

The 'deterrent' goes to war

DUNCAN CAMPBELL reveals how Britain's bomb would be used over neutral Sweden and a NATO lie to justify cruise missile bases.

IN THE EVENT of war, Britain and the United States plan — in effect — to make war on a neutral country, Sweden, as well as on Russia. Attack plans for British-based bombers, according to Air Force sources, involve flying to the Skagerrak straits north of Denmark, and then diving to low levels of 200 to 500 feet and crossing Sweden and the Baltic to their destinations. The reasons for overflying Sweden are simple: it is anticipated that an air war is in progress over Germany and that the central front makes the area very dangerous as well as well-defended; by going as far north as possible, the planes stay out of Soviet and Warsaw Pact radar coverage as long as possible.

British and US planners have apparently imagined that Sweden will remain insensible to this invasion by literally hundreds of aircraft. The numbers due to converge on the Skagerrak are so great that the question of timing for each bomber to pass through has assumed critical importance. And yet, according to a former Vulcan officer, the Swedes are expected to 'turn a huge blind eye.'

In any case, Sweden would not remain insensible, according to the Defence Attaché at the Swedish Embassy in London, Rear Admiral Rolf Rheborg. 'Swedish policy', he said, 'will be to prevent anybody passing through our air space. It doesn't matter whether the intruders come from east or west... The Air Force will do its best to shoot them down'. Details of Swedish defence plans and exercises were secret, he said, but covered 'all borders and all possible invasions.'

Sweden does possess a large force of modern interceptor aircraft, and a comprehensive and well-equipped air defence system. There is a concentration of air defence forces in the south as well as the north which could be used against British and US bombers, unless these were attacked first by NATO. The stream of aircraft overflying Sweden would include Vulcans (until 1969 Britain's only independent nuclear force) and Buccaneers, and US F111s and B52s (which move forward to Britain in crisis).

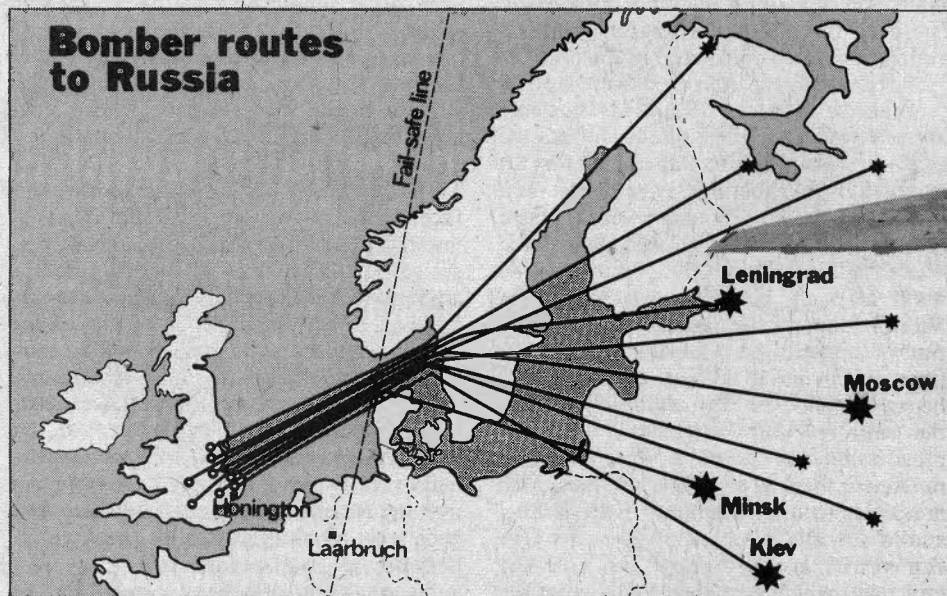
There is some evidence that the Swedish government has in the past been willing to support this passive role in nuclear warfare. In the early '50s, the Soviets shot down a

Swedish-based Catalina aircraft which had been making secret flights into Soviet Baltic states. It had been fitted with secret US equipment and was using bomber radar to map out attack plans for US bombers to fly across Sweden and the Baltic into Russia. Many details of this secret US-Swedish deal were not revealed until recently.

