

NEWS RELEASE

NEW ZEALAND
**Planning
Council**

*Te Kaunihera Whakakaupapa
Mo Aotearoa*

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EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 24 AUGUST 1987

NUCLEAR THREAT MUST BE FACED

"While nuclear war is not inevitable, it is possible and real peace will not be helped by ignoring that threat", said Planning Council Director Peter Rankin today.

To help New Zealanders understand what a nuclear war would mean for them the Planning Council is publishing a book on Monday New Zealand After Nuclear War. "We are not scaremongering" said Mr Rankin. We are giving people better information so that they can decide realistically what they want to do about the possibility of a horrible disaster.

New Zealand acts realistically in the face of other possible disasters. Individually we pay fire insurance premiums against the chance that our house burns down. Collectively we recognise the risk of earthquakes, study them scientifically and strengthen buildings against them. Against the threat of conventional war, or direct invasion, we develop and pay for armed forces.

We should take the same sort of realistic approach to the possibility of nuclear war, according to Mr Rankin. Most of the information we get about the effects of nuclear war comes from Northern Hemisphere experts. They naturally focus on what would happen in Europe and the United States - on rapid total destruction and death by blast and radiation. Many people in New Zealand believe the same thing would happen here and that there is nothing they can do about it. Others convince themselves that it can't happen or it won't happen here. The Planning Council believes it is better to find out what would happen here in New Zealand and then decide what we can and should do about it.

There have been other New Zealand studies of nuclear war - by the Commission for the Future, the Royal Society, and Dr George Preddey. But more frequently, television, books and papers tell us what would happen in the

North and that tends to form our ideas of what nuclear war means.

New Zealand After Nuclear War provides an up-to-date New Zealand perspective. The Planning Council hopes it will lead more New Zealanders to take an active, realistic approach to the threat of nuclear war.

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NB: Funding for the study was provided from
Rainbow Warrior reparation funds through the
Ministry for the Environment.