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ARIZONA NEWSLETTER

Doctors for Disaster Preparedness

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SOVIET OBJECTIVE: VICTORY

The Nuclear Attack Planning Base 1990 was discussed by Joseph Moreland, Assistant Associate Director of Civil Defense, Federal Emergency Management Agency, at a meeting held at the Pima County Medical Society Building, April 1, 1987. Moreland visited Arizona to confer with state emergency planning officials.

The new study by FEMA updates a 1975 study, which is obsolete because of changes in weapons technology resulting in smaller, cleaner, more accurate warheads.

In assessing the threat, FEMA officials analyzed USSR warfighting objectives, and the strategies that would likely follow from them. The overall Soviet objective, Moreland said, was victory. The secondary objectives are: the destruction of the "imperialist" government; the disarmament and neutralization of enemy forces; and the limitation of damage to the postwar world, especially Europe.

Soviet planners are said to consider the use of nuclear weapons "inevitable" in the event of war (although "use" does not necessarily mean "strategic use.")

The principles the Soviets are thought to follow in selecting their targets are not a mirror image of US procedures. Their doctrine states that the targeting of populations per se is "militarily unproductive and politically immoral" (although they would have no reluctance to strike a military facility that was near a population center.) Their top priority targets are (1) weapons that could be used for retaliation; (2) major "nodes" within various target classes, for example, important links in the electrical power grid and the approximately 125 chemical plants that produce the raw materials used in all chemical manufacture; (3) state capitals (part of the "decapitation" strategy of destroying leadership). Ground bursts would be limited, since it is not the Soviets' purpose to create radioactive deserts.

About 47.2 million persons (19% of the population) live within very high risk areas, which might be subjected to blast overpressures equal to or greater than 10 psi. About 32.2 million persons (13% of the population) live in high risk areas, where overpressures between 5 and 10 psi might be anticipated. Nearly 72% of the US population is potentially affected by blast overpressures of 0.5 psi or more.

More than half the US population resides in areas expected to be at "medium" to "very high" risk for fallout, where "medium" is defined to mean a one-week unprotected dose of between 3000 to 6000 roentgens. FEMA estimates that 68,000,000 dosimeters would be needed, whereas 34,000,000 obsolete dosimeters are available. The consequences of "selecting" certain types of shelter are outlined in FEMA's report, although the means of providing any shelter are not in the FEMA budget.

"Our attack preparedness has deteriorated," Moreland warned. "Civil defense dollars are being used to develop evacuation plans for nuclear power plants and for other purposes related to natural and technologic hazards." He does not foresee any improvements in funding, given Congressional opposition to population protection.

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Research on civil defense isn't done these days. But in the 1960s, a specially constructed town was subjected to a nuclear blast at the Nevada Test Site. An old film of the experiment has been recorded on video tape and made available by Fighting Chance. It will be shown at the Wilmot branch of the Tucson Public Library on Thursday, June 18, at 7:00 p.m., along with an educational video about fallout.

H i g h F r o n t i e r will present a seminar on SDI deployment at the Adams Hilton in Phoenix, Saturday, May 23. Call 325-2689 for details.

PSR TRIES TO SUPPRESS FREE SPEECH

From the newsletters of the "peace" network, which includes Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) among many groups, one might conclude that the network is devoted to freedom of expression. Citizens, including public officials, are encouraged to violate the laws against trespassing on government property, and the copyright law, as long as they are engaging in "symbolic free speech." The ACLU, for example, was ready to come to the defense of Sheila Tobias and Peter Goudinoff, who reproduced substantial portions of a High Frontier film without permission, in order to ridicule it. Tobias thinks she has the right to "kick their stuff around as much as she likes," (apparently without regard to the technical accuracy of her assertions), as was stated at an American Friends Service Committee meeting on Jan 18, 1987. (High Frontier later dropped the lawsuit.)

But there are some rules that are inviolable. One is that a physician with an alternate point of view is not supposed to attend the PSR-run nuclear war course at the University of Arizona College of Medicine without an invitation. So I asked for an invitation. No, the instructor (Dr. Barry Weiss) said, he just didn't want me there. Last year, I had asked a "disruptive" question, after raising my hand and being called upon. (The question had to do with the propriety of implying that the National Academy of Science endorsed Sagan's "nuclear winter" theory when the NAS actually said that there were too many uncertainties to come to any conclusion. Dr. Weiss never answered my question, but he did delete that statement from this year's class.) Dr. Weiss said he would think about calling Security, even after I promised not to say a word.

Another objectionable activity is to make a tape recording, when it is "academic freedom," rather than mere copyright law, that is at stake.

DEPLOYMENT OF SDI ESTIMATED TO COST \$121 BILLION

The George C. Marshall Institute recently released a study concluding that a 93% effective, three-layered defense based on "smart" kinetic energy weapons, could be deployed by the mid-1990s at a cost of \$121 billion (or an annual cost of 3 to 4% of probable Department of Defense budgets).

This figure is about 12% of the \$1 trillion cost estimate of the Union of Concerned Scientists, which is widely quoted in the news media. I also saw it in a videotape that is shown by PSR on visits to Tucson schools. I asked about the basis for the figure, and was assured that it was "documented." Some investigators at the Center for Peace and Freedom in Washington tried to find the "documentation." Peter Clausen of the UCS said that he was "not sure much lies behind it analytically." Some anti-SDI groups credited former Secretaries of Defense Harold Brown and James Schlesinger. Brown stated that the question was "not susceptible to [a] ... detailed and documented approach." Schlesinger repeatedly refused to answer his mail or his telephone.

More details, and telephone numbers of people you can contact regarding both estimates, are available on request.

SCURVY IN THE UKRAINE?

A letter from the Ukraine (Materiali Samizdata No. 30/86) reports: "I do not buy any vegetables, although there are many in the stores....We eat vermicelli, old potatoes...I am having a problem with my gums---they are bleeding and hurt all the time, and my teeth are loose....What frightens us most of all is lack of information."

NATURAL RADON MORE HAZARDOUS THAN CHERNOBYL

Indoor radon from natural sources may cause about 10,000 lung cancer deaths annually in the US. Reducing air leakage from houses by half (as energy conservationists advise) would kill an additional 10,000 per year. According to experts sponsored by WHO, the 30 year toll in delayed cancer deaths due to Chernobyl is expected to be about 1600 (Access to Energy, May 1987). Some think this estimate too high (Issues in Science and Technology, Fall, 1986, p. 25.) The level of 10 picocuries/l found in several Tucson homes gives the occupants one chance in 30 of dying of lung cancer, if exposure is prolonged. For more information, write NCEB, PO Box 7732, Louisville, KY 40207.