told that copies would not be issued unless required in the run-up to a war emergency.

- 3.03 Single copies of the 30 minute video "Should Disaster Strike" have been sent to County Emergency Planning Officers with further copies for loan available from them on video or 16mm film. The first copy sent out last December has now been withdrawn and CEPOs have been asked to return it to the Home Office. Apparently, the commentary had misrepresented the casualties at Flixborough, Salford and Abbeystead. A new version has now been issued by the Home Office.
- 3.04 The 28-page booklet is titled "Civil Protection: Planning for Major Emergencies at a National and Local Level". It's divided into sections giving, first, under the title "What it does and why" an explanation of what activities the new phrase "civil protection" is designed to cover: second, a brief assessment of the effects of nuclear weapons: third, two sections giving a description of the different organisations involved called "Who is Involved" and "The Way It Works" and, fourth, some notes on future developments called "Planning Ahead". In addition, there's a section called "Some Questions Answered" dealing almost entirely with criticisms of civil defence. Finally there's a guide to further Home Office publications and a nationwide list of local authority Emergency Planning Officers who are to provide further copies of the booklet and information about the video.
- 3.05 The booklet gives various explanations of what it means by civil protection:
- "The essence of civil protection is planning for the care of those involved in a major disaster. It is a means to provide shelter for the homeless, food and water for the hungry and practical help for the injured".
- "Planning for civil protection covers the whole spectrum of possible catastrophes ranging through natural disasters, industrial and transport accidents and wartime emergencies".
- "Civil protection is focussed at a local authority level ... The reason for this localised rather than national responsibility is that no two areas are alike, the geography, the resources, the people and the problems are all different and best understood by those who live and work there".
- "Civil protection is not a specific organisation as such. It is a useful way to describe the co-ordinated efforts of a number of people who are making plans and training to cope with effects of major emergencies, in peacetime or wartime".
- 3.06 Copies of the booklet are not available through HMSO but are to be circulated by local authority CEPOS.
- 3.07 The quarterly magazine is a similar glossy production to be circulated by the Home Office to CEPOS for free distribution. It will be aimed at what is called "the civil protection world". The first issue contains a message from the Home Secretary, two articles about the work of Easingwold, the Home Office Civil Defence College (which has not yet been renamed the Civil Protection College); some news articles about emergency incidents; a background feature about the nature of radiation; and a promotional spread for the Civil Protection publicity material.

- 3.08 The brochure is an A4 sheet folded into three to accompany the film. It contains material summarised from the booklet. All items feature prominently the orange circle containing a blue triangle which is the internationally accepted symbol for civil defence. "You will be seeing it frequently in the future", we are told.
- 3.09 The whole package of publications has been designed by advertising consultants Waldron, Allen, Heary and Thompson on a £300,000 contract with the Home Office.
- 3.10 At the press conference on 16 December, the Home Secretary, Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, acknowledged that the Government had been under pressure to produce the new public information programme by "people involved in Civil Protection". He argued that the basic argument in favour of emergency planning had been clouded by the association between civil protection and questions of defence policy. He thought that support for civil protection was compatible with a wide range of views about defence and foreign policy.
- 3.11 When questioned, the Home Secretary said that countries with widely differing defence policies had adopted civil protection. The Home Office had decided to engage in a public information programme at this time because there was no current international crisis and therefore the publicity campaign would not contribute to heightened tension. Also, there was pressure from people involved in civil protection to do so. Pressed about the withholding from public distribution of the "Protect and Survive" booklet for householders, Mr Hurd said that the pamphlet was "crisis material". People would not take any notice of it in a situation where they were not alarmed and a crisis was not anticipated. When asked whether "Protect and Survive" had been rewritten, the Home Secretary gave no clear answer but said that written material might not be the best way to convey the message in a crisis. In answer to a further question about the failure to re-issue "Protect and Survive", Mr Hurd said that if issued now people would laugh at it or throw it in the wastepaper basket.

4.00 "Civil Protection": An Assessment

- 4.01 The Home Secretary in his candid remarks about the purpose of the Public Information Programme made more than one reference to pressure from "people involved in civil protection". It appears from the limited scale of the Information Programme and the restricted methods of distribution proposed, that the package is intended, first, to appease the civil defence lobby who have been pressing very hard for the government to take a more positive stance in favour of civil defence and, second, to boost the morale of the civil defence community, especially the emergency planning officers. From the content of the materials and the proposed methods of distribution, it seems unlikely that the programme will have much impact on the general public. The question arises whether a campaign which has ducked the challenge of going out to the general public can do much to restore the standing of civil defence in the community or the morale of civil defence professionals.