The secrecy surrounding the war plans for nuclear forces has also enabled NATO and the Ministry of Defence to misrepresent the balance of long-range theatre nuclear forces: this is the balance used to justify the deployment of cruise missiles in Britain.

This balance-sheet adds up aircraft and missiles on each side which can reach the Soviet Union from normal Western European bases — and vice versa. In this category, the Soviet Union has conventionally been shown with an overwhelming pre-

RAF and USAF nuclear bombers based in Britain have secret war plans to overfly Sweden to reach their Russian targets. The map shows typical routes from British bases. Most routes converge north of Denmark. The 8 degrees east latitude is the fail-safe line which they cannot cross without a second, final order. Honington and Laarbruch are the bases for Buccaneers which are targeted on the USSR, although NATO publicly claims they can't get there. (Right) Vulcan nuclear bomber, based near Lincoln.



ponderance of 900 to 280 or so. The figure has been obtained by a careful definition which excludes many pertinent NATO forces such as submarine missiles and carrier-based aircraft. These convenient exclusions have long been noted and corrected by outside observers. (Mary Kaldor, *NS* 26 Sept 1980). But no-one has yet noticed a deliberate lie in the presentation, which casts considerable doubt on the credibility of other aspects of the justification of NATO modernisation, involving the new missiles.

None of the Royal Air Force's Buccaneer aircraft are included in the 'long-range theatre nuclear force' balance, because as far as is publicly known they do not reliably have sufficient range. The British public, and the politicians of other NATO countries who have to consider the cruise missile decision, are thus unaware of two crucial points: these aircraft not only have the range to reach the USSR, but are specifically targeted

on Soviet cities and military installations.

There are between 80 and 90 Buccaneers available, although some are being scrapped after urgent fatigue tests. The remainder, divided up into five squadrons and a training unit, were based at Honington in East Anglia and Laarbruch in western Germany. Two of the squadrons are now at Lossiemouth and have recently been given a new primary task of nuclear attacks on shipping off north Norway, but they still have land attacks on the USSR as a secondary role.

From the Honington base, the Buccaneers would attack targets in the Baltic coastal strip of the USSR, which includes such cities as Riga, Tallinn and Kaliningrad. Buccaneers from Laarbruch would attack targets in western central USSR, which includes cities like Lvov.

This deliberate misrepresentation (and

who knows how many others) has only been possible because secrecy concealed the real 'balance' of long-range forces. On the most recent MoD figures, the gap between Warsaw Pact and NATO long-range nuclear capable aircraft is 350 to 260. This 'gap' is non-existent when the Buccaneers' actual capability is revealed. The Ministry of Defence did not deny that Buccaneers were targeted on the USSR: 'I can't really talk about what its actual role would be,' a spokesman said this week.

THE OPERATION of the deterrent creates a set of peculiar psychological problems, particularly for aircraft crews involved in long range 'strikes'. (Nuclear warfare has evolved a large set of substitute codewords; 'strike' means a nuclear attack, 'special' weapon, generally, a nuke.) They are trained, for instance, in a Recovery Procedure for getting back to some Norwegian, Danish —

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or Swedish — airfield. But no-one expects to be going back anywhere. There would be nowhere to go back to.

More seriously, the justification and rationalisation of nuclear weapons lies in deterrence theory. If deterrence fails, and an attack is to be launched, the moment of action is also the moment when all faith in the purpose of the action is dissipated. One strike flier gave this account of how he then saw the course of the holocaust:

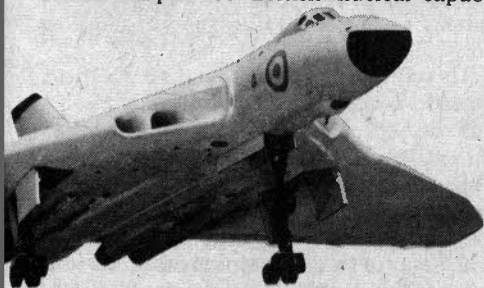
If deterrence had failed, my own rationalisation would be that I'd prefer to be out front at the time of the final act than sitting back home waiting for something to rain down on me from above. I would much rather be in the thick of it, devoured in the holocaust. . .

