

Nuke war scenario

Sir, — Congratulations to the Planning Council for providing (August 30) an alternative scenario about the outcome and consequences of nuclear war. Their approach still has some shortcomings however.

There are, in fact, an infinite number of distinct scenarios; each has different consequences for New Zealand. It is perhaps best to think of a spectrum of possible nuclear wars, ranging from devastation comparable to that inflicted by Chernobyl, through the Japanese experience of 1945, to the northern hemisphere nuclear winter assumed by the Planning Council, and to the complete global holocaust the activists presume.

I think the most probable nuclear war will see fewer than 10 weapons detonated, and will show major environmental damage over a single continent, or sub-continent. If that continent was Europe, New Zealand's economy would be damaged by an embarrassingly high demand for our agricultural produce.

We would become the Saudi Arabia of the south seas. We would experience huge balance of payments surpluses as our terms of trade climbed rapidly; and an appreciation of the New Zealand dollar that would bankrupt industry, creating widespread unemployment and inequality.

The Planning Council scenario is deliberately designed to expose our vulnerability to the availability of supplies from the outside world. This is an issue that rightly implies considerable danger in New Zealand's present policies of laissez-faire in a global context, but I think we would cope better than the council suggests.

KEITH RANKIN

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Nuke war aftermath

Sir, — I would like to congratulate the Planning Council on their excellent report on the effects of nuclear war on New Zealand. However, I can't understand why it cost

\$500,000 to discover what I've known all along: that we wouldn't be hit, would receive little fallout and would suffer mainly because we're so utterly dependent on the free world for our economic survival and physical wellbeing.

Personally, I suspect the Government initiated the whole thing, simply to keep the populace believing that nuclear war might happen, and therefore keep its so-called "antinuclear" policy popular and high in the national psyche. However if, as many people, including myself, believe, nuclear war does not happen, then the whole exercise is meaningless.

In order to back up their claim that nuclear war is possible, the pacifist/anti-American faction pushes the line that it is American policy to strike first and win a nuclear war. This is incorrect.

Firstly, it is not in the interests of America, or any individual Americans to blow up themselves, their family, friends, and a couple of billion complete strangers as well, and they know it. Secondly, every recent major US political leader, including the presidents, have stated that nuclear war is unwinnable. Thirdly, if the Americans or the Russians intend to start World War III, why haven't they done it? Why has the cold war stayed cold for 42 years? Simply because nuclear deterrence works and every day that goes by is further proof that it works.

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