4.02 One particular lobby which has been pressing for some time for a major public relations effort in support of civil defence, is the National Council for Civil Defence (NCCD). The NCCD claims 230 Parliamentary Sponsors in both Houses of Parliament representing all the main parties. In May 1985, a booklet, the "Civil Defence Briefing Guide" was published for use by the NCCD's Sponsors in Parliament which was highly critical of the government's performance in regard to civil defence. In a key section headed "Presentation of Civil Defence", the booklet stated:

"A series of public relations failures over the past 5 years enabled the disarmament lobby to mount a successful campaign against civil defence which has undermined public confidence".

"As a result, Emergency Planning Staff who should now be progressing the measures required under the new Civil Defence Regulations find themselves on the defensive or, in certain 'Nuclear Free Zones' areas, prevented from carrying out their responsibilities by hostile local authorities".

"A large percentage of the public is now persuaded of the futility of civil defence through emotional and illogical propaganda. The Home Office has failed to put over its own case".

4.03 The National Council for Civil Defence accepted realistically that the argument about civil defence had been lost with the public and that EPOs were on the defensive. Their booklet detailed a large number of practical suggestions for remedying the situation several of which now feature prominently in the Home Office's Planned Programme of Implementation and others of which are directly relevant to the "Civil Protection" package. It's worth giving several of the NCCD's points:

"Effective civil defence can be created only if it has the support of the general public. This requires a major effort in public relations".

"The rationale for civil defence should be presented as the need to plan for the protection and recovery of all individuals from the effects of all hazards in peace and war. The case for civil defence is valid even without reference to the nuclear deterrent".

"The Government must accept publicly the need for effective civil defence preparations to meet the threat of major peacetime emergencies".

"The Government should adopt the international civil defence symbol and the other civil defence provisions of the 1977 Protocol 1 to the 1949 Geneva Convention".

"The Home Office should advise local authorities immediately that the internationally recognised civil defence insignia and identification cards will be the ONLY authorised insignia and cards used by civil defence workers in the UK".

"The Government should give some thought to the production of a large number of lapel badges, T-shirts, car stickers etc with the insignia and possibly with some short slogan such as "Civil Defence Makes Sense" or "Civil Defence Cares For You".

"Until recently all political parties supported the need for effective civil defence. The Government must work for the restoration of all-party consensus on civil defence. This can best be achieved by adopting the "All Hazards" rationale and by emphasising the priority of protecting the individual in the community and by making civil defence effective".

- 4.04 It will be noted that the Government has not gone all the way with the National Council. For example, no advice has been issued to local authorities instructing them to use the International Civil Defence symbol and no major public relations "splash" with T-shirts and slogans has been attempted. This half-hearted adoption of the National Council's proposals for a "major effort in public relations" suggests a weakness in the government's commitment which the bravado of changing the name of civil defence to civil protection does not conceal. Internationally, the orange triangle on a blue background is the civil defence symbol standing for emergency measures to protect the population in peace and war. The National Council wanted the Government to use the symbol and the term in exactly the same way, that is, British Civil defence being redefined to include planning for peacetime emergencies. However to do this the Government would have had to commit itself seriously to a fundamental reorganisation of civil defence so that a proper system for coping with civil emergencies was developed. This course has not been pursued, however - and the easier option was adopted of changing the name of civil defence, but not the substance.
- 4.05 When Sir Nicholas Bonsor MP moved the Second Reading of the Civil Protection in Peacetime Bill in the House of Commons in February 1986 he specifically thanked the NCCD whose work in the preparation and encouragement of civil defence had been the bulwark on which civil defence was advancing.
- 4.06 The main fault with the new Civil Protection material is that a proper emergency planning framework which would allow local authorities to satisfactorily prepare for peacetime emergencies does not exist - yet the public relations material glosses over this and pretends that it does.
- 4.07 Parts of the framework for a comprehensive national emergency planning service have been constructed but not to the extent that the publicity material claims. In order to cope with the fact that the Civil Protection Service which it asserts is in being does not in fact exist, the publicity campaign has to resort to overstatements, misrepresentations, omissions and untruths. The image of a civil protection service conjured up by the Home Office's advertising agency is blurred and vague - inevitably vague because the concept of a comprehensive civil protection service has not been thought through and the means to make it a reality are not in place.
- 4.08 What would be needed if a proper Civil Protection Service for the whole nation was to be developed would be:
- a proper legislative framework
 - adequate grant support from central government
 - political consensus in support of the service
 - an established national, regional and locally based structure for co-ordinating peacetime emergency planning

