

**Cambridge
and
Nuclear Weapons**

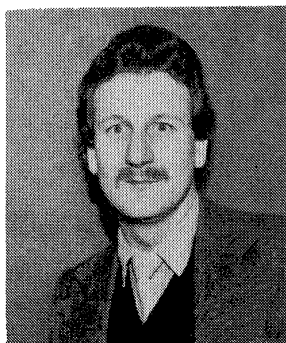


Essential Information

Cambridge and Nuclear Weapons

Essential Information

I hope you will take the trouble to read this booklet, even though it may shock and disturb you. It tells you what could happen to our city in the event of a nuclear attack. There would be few survivors. It would be the end of the world as we know it.



As international tensions grow and more sophisticated nuclear weapons are built every year, the dangers of nuclear war are increasing. Any nuclear attack is bound to mean the death and destruction of all that we love and hold dear. If you have children, as I do, you will feel a special responsibility to safeguard their future. This booklet will help you understand and face up to this terrible threat.

With other members of the City Council, I was angered and horrified to learn what could happen to Cambridge. By a majority vote the Council decided to make sure that everyone in the city knows the truth. We commissioned this booklet and are sending a copy to every home in Cambridge. We hope this is a step towards a safer Cambridge, a safer Britain and a safer world.

Christopher Howard

Councillor Dr. Christopher Howard
Leader, Cambridge City Council

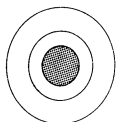
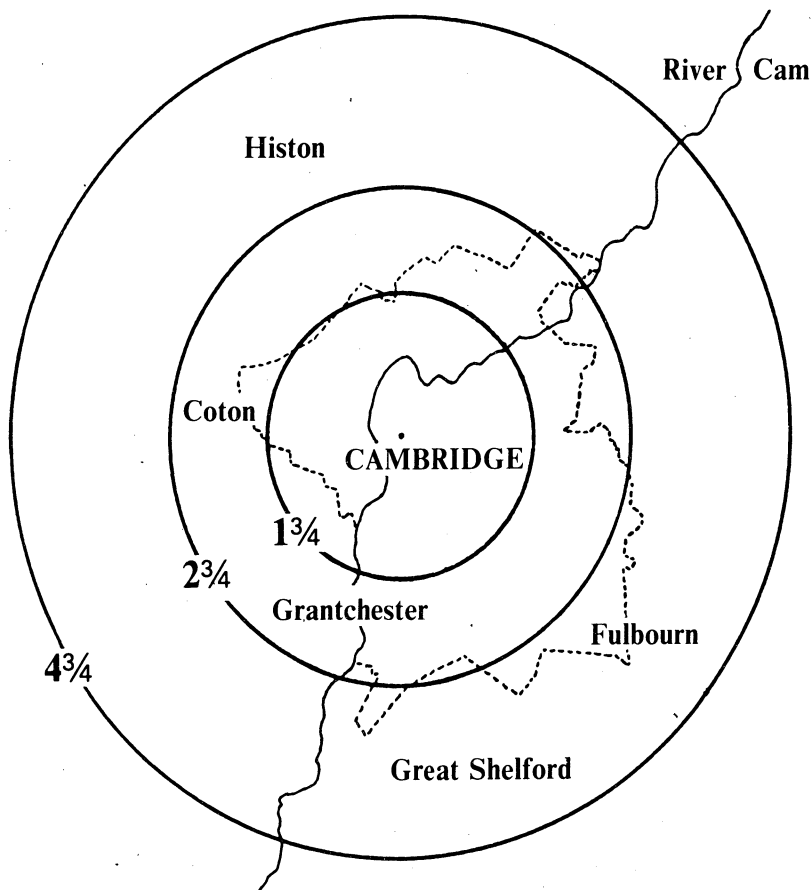
Why is Cambridge at risk?



The effect of a 20 kiloton bomb on Nagasaki

There are now more than 16,500 long-range nuclear weapons in the world – enough to destroy modern civilisation at least 30 times over. This number has doubled in the last ten years and is expected to double again in the next five. Although we cannot know where all these bombs are aimed, there are three reasons why Cambridge is at risk. First, the various nuclear powers, including Russia and America, threaten to destroy their enemies' cities in the event of war. Second, there are several targets in Cambridge itself, such as the airport, which is used by military aircraft, and a government bunker of regional importance on Brooklands Avenue. Third, there are many British and American bases in the area: Lakenheath, Mildenhall, Oakington and Alconbury, to name just four. These would be attacked even in a 'limited' war, and radioactive fallout drifting across from these targets would kill most of the people in Cambridge.