He found the closing scene of the anti-war film *Dr Strangelove*, when the American bomber pilot rides with an H Bomb down to its target, wholly apt:

I'd rather be out there astride my weapon than sitting back home feeling completely impotent — although there was no more potency being out front in terms of remedying anything. . .

Crews were, and are, trained to respond to this situation by making their technical workload as high as possible so that there is no time for anything except to carry out complete, well rehearsed manoeuvres.

BRITISH TARGET PLANS embody this principle in a number of ways. Although the main weapon of British nuclear-capable



Vulcans, Jaguars, and Buccaneers is a megaton hydrogen bomb, they are nevertheless instructed to aim to a standard which would be remarkable even for ordinary bombs. In the centre of each target city, a military pseudo-target is selected — perhaps a barracks, or a local military HQ. The bombers' mission is to drop the bomb exactly *there*, and to aim at a precise spot, say the *north-east* corner. 'If the Russians were doing it', said one specialist, 'it would be like them aiming a weapon big enough to destroy most of London at the entrance steps of the Ministry of Defence'.

Joint US and allied nuclear attacks on Russia are carefully worked out in a continually revised computer-produced document called SIOP — the Single Integrated Operational Plan. SIOP is prepared by the US Strategic Air Command in Omaha, Nebraska, and assigns targets for each of the tens of thousands of nuclear warheads carried by missiles, submarines and aircraft. So-called 'theatre' nuclear forces, into which somewhat spurious category the cruise missiles fit, are assigned their targets by the US's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) from headquarters in West Germany.

Target plans for British aircraft, like their American equivalents, set out to dehumanise the target cities and their populations. The plans are drawn up by the Joint Air

Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre at Bampton, near Huntingdon. Mainly, they do not speak of cities by name but merely by target numbers or 'ALNs' — Allied List Number, which is the number in the scheme of destruction prescribed by SIOP. (There is a similar but separate British-only 'National Plan' for unilateral use of British nuclear weapons.) Photographs are provided but, far from being the latest satellite reconnaissance pictures, they are, according to one source familiar with them, 'more likely to be from the 1940s than the 1970. The pictures are blurred and somehow distanced from reality by their age, in the same way that cities are transformed into 'legitimate' military targets by the presence of a small barracks. This is traditional: the first communiqué of the A-bomb attack on Hiroshima called it a 'military' centre.

AS SHOWN in celebrated movies like *Dr Strangelove*, the British nuclear force has its 'fail-safe' procedures and secret war rooms for pressing the Button. For the Polaris submarines, the No 1 Button is in the hands of the Chief Polaris Executive, and is at the naval and NATO HQ in Northwood, Middlesex. Reserve buttons are at Plymouth and Dunfermline, with many lines of command yet in reserve. The main means of communication with submerged submarines are the giant Very Low Frequency (VLF) transmitters, of which Britain has three — not one, as usually reported. These are at Rugby, Criggion in Shropshire, and Anthorn on the Solway Firth. Rugby and Criggion were modernised and Anthorn built in the 60s to provide the necessary links to submarines; each can take over if another is attacked.

For British bombers, the main Button is that of the bomber controller at Strike Command headquarters at High Wycombe. (In fact, the 'Button' is a pure metaphor — his orders go out as simple spoken messages.) Reserve 'war rooms' are at RAF bases up and down the country. The bombers will not normally take off, ever, with live nuclear weapons on board, unless war is believed to have started. They then fly towards Denmark where a second verbal order must be received or they wait at 'fail-safe'. Once they have passed east of Denmark, they must not return, and cannot be recalled.