- general experience and uniform training in the emergency planning profession for peacetime emergency planning
- access for emergency planning officers to facilities, equipment and resources appropriate for handling peacetime emergencies
- a clear public acknowledgement by the Home Office that the central role in most peacetime emergencies is taken by the Police and Fire Brigade with support from local authorities.

None of these requirements exists at the present time. The Home Office knows that they do not exist. That may help to explain why the Public Information Programme is being promoted in a somewhat half-hearted way.

4.09 There are many examples to illustrate these points in the Civil Protection booklet. We shall restrict ourselves to four.

4.10 First, page 5, "Why we need civil protection", the second paragraph reads:

"Planning for civil protection covers the whole spectrum of possible catastrophes ranging through natural disasters, industrial and transport accidents and wartime emergencies".

This statement is a blatant misrepresentation of the true position for several reasons:

- (1) Under the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1986, civil defence grant is payable and civil defence resources are available for use in peacetime emergency planning only if the local authority first undertakes war planning. Thus, if there were a spectrum of catastrophes covered by planning for civil protection, an honest account would have to describe the range as proceeding from wartime emergencies through to natural disasters and not the other way round. The whole pamphlet is filled with examples of a deliberate and wholly misleading attempt to hide the primacy of war planning in civil protection. The pamphlet sets out to banish civil defence against nuclear attack to the margins of this puffed-up comprehensive civil protection service, whereas in fact civil defence for war purposes is central to the whole programme. It completely overshadows in the actions and intentions of the Government all other developments in emergency planning.

However,

- (ii) To take the argument further there is no existing range of plans in Britain covering the whole spectrum of possible catastrophes. The Home Office pamphlet is not telling the truth. A number of County Emergency Planning Teams have moved beyond war planning to develop contingency plans for civil emergencies, but there are probably as many who have done no planning for peacetime emergencies except to fulfil their statutory obligations to plan for a few industrial sites under the CIMAH Regulations. The picture across the county is at best extremely patchy; moreover, if one examines authorities below the County level, probably most have a Major Peacetime Disaster Scheme but few have developed contingency plans for a range of catastrophes. The "whole spectrum of possible catastrophes" is not covered despite the claims in the pamphlet.

(iii) If local authorities at the present time wanted to make a major effort through their emergency planning teams to develop peacetime emergency plans so as to cover the whole spectrum of Civil Protection, they could not do it. Why not? Because the Home Office is directing them at the present moment to engage in war planning as a top priority with targets and deadlines stretching through to the end of 1989. The crash programme to implement the Civil Defence Regulations, the Home Office's Planned Programme of Implementation, makes it impossible for local authorities to move quickly if they want to, to introduce a range of plans across the "spectrum of catastrophes". The Home Office knows that it is exerting considerable pressure on local authorities at the present time to develop civil defence plans against hostile attack and that emergency planning staffs are likely to be considerably stretched meeting these requirements yet it shamelessly gives the impression in the Civil Protection pamphlet that its priorities are with peacetime planning. Inevitably this will promote cynicism, not only from NFZ authorities but also from within the civil defence community itself, who know the reality.

4.11 A second blatant example of misrepresentation is contained on pages 10-11 of the booklet. Under the heading "Civil Protection: Who is Involved?" a large organisational diagram is reproduced something like the solar system, which shows agencies involved in civil protection all orbiting round a central sun, much larger than the rest, which contains the words in large type "The Local Authority Councillors and Chief Executive". This is no doubt pleasing to the egos of Councillors and Chief Executives and their officers in the emergency planning field who enjoy a reflected glory - but it misrepresents the real situation in almost all cases. Most emergencies in peacetime, such as domestic gas explosions, burst water mains, large fires, train or motorway crashes, leaks of industrial gases and so on are controlled principally by the Police and Fire Brigade or less often by emergency teams of the public service involved. Local authority major peacetime disaster schemes are quite explicit on this point: "In the event of a major disaster the police will assume overall control and co-ordination of operations, taking any necessary measures to safeguard the public".