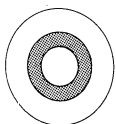
What one nuclear weapon would do to Cambridge



**If you were in Cambridge
(0 to $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the bomb):**

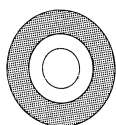
For the purposes of illustration, let us suppose that a one-megaton bomb were dropped near ground level over the Guildhall. (This is 50 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Nagasaki). Great St. Mary's, the Market Place and Lion Yard would

all disappear into a crater about 20 storeys deep. A rim of deadly radioactive soil would be thrown up around the ruins of most of the colleges. Nothing recognisable would remain from Castle Hill down to the Catholic Church. Little of significance would be left standing in the rest of the city. Within seconds almost everyone in the city would be killed.



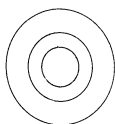
**If you were further away
(1 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles):**

Suppose you were away from Cambridge – doing errands, or visiting a friend – outside this circle of complete and immediate devastation. Even as far away as Grantchester or Coton, five out of ten people would die immediately, and four or five more would be injured. Half of those surviving the blast from the explosion might eventually die from burns. Others would die, sooner or later, from exposure to radiation. Buildings would collapse and fill the streets with debris. Most cars, buses and fire engines would be destroyed.



**If you were still further away
(2 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles):**

Imagine instead that you were fortunate enough to be further away from Cambridge, in Histon or Fulbourn or Great Shelford. Even at that distance half the people would be killed or injured. Houses would lose their doors and windows. The contents of upper floors would be blown out and walls would crack. Streets would be blocked with debris. Fires would spread throughout most of the area and burn for at least a day, destroying half or more of the buildings.



If you were even further away:

For up to hundreds of miles away, depending on the wind and the nature of the bomb, radiation would kill thousands more. The radiation would be spread by tons of particles of contaminated soil and debris drifting away from the blast area. It would cause deaths from radiation sickness in the first few weeks, cancers in later years,

and genetic defects in future generations. For many of those who survived these risks, recovery would be long and painful, perhaps with permanent disability.

What about Civil Defence?

After a nuclear attack, there would be minimal medical care and few facilities for the hundreds of thousands of people suffering from burns, radiation sickness, blast effects or other injuries. Epidemics of plague, typhus, cholera or other diseases would break out. Water supplies would be contaminated. There would be serious shortages of food, with stocks largely destroyed and little hope of replacing them. During the Second World War, cities that had suffered badly in an air-raid received help from elsewhere. In a nuclear war it would be very different. The Medical Working Group at an international conference of leading scientists has issued the following warning:

There is no possible effective medical response after a nuclear attack...most hospitals would be destroyed, medical personnel among the dead and injured, most transportation, communication and energy systems inoperable and most medical supplies unavailable. As a result most of those requiring medical attention would die.

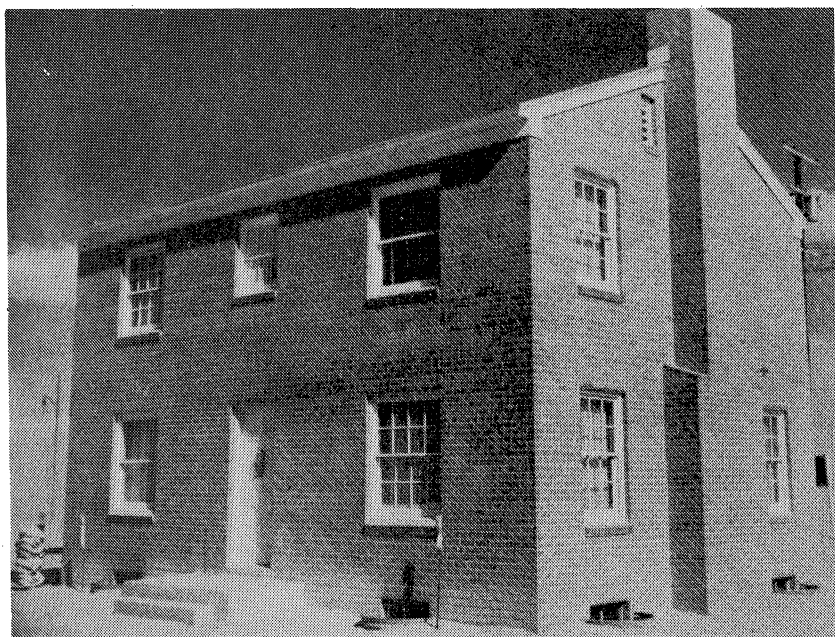
'Protect and Survive'