Other, bizarre, fail-safe procedures were recalled by former RAF personnel who worked in Germany in the early '70s. At that time, RAF Phantom aircraft were kept on fairly permanent alert at the Bruggen air base, fully armed with nuclear weapons. The weapons were all-American. The fail safe mechanism was all-British. It consisted of a large piece of wood the size of a domestic door, into which many six-inch nails had been hammered. This complex technological item was placed directly in front of the Phantom's nosewheel once it was in position ready to 'scramble', preventing it taking off. An armed British RAF policeman stood on one side of the aircraft, guarding it. A USAF security policeman stood on the other side of the aircraft, guarding the fail-safe device and the nuclear bomb aboard. If anyone tried to remove the door-and-nails, thus enabling the plane to take off, he was ordered to shoot them instantly.

Making war was to be effected by sending two senior officers, one RAF and one USAF,

scooting around the airfield in separate staff cars, each holding up Top Secret blackboards on which were inscribed the 'go' codes. Invariably, on these exercises, according to our eyewitness, one or other staff would be late. As one half of the mission was authorised but the weapons not released, the British and American policemen would quickly 'ready themselves for a John Wayne shoot-out at dawn'.

The description is reminiscent of similar controls on nuclear-armed NATO aircraft used by German and Dutch pilots, which were revealed to a US congressional committee. The primary means of preventing pilots taking off on an unauthorised nuclear-armed flight, the committee was told, was a US Marine sniper who took permanent aim on the German pilot while he was aboard his aircraft.

The major tenet of safe handling of nuclear weapons has long been the 'two-man' principle, whereby every operation to arm and use a nuclear weapon requires two people to act together. But this has now apparently been abandoned with the introduction of the *Jaguar* aircraft. Jaguars can only have one pilot.

THE DEADLY LOGIC of nuclear warfare extends across all aspects of a future war. Britain's plans for ensuring that the bombers do indeed get their orders to go include pressing the BBC into service. Should High Wycombe and other major centres like Bawtry, near Doncaster, have been destroyed, then airborne control aircraft will take off from another base near Huntingdon to send the final orders. Should even this not be available, the last line of defence will be BBC Radio 4, whose long wave transmitters at Droitwich will also then be putting out the instructions for Armageddon.

The SIOP plan takes into consideration the likelihood that many US missiles or other strikes will not reach their target through error or early destruction. Consequently 'overkill' is indeed put into practice. US and British bomber crews heading for Russia are warned that when they get to cities such as Leningrad, Kiev, or Minsk, there may be no city left, as ICBM's will already have struck. What, I asked one former crew member, happened if they found themselves flying low across burning cities, over the dead and dying of the earlier strike? 'You add your contribution to it and then get out.'

Similar sterility of thought afflicts the nuclear battlefield. NATO exercises always assume aggression across central Germany from 'Orange' (ie Warsaw Pact) troops. Although US plans exist for an invasion in the other direction (NS 27.6.80 'How to blow up the world'), the basic NATO doctrine is simple — to retreat using hills and rivers as barriers and control points to create zones where it is intended to 'canalise' enemy troops. They are forced to move in relatively dense formation between high ground held by NATO forces. If this is successfully done, the next job is to re-align your forces to

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Confusion

In the previous article in this series (NS 17 April), pictures of the nuclear weapons production factory at Burghfield and the 'SSA' nuclear store were transposed. The top photo is Burghfield; the bottom, the SSA at RAF Scampton, near Lincoln.

Bombs III

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clear a Nuclear Killing Zone, NKZ. A barrage of nuclear shells will then be fired into the NKZ from 8 inch howitzers a mere 10 miles or so away. Britain has bought at least 16 howitzers and their associated shells from the US for precisely this purpose. Some 50 smaller 155mm guns are also officially said to be capable of firing nuclear shells. It is into this scenario that the neutron bomb fits — its special danger being the lowering of the threshold at which nuclear weapons might be used.