4.12 The role of the local authority and its emergency planning team is principally in a support capacity to Police, Fire and Ambulance services and is complementary to them providing resources and expertise when requested. There are certain types of emergency such as food poisoning or rabies where Environmental Health Departments take control; local authorities do have a more central role where widespread flooding or prolonged snowcover isolate communities and houses and bring Public Works, Highways, Housing, Social Services and other Departments into play and evacuation and rest centres have to be organised. But even in the one peacetime situation where, thanks to an EEC directive (the Seveso Directive), the Government has been obliged to give a proper statutory basis to peacetime emergency planning, that is the control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards (CIMAH) Regulations, the local authority still does not control the main emergency operation. The County Emergency Planning Team prepares an offsite Emergency Plan which in the event of a major industrial accident supports the on and off-site arrangements of the Fire Brigade, the Police and the Ambulance Service

and they run the show. Moreover, particularly in Fire and Civil Defence Authority areas where the County Emergency Planning Unit is attached to the Fire Service and has no associated Highways, Social Services or Education Departments, the local authority response to a CIMAH emergency falls almost wholly to the District within which the CIMAH site is located.

4.13 Again, in potential nuclear power station accidents, control rests principally between the Central Electricity Generating Board or British Nuclear Fuels, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the Police; and, similarly, with a rail crash involving radioactive fuel British Rail and the nuclear power operatives, together with the police, control the emergency arrangements, for which the plans are semi-secret and from which local authorities are largely excluded.

4.14 It is thus mostly a pretence that local authorities control peacetime emergencies. The lack of coherence in the whole system was a problem which confronted Anne Tyerman, the Director of the Home Office video "Should Disaster Strike". When she tried to make sense of the civil protection framework, she failed. She writes pleasantly in the first issue of Civil Protection about her problems in trying to weld the diverse elements of the civil protection world "into a coherent whole":

"Was an exercise on an Army base in Devon more appropriate than a small scale afternoon training session at a waste site outside Norwich, or a seminar in the basement of County Hall in Wakefield?"

"In the end I abandoned the aim of giving the broad national picture and, instead, concentrated on trying to give a flavour of some of the people involved in the field"

It's not surprising that Ms Tyerman abandoned the aim of giving the broad national picture because there is no coherent whole.

4.15 A third misleading theme running through the booklet and through the whole Civil Protection publicity campaign is that civil protection is politically neutral, a humanitarian response to human suffering on whatever scale and from whatever cause. It seems to be assumed from the Home Secretary down that if this assertion is made often and strongly enough then political consensus in favour of emergency planning can be restored. Political consensus might be possible if the Home Office would look honestly at the overwhelming problems of developing a credible civil defence policy in response to the threat of nuclear war. But instead it is trying to confuse the issue by mobilising undoubted public support and political consensus for peacetime emergency planning behind its already discredited civil defence policies.

4.16 On page 8 of the pamphlet we read:

"There are differences of opinion about whether or not we should have nuclear weapons and what their effects would be. Irrespective of this, there is always a need for civil protection".

We have pointed out above how misleading is this representation of civil protection. The Government through the Planned Programme of Implementation and the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act is attempting to force local authorities to complete their war plans as a top priority and will deny them grant for peacetime plans unless they do so. It is clear that the civil protection campaign is an attempt to rescue civil defence from the discredit into which it has fallen. By dressing it up in the clothes of peacetime emergency planning it is hoped to regain lost ground. However, the reality and the result may be to bring discredit and controversy to an area where there has previously been consensus and the chances of developing a coherent peacetime emergency system may be harmed.

- 4.17 A fourth example of misrepresentation is contained on page 13 of the Civil Protection pamphlet where there is a paragraph of only 20 words under the heading "Footing the Bill". It says:

"The Government supports local authority work by grant payments at the rate of either 100% (eg on emergency communications equipment) or 75% (eg on emergency centres)".

