

Missiles are not blastproof or mobile, reports Duncan Campbell

## Work starts on cruise silos

CRUISE MISSILES, despite their vaunted mobility which is supposed to be a principal advantage, are to be put into missile silos now under construction at the British cruise bases. A report to the US Senate reveals that the missile shelters at

these bases, Greenham Common near Newbury, and Molesworth near Northampton, are to be hardened to withstand shock waves from nuclear explosions up to 2000 pound per square inch. This is the same degree of 'hardening' as is currently used at US ICBM bases. In theory, the cruise missiles should then be able to survive a one megaton nuclear weapon exploding as little as  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a mile away.

Cruise shelters and other facilities are now under construction at the first British cruise base, Greenham Common. The precise site chosen is in the extreme west of the airfield — the area closest to the

town of Newbury. The new site is ringed with watchtowers and multiple fences, left over from an earlier era of nuclear weapons storage.

The construction of the blastproof cruise missile shelters means that the US does not anticipate having enough time to move the missiles away, and that they will thus be targets for an early and massive nuclear strike. This indeed was anticipated during the recent home defence exercise, *Square Leg*. The British government has backed this view up by issuing a Home Defence circular suggesting that war plans should now be ready to operate within 48 hours. □