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NEWS

# 'Grim facts' in N-war report

A Government-commissioned report on the effects on New Zealand of a northern hemisphere nuclear war will be formally released early next week, Environment Minister Phil Goff said yesterday.

Cabinet commissioned the report last August, following a proposal by the Scope (Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment) committee of the Royal Society that such a study be undertaken.

"This study will be the first analysis of the environmental, social and economic effects of the impact of nuclear war on a southern hemisphere country," the Minister said.

## Reparation money

The study was funded by reparation money paid by France for

the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior.

"The report presents some grim facts about the consequences of nuclear war on countries that may not be directly involved in the exchange of warheads," Mr Goff said.

## Worsen impacts

While New Zealand would survive, there would be massive destruction of the country's existing social and economic systems, a substantial reduction in living standards and the threat of complete social breakdown.

"An electro-magnetic pulse from a high altitude nuclear explosion over Australia would considerably worsen these impacts by knocking out communication and transport systems," said the Minister.

"The intent of the report is not to frighten or shock people, though it may have this impact. It

was agreed to and funded by (the) Government because the information it provides will help sector groups, policymakers, institutions and individuals develop realistic responses should such a war occur," Mr Goff said.

The Government's policy had been to take part in international attempts to limit the risk of nuclear war.

## Public submissions

"However, we cannot ignore the possibility of a war occurring. As with the risk of a natural disaster such as an earthquake, there is value in preparing contingency plans, while at the same time doing our utmost to prevent such a catastrophe occurring," he said.

It was likely that public submissions would be called on the report before a decision was made on a follow-up phase II study on contingency plans being undertaken.