No mention is made of the fact that these grants are payable only for civil defence resources, that is, for capabilities which assist the response to hostile attack. These grants are not available for facilities for peacetime emergencies such as mobile control centres, loud-hailers, earth-moving equipment, snow ploughs and so on. On page 5 it is said that £98 million a year was set aside for maintaining the civil protection network in 1986-87, including £16 million for local authorities. The truth is that this money was mainly spent on the system of hardened bunkers and communications lines which the Home Office wishes to have in place in case of nuclear attack. Some of it was spent on constructing mock-ups of British house types in the Nevada desert, to see how they stood up to blast-waves from simulated nuclear explosions. Only a small proportion was spent on planning the response to peacetime emergencies.

- 4.18 Thus what we have in the Civil Protection Public Information Programme is not the major public relations effort designed to rehabilitate Civil Defence and linked to a comprehensive peacetime emergency planning service which the NCCD wanted. What we have is the fanfare without the occasion. It's not the emperor who has no clothes, but the clothes which have no emperor.

5.00 "All Hazards": An Assessment

- 5.01 It is important to recognise the significant role which local authorities have played for generations in responding to emergencies as they occur in our communities. Day and night, local authority workers are out assisting the Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service by shoring up damaged buildings, clearing roads, finding temporary accommodation and setting up rest centres, counselling victims of emergencies and so on. It is this large area of local authority initiative which the Home Office is attempting to marshal behind its

"civil protection" banner. But can the day-to-day local authority response to peacetime emergencies, built on the goodwill, expertise and discipline of local authority staff and the persistent concern for their wards of local councillors, be connected legitimately with planning for nuclear attack? The Home Office appears to believe that it can be and, until recently, has been promoting a rationale in support of this view, called the "All Hazards" approach to emergency planning.

- 5.02 There are two arguments which stand behind the "All Hazards" approach to emergency planning. One is that there is some kind of "seamless robe" covering all emergencies of whatever scale and that the methods and resources employed to deal with them are basically similar, whatever the cause of the emergency, in peacetime or in war. A Senior Home Office official recently spoke of the "essential one-ness of all emergencies". The second argument is the pragmatic one that the morale and expertise of emergency planning officers will be improved - and also their value to the community and their public standing - if they can be employed on the useful task of making plans for peacetime emergencies.
- 5.03 The "All Hazards" approach to emergency planning was proclaimed as the rationale behind last year's Civil Protection in Peacetime Act. It has also made its appearance officially in Home Office guidance to local authorities ES1/1986:

"The Government encourages local authorities to adopt an all hazards approach to emergency planning. The practical consequences of disasters can be very similar no matter how different their causes and the specific plans required under Schedule 2 to the Regulations will often have peacetime applications".

Subsequently references to "all hazards" have been deleted from the draft amendments to 'Emergency Planning Guidance to Local Authorities' and no reference is made to the phrase anywhere in the "Civil Protection" publicity. These late omissions suggest some last minute hesitancy on the part of the Home Office. Even so, "all hazards" is at present the rationale for "civil protection".

- 5.04 There are, however, two fundamental flaws in the Government's proclamation of an "all hazards" approach to emergency planning:
- (i) the first is that planning for catastrophe on the scale of nuclear war involves a quite different approach from planning for peacetime emergencies because the circumstances are entirely different
 - (ii) the second is that the legislative framework, material resources, funding, political consensus, administrative commitment, and political initiative do not exist at present to develop a comprehensive national programme of response to peacetime emergencies.

5.05 The first and fundamental problem with the "all hazards" approach to emergency planning is that it ignores the decisive differences between planning for nuclear attack and planning for peacetime emergencies. Peacetime emergencies are essentially localised at a specific point or in a specific area. The job of the emergency planner is to make arrangements for concentrating and combining resources at the point of the disaster, if necessary mobilising resources from far afield and bringing them to the scene. The control of peacetime emergencies is generally handled by the Police and Fire Brigade, together with water, gas or local authorities who have contingency arrangements for lending support to each other until the immediate crisis is over. Occasionally, in particular extremities, Government ministers may take over and manage the emergency but it is still essentially a localised operation.

5.06 Civil defence planning for nuclear attack is quite different. All normal communications, lines of control, liaison arrangements, access to resources and so on must be assumed to have broken down. Agencies which normally can rely on each other for co-operation are on their own. It is impossible to concentrate manpower and resources at the point of the emergency because the emergency is everywhere and surviving resources are needed everywhere. A completely new structure of command and control springs into operation which is not used in other emergencies. Special emergency provisions are rushed through parliament to change the legislative framework so as to allow civil defence plans to operate.

