

Nuclear war toll revised

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The report on the effects of nuclear war prompted the Home Office to do its sums in — this time based on data from Hiroshima and US Government assessments.

The results still underestimate the effects of an attack, the report's authors, Dr S. J. Jipavlou and Dr G. Carr, of the Home Office's scientific research and development branch. They take no account of deaths in high-rise flats, nor of the combined effects of several bombs dropping at once. They deal only

with the effects of blast — not heat or fall-out.

If the walls of a house survive the blast, debris will be the biggest hazard, say the scientists in their report. "Blast waves will enter buildings causing household items to be displaced, and internal partitions, window frames, doors etc. to fail and become missiles."

Their views are clearly embarrassing for a government wedded to the principle of "protect and survive", which may explain why the report carried a disclaimer that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Home Office.

N-war toll

'more than 13/9/86 forecasts'

By Andrew Veitch, Medical Correspondent

The Government has seriously underestimated the number of people who would be killed in a nuclear attack, according to figures published by the Home Office last night.

Ninety per cent of people in ordinary brick houses would be killed by a pressure of 9.6-12 pounds per square inch (psi) from a single one-megaton bomb. According to previous Government figures, the blast would have had to produce a pressure of 30psi to kill the same proportion.

The report does not deal in hard numbers of deaths, but what it shows is that the old calculations, based on World War II data, were wide of the mark: blast from nuclear weapons will be far more deadly than that from TNT.

But it appears to have had an effect on Government planning. A Home Office spokesman said last night that eight authorities had started on a pilot project earlier this summer to identify communal bomb shelters.

She named them as Cheshire, Dorset, Hertfordshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, North and West Yorkshire and the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The shelters, in such places as flyovers and car parks, basements would have to be habitable for up to 14 days with 1.4 square metres of floor space for each person.

"The results of the review can be used for analysing shelter requirements and improving civil protection in time of war," she added.

"Local authorities are being encouraged by the Home Office to carry out surveys of potential communal shelters in their areas and other Home Office studies have looked at a range of shelter types which can be fitted into houses."

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