In battlefield nuclear warfare, it is not merely a question of firing one or two nuclear shells. Current US and NATO doctrine, spelt out even in unclassified manuals, describes the official concept of a 'package' of dozens of nuclear weapons being used at once. In a typical package, there could be anything from 40 to 140 nuclear attacks. Atomic demolition munitions would be used in front of enemy troops, with several dozen nuclear shells launched on to major concentrations. Lance missiles would attack rear reserves and control points, and aircraft would use larger bombs on strong points. The package should 'alter the tactical situation decisively' and have 'full integration with other military and diplomatic actions'. The package concept is literally a recipe for a holocaust.

Curiously, according to former members of the army, such exercises do not include serious consideration of what happens when the enemy then fights back with nuclear — or, for that matter, chemical weapons. Defence against nuclear weapons in the battlefield is practised as an abstract discipline, not as a next step after NATO has launched a nuclear attack in the battlefield. The logic is fairly suggestive. No exercise in the German field has anticipated that NATO will not be the first to use small nuclear weapons. But the exercises stop there. No-one knows what hell happens next, as a counter-stroke destroys a large part of NATO's field forces and its command centres. After that, nuclear war is out of control.

On paper, rather than field exercises, the strategy can be examined further. Here, as former Chief Scientific Adviser Lord Zuckerman revealed, there is a further chill: no paper exercise at creating limited warfare has stopped short of an all-out exchange.

IMAGINATIVE ATTEMPTS at nuclear mayhem raising will be added to this mix. As discussed two weeks ago, Britain has access to a small number of 'atomic demolition munitions'. As their name suggests, these are small nukes intended for sabotage of key installations either in the front of an enemy advance or on key installations in the rear. Their prior siting in selected places has raised considerable controversy, particularly in Germany where details of any installation of ADMs is withheld, even from most of NATO. Certainly conventional explosives charges are built in to many bridges in key locations, according to British explosives experts. Such charges are called 'cheeses'.

ADMs are also intended to be used by SAS and guerrilla troops operating behind enemy lines. A US plan for providing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to special forces and partisans in the USSR and countries like Finland was among the documents leaked in 1980 (NS 27.6.80). A special unit known as the Special Operations Task Force Europe, which is now based at Stuttgart, plans such nuclear sabotage in conjunction with the CIA. SOTFE works closely with the British SAS, who have been allocated ADMs for their use since the late 1950s, according to a former SAS Major then involved in planning SAS war operations. Since nuclear weapons can be produced as eight-inch-diameter artillery shells, they can also be produced in a form in which paratroopers or SAS can carry them in backpacks, and assemble and fire them near valuable or important targets. Caches of such weapons have been prepositioned for wartime use, for example in Turkey. □

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Getting our greens

Arthur Marshall

SUCH HAS been, and is, my humble position in life that my meetings (if such they may be called) with the great of this world have mostly been both hasty and accidental. In 1942 I found myself, masquerading as a Major, in London and at Combined Operations HQ. Sporadic raids on the French and other coasts, and the enormously successful one on St Nazaire, were taking place and it was all very interesting and unusual. We were in Richmond Terrace, one of the Whitehall off-shoots on the river side, and emerging one November evening after work, I found myself in a pea-souper fog, a hazard which is now no more but in which, however well one knew the streets, it was possible to get instantly lost, and the wartime black-out was hardly a help. I had planned to walk up Whitehall and so to Pall Mall and the welcoming doors of the Reform Club but in fact it was into Downing Street that I mistakenly groped my way and was suddenly sent flying by a burly and, at a distance of about a foot, fully recognisable figure. Churchill, no less. He grunted the word 'Shorry' and passed on, pursued by two agitated persons (detective and chauffeur?) who said anxiously 'We've lost him. Which way did he go?' I pointed into the swirling opaqueness and they hurried after him, but just for a moment I felt that I had been right at the heart of things.