5.07 The Home Office is fully aware of the essential difference between planning for emergencies in peacetime and after nuclear attack. Addressing the County Emergency Planning Officers' Annual Study in 1982, Alan Howard, a Senior Official, was quite explicit:

"Clearly there are differences (between peacetime and war time planning. In Wartime, these consist) in the scale of disaster, the diversity of attack, the multiplicity of targets, the fact there might be a continuing attack: it's not just (as in peacetime planning) a question of a single disaster happening and all resources being concentrated on a particular event and aid summoned in from nearby counties and emergency services. (In war), they will all have their own problems. It is very important that the plans against war should be entirely self-sufficient".

5.08 This essential distinction between the problems of wartime and peacetime planning is accepted by the emergency services, who have separate units to deal with them. Civil defence planning has always recognised the unique circumstances faced in war, especially nuclear war, and has concentrated on developing a network of hardened facilities across the country which offer the possibility of maintaining or restoring communications and control when the community is being physically wrecked. These facilities have not been designed to cope with all hazards and have none of the flexibility needed to do so - they are designed to cope with a particular hazard. Civil defence equipment is largely inappropriate for responding to peacetime emergencies:

- communications are with other bunkers, not with the regular emergency services
- communications are fixed and hardened, not mobile or portable

- many emergency control centres built for civil defence purposes are unsuitable for daily use and therefore in-appropriate for peacetime emergencies
- civil defence planning assumes a different command and control system from that operating in peacetime.

5.09 There is therefore a break, a radical discontinuity, between the hierarchy of plans which may be developed for peacetime emergencies and the plans developed for civil defence against nuclear attack. Local authorities undoubtedly wish to see a much stronger and better co-ordinated response to peacetime emergencies - and in particular major disasters - constructed on the basis of the daily and weekly co-operation between themselves and the emergency services which has been going on for years. But it is entirely inappropriate to straitjacket improvements in the planning for peacetime emergencies to the apparatus of civil defence planning - and effrontery then to call this an all hazards approach. The Home Office is attempting to introduce a top-down approach to peacetime emergency planning derived from its national network of civil defence outposts - whereas what is needed is a bottom-up approach, strengthening the existing flexible arrangements established locally which can be assisted to work better by means of a proper legislative framework.

5.10 The second problem with the "all hazards" approach has already been spelt out in the discussion of "civil protection" (para 4.08 above) and needs some amplification here. It is that a proper legislative framework, adequate funding and suitable national, regional and local structure do not exist for promoting peacetime emergency planning. Moreover, for as long as planning for peacetime disaster is linked to civil defence planning there will not be political consensus behind such a programme and while emergency planning officers are obliged to devote the best part of their energies to wartime plans there will not be time to do peacetime planning properly.

5.11 Local authorities, with the specific exception of Fire and Civil Defence Authorities, under Section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972 have the power to take action to avert, alleviate or eradicate the effects or potential effects of an emergency or disaster on their area which is occurring, imminent or may reasonably be apprehended. However, they are not grant-aided under Section 138 and the Government has specifically decided not to introduce a statutory duty on local authorities to undertake peacetime planning. Local authorities, including Fire and Civil Defence Authorities, are however, obliged by statute under the Civil Defence Act 1948 and the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983 to undertake civil defence planning. The effect of the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1986 was to amend the Civil Defence Act so as to make it permissible for local authorities to use their civil defence resources for purposes of peacetime planning and to be grant-aided when doing so. Since FCDAs have been denied Section 138 powers, the only basis on which they can engage in peacetime planning (apart from the rather limited duties under the CIMAH Regulations) is under the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act.