The Government has issued a booklet, 'Protect and Survive', which contains instructions for building a nuclear shelter in your own home, and on what to do in the event of a nuclear attack. These measures would give you some protection from radioactive fallout if you were far enough away from the centre of the explosion. They would be virtually useless, however, if Cambridge received a direct hit. And even if no bombs fell on the city itself, the level of radiation produced by a general attack on military bases in East Anglia would kill most people even inside their home-made shelters.

The reality is that the vast majority of the population cannot be protected from a nuclear attack on a country with as many nuclear targets as Britain. The Government's plans for coping with nuclear war concentrate on the maintenance of law and order, and the survival of some form of regional government operating from underground bunkers.

More safe or less?

Obviously, we need emergency planning against such peacetime disasters as flood, fires, epidemics and so on. But the trouble with



Before and after: a demonstration of the effect of blast from a one megaton bomb 2¾ miles away

civil defence plans for nuclear war is that they give us a false sense of security, while they may actually increase the risks of such a war. In a serious international crisis, civil defence preparations would be seen as a preparation for war, and could even provoke an attack. Thus during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 none of the nuclear powers put their civil defence plans into effect, for fear of aggravating tensions and unintentionally sparking off a nuclear war.

What can you do?

You may react in one of several ways to this leaflet. You may throw it in the dustbin and try to avoid thinking any more about it. You may decide to make your home more secure, and plan what to do under a nuclear attack. You may begin to ask questions. Are we safer, is Britain more secure, with or without nuclear weapons? Would we be prepared to inflict such a catastrophe on other countries? Why can't the arms race be stopped? Why don't we have enough shelters for everyone? Could we afford them, and would they make us safe?

The City Council is aware of the dangers. It supports the abandonment of British nuclear weapons and has decided to declare Cambridge a nuclear-free zone.

Whatever your feelings and conclusions, make them known. Talk to your family, to your neighbours and friends. Tell your local Councillor how you feel, and what you want him or her to do. If you like, write to the newspapers, or to your Member of Parliament. But be concerned, and be heard. It is your life, and your city.

Sources:

'The Effects of Nuclear War', Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress.

'World Military and Social Expenditures 1981', R.L. Sivard, World Priorities, U.S.A.

Photographs:

Yamahata Yosuke "Hiroshima-Nagasaki."

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

G. G. Datson, LL.B.,
Chief Executive and Town Clerk

Michael Ball, LL.B.,
City Secretary and Solicitor



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Ext: 327

My reference

Your reference

GB/PAW CD/98

Enc:

2nd February 1983

Dear Mr Healy,

Cambridge and Nuclear Weapons

The Mayor (Councillor Peter Cowell) has asked me to respond to the resolution sent with your assistant's letter of 15th December 1982.

The complete text was supplied to the members of the General Purposes Committee which met last month. The Committee was gratified to learn of the identity of interest between our two cities on the subject of nuclear weapons, and of the support for its activities. No design has yet been commissioned employing your seal but the gesture - and the terms of your Council's resolution of 13th December 1982 - were warmly appreciated by the Committee.

A copy of the leaflet distributed to 36,000 homes in Cambridge is enclosed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. G. Datson'.

Chief Executive.

X

Mr Paul E. Healy,
City Clerk,
Cambridge City Council,
City Hall,
Cambridge,
Massachusetts 02139
U.S.A.

Please address all correspondence to the Chief Executive

S-77

Comm. from G.G. Datsun, Chief Exec. & Town
Clerk of Cambridge, England in acknowledgement
of resolutions adopted by the City Council Re:
nuclear weapons.

In City Council,

February 14, 1983

2/14/83

- Placed in File -