

Nuclear aftermath

New Zealand After Nuclear War by the New Zealand Planning Council. Published by the Government Printing Office, Retail price \$16.95.

This book is not, as at first might be expected, another impractical call for nuclear disarmament by a bunch of idealistic pacifists, but a calm, logical, objective study of the effects a nuclear war would have on New Zealand.

Funds to research and write the book, and the 20 background papers,

came from some of the reparation paid to the New Zealand Government following the bombing of the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbour in 1985.

Effects

The book assumes New Zealand is not a direct target during a nuclear exchange and studies the economic, social, health and direct effects on this country.

The assumption is that there is a total nuclear war involving more than 10,000 warheads which devastates most combatant countries in the Northern Hemisphere. Several targets in Australia are also hit.

Global fallout causing the slow, painful death of the most of the remaining world's population is the popular image of the after-effects of such a conflict, but the book dispels the myth that this will also be the case for New Zealand.

The most devastating immediate and medium-term effect on New Zealand will be from an Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) which travels out from an airburst nuclear fireball.

This pulse would burn out all communication, telephone and TV links, render useless most electronic equipment and computers, and knock out the national electricity grid.

"It would take high levels of initiative, co-operation, adaptability and tolerance to facilitate a return to a relatively stable, open and democratic society after the shock of a nuclear war."

New Zealand After a

Nuclear War does not make light reading, but gives an interesting perspective on how dependent we are on the rest of the world for imports of essential goods and technology, and on our supposed isolation. — KT.

The book deals at length with other effects, including the possible breakdown of law and order because of lack of communication, severe disruption of health services as stocks of imported drugs run dry, disruption to transport and the effect on the environment and climate.

"Currently New Zealand society has difficulty resolving problems which are minor by comparison, such as those associated with redundancies, restructuring, unemployment and decline in export markets," the book says.