- 5.12 The limitations of the new Act hinge on the definition of "civil defence resources" and on the "subject matter of civil defence plans". Local authorities are only permitted to use their own "civil defence resources" - that is effectively their bunkers, communications equipment and civil defence personnel, including volunteers in taking action against peacetime disaster. These resources include only staff who are members of the Emergency Planning Team and there is no power to plan for the use of non-civil defence resources or of other bodies' resources. The "subject matter of plans" must relate to the 12 classes of plan specified in Schedule 2 of the 1983 Civil Defence Regulations and the peacetime plans must follow and be secondary to the performance of the civil defence function. Most of these civil defence plans are so general in their scope - because designed to deal with a generalised emergency of total breakdown - that they are unlikely to have much relevance for peacetime emergencies which are specific and localised.
- 5.13 Civil defence plans are necessarily general because the government consistently refuses to suggest likely attack patterns or likely targets. Civil defence plans are designed to offer a flexible response to all forms of attack. Thus Schedule 2 indicates a plan for collecting and distributing information, another for providing and maintaining a rescue service, another for billeting or temporary accommodation, another for emergency feeding services, and so on. The plans are generalised to cover the whole local authority area and the job of the emergency controller in a war situation would be to combine elements of them in a form suitable to meet the particular emergency situation experienced. The system was strongly criticised in the Report of the Greater London Area War Risk Study (GLAWAR) published in 1986 which thought these arrangements would only be "of marginal use". GLAWARS reached the conclusion that specific plans need to be reached for specific contingencies.
- 5.14 If we examine the sole statutory requirement on local authorities in Britain to engage in peacetime emergency planning, the control of Major Industrial Accident (CIMAH) Regulations 1984, the planning requirements there are site-specific. Local authorities, in consultation with the operators of the industrial firm in question and with the emergency services, are asked to draw up a specific off-site plan. The plan relates to a particular hazard or hazards and identifies particular resources in the immediate vicinity which can be mobilised, if necessary. It is this type of legislative framework for peacetime emergency planning which is required, relating specific plans to specific contingencies. What the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act offers is a set of generalised plans of limited applicability to any particular peacetime emergency.
- 5.15 It is not clear at the present moment whether the Home Office will continue to argue that it is following an "all-hazards" approach to emergency planning. It may be that the contradictions so smoothly covered over by the phrase will prove too much and recourse will be made to the even blander formulas of "civil protection". Since both conceal the same reality which is that there is no uniform approach to wartime and peacetime planning, it really makes no difference.

6.00 Conclusions

- 6.01 Local authorities have received Home Office Circular No. ES1/1986 which says that the Government is encouraging them to adopt an all hazards approach to emergency planning. County Emergency Planning Officers are now receiving quantities of the "Civil Protection" publicity materials which they have been requested to distribute to the districts and to others interested. The first issue of a new quarterly journal, Civil Protection, has made its appearance and will offer a regular reminder of the new Home Office approach.
- 6.02 It seems appropriate for NFZ local authorities to press the Home Office for an explanation and justification of its All Hazards doctrine. It would also be appropriate for authorities to inform the Home Office that, failing a satisfactory refutation of the points made in this report, they do not find in the "all hazards" doctrine, nor in the powers made available to local authorities under the Civil Protection in Peacetime Act 1986, substantive evidence that the Home Office is genuinely committed to promoting planning for peacetime emergencies.
- 6.03 In order to develop a comprehensive peacetime emergency planning service a statutory duty should be placed on local authorities and planning work for peacetime emergencies should be grant-aided at the same level as for civil defence. In the absence of such an Act and the national framework established by it, Fire and Civil Defence Authorities should continue to press for Section 138 powers under the Local Government Act 1972.
- 6.04 The "Civil protection" publicity campaign launched by the Home Office is objectionable because it claims to be seeking consensus with its political opponents when in fact it is doing precisely the opposite. The aim is to isolate critics of government civil defence policies by attaching civil defence planning to a form of emergency planning which does enjoy all-party support, namely, peacetime emergency planning. The effect will be to increase cynicism on all sides and this may hinder attempts to improve arrangements for peacetime emergency planning which are greatly needed.
- 6.05 Showings of the Home Office video film should be attended by a member or an officer of the local authority who has read this report and can present the viewpoint expressed. "Civil Protection" leaflets distributed with the film should be accompanied by an NFZ leaflet based on points made in this report. Future copies of the Civil Protection journal should be taken to committee and the comments of members be sought. Authorities should not circulate copies of the "Civil Protection" booklet and periodical.
- 6.06 The hazards for the Home Office of promoting Civil Defence in its new guise of "Civil Protection" are that it will open up the whole question of Civil Defence again to public gaze and ridicule. NFZ authorities have not yet been known to miss such an opportunity.