Well then, paying a post-war visit to the Tate Gallery and turning sharply away in disgust from a, to me, abhorrent modern painting, I found that I had cannoned into none other than Field Marshal Alexander (surprisingly short in stature) and we too exchanged 'Sorries' and I wondered to myself, in my witty way, whom I was going to bump into next. And bless me, travelling by train to Exeter for onward transport by road to Appleton, if I didn't have another brief encounter with Somebody. I was in one of those nice railway carriages with proper compartments and not our present ghastly, restless, open-plan disasters with a constant *va-et-vient* ('The buffet is in the centre of the train') up and down the central aisle. A further advantage of those old-fashioned carriages was that they did not announce to one and all (TOILET ENGAGED) that you had gone to the lavatory. Safely closeted in one shortly after leaving Westbury, I was made aware, by a frenzied rattling at the door, of the fact that there was somebody without whose need was even more urgent than mine. Hastily completing my business, I hurried out and full tilt into the imposing physique of the then Archbishop of Canterbury (Ramsey), hovering expectantly. It occurred to me that if there were to be a serious railway accident and I sustained a mortal injury, I would be finely placed for receiving, and from an august source, whatever ranks, if anything does, in the Church

of England as Extreme Unction.

Continuing my proud boasts, but perhaps on a slightly less exalted level, I once went up in a Peter Jones lift with genial Percy Thrower, the highly gifted gardening expert, but the Peter Jones emporium is a long way from 'Myrtlebank' and it is really in Appleton that we now need Mr Thrower's expertise, for the latest exciting news from this quarter is that we are going to try to grow our own vegetables. There now! My spacious grounds already contain a sizeable vegetable plot, concealed from the gracious flower gardens by a hedge, a plot which I loaned out to dear old Mr Bidder, tree-feller and wood-cutter and ditch-cleaner extraordinary but who is now, alas, no more. And so, in lieu of Mr Thrower, I have invested in a fully illustrated guide, selling at 40p and published by Pan Britannica Industries. It is by the admirable Dr D.G. Hessayon, is called 'Be Your Own Vegetable Doctor' and a first reading drains the blood from the face and sends shock waves of alarm through one's entire system.

Prepare yourselves to, like poor old Macbeth, sup full with horrors. Take the Cucumber Family, in which are embraced marrows and courgettes. They can get Gummosis (sunken spots through which oozes an amber-like gum which develops, as though that weren't already quite enough, mould). They can get Anthracnose and, before death, turn a variety of colours — pale green, pink, black, yellow. They can get Stem Rot, Sun Scald, Powdery Mildew, Verticillium Wilt and, understandably after such sufferings, Bitterness. Almost as vulnerable are the veg that to me are the best of all, beans and peas. In mounting and sympathetic dismay one reads of their plucky struggles against Downy Mildew (mauve mould on the underside), Chocolate Spot (fatal if, like shingles, the spots meet), Bean Seed Fly (leading on to Tunnelled Seedlings, and completely lethal), Thrips and Pea Aphids and Halo Blight, Pod Spot and Maggots and Fusarium Wilt (reddish-brown streaks in the stems and not nice at all).

Although I am not particularly fond of parsnips, my heart goes out to them in their afflictions, and here, as in carrot diseases, Dr Hessayon's coloured illustrations reach a new spine-chilling peak. One peep at a parsnip in the final stages of Parsnip Canker and one just has to turn, shuddering, away, only to find one's gaze transfixed anew by a carrot with Violet Root Rot.

But what, I hear you ask, of the humble spud? Well, hold on to something firm while I tell you. Whereas celery and spinach both have a mere five things threatening them, and lettuce as many as thirteen, potatoes top the lot with no fewer than twenty-six perils, the last one being, of all things, Gangrene, which one had assumed to be a treat specially reserved by wise providence for humans. The catalogue of potato misfortune is endless — Wart Disease, Hollow Heart, Gapping, Capsid Bug and Blight. Trade union members on strike and active on picket lines will be fascinated to hear that spuds also have Blackleg (the haulm wilts and withers) and no less than two sorts of Scab, Common and Powdery. So now they can vary the insults hurled at those backsliders who, and how very odd of them, wish to work. □