



Nuclear Attack Risks High Here

Director: It Could Be Disastrous

By SALLY SWARTZ
Post Staff Writer

Palm Beach County residents are likely to suffer disastrous effects of nuclear fallout if Homestead Air Force Base is hit in a surprise nuclear attack, according to Pentagon and local Civil Defense officials.

Homestead is one of 50 prime Soviet nuclear targets, the Pentagon said in a report last week. Fallout from an attack on the base near Miami could reach Palm Beach County in five hours or less, says Civil Defense Director Robert Owen.

"A successful surprise attack could be devastating," said Owen, who has a "1,000-times-safer-than-outside" office in a concrete-covered mound at 3723 Belvedere Road, West Palm Beach. "But we'd be in fairly good shape here if we had a warning."

Palm Beach County is one of 19 Florida localities the Pentagon considers "high risk" areas. The military chieftains are preparing a "crisis relocation" plan to move people out of cities into safe rural locations in case of nuclear disasters.

ings designated as less than 40 times safer than outside.

When Owen talks about having a "warning" of imminent attack, he doesn't mean hours. He means days, even weeks that would be needed to get Palm Beach County set up to face a crisis.

Empty water barrels would have to be moved out of warehouses, filled and transported to community fallout shelters. People would have to be told where the 313 shelters are. Shelter managers would have to be trained. Others would have to be trained to operate the equipment that monitors radioactive fallout.

Those who did find the neighborhood fallout shelters would have to bring along a two-week supply of food. Some of the shelters still have the "fallout cookies" and other rations that were stocked there in the fifties.

The hard biscuits are still edible, said Jane Allen, shelter coordinator, "especially if you take off the wrappers and let them air a little."

Medical kits in some shelters have had eyedrops and other perishable medicines removed, but they're still usable.

"You'd pretty much have to bring your own survival kit," Owen said. "It wouldn't be Utopia by any means."

Owen hasn't given up trying to interest people in preparing for nuclear disasters.

"It bothers me that people always say, 'Why worry about it? Nobody's going to be alive afterward anyway.' But even in a full-scale attack against the country, we'd lose 20 million people at the most. The people who know what to do and obey officials have a good chance to survive."

Younger people he talks to in schools seem more willing to accept the idea of preparing for nuclear attack, he said.

Middleaged and older people take the attitude that "planning is futile."

He has seen a growing interest in the subject over the last year, he said, "probably because of all the disaster movies like 'Earthquake' and 'Towering Inferno.'"

While he's no soothsayer of doom, Owen figures that 22 nations now have nuclear weapons, and one of them is going to use that power eventually.

"It could be by accident or it could be irresponsible use," he said. "And what good is second strike capability? We may not even know who bombed us. We've always used the weapons we have, and sooner or later it will happen."

While China and Russia are building up their civil defense networks, Owen doesn't look for that to happen in the United States. The federal government won't spend money on it until they hear a demand from the people, he said.

"People don't want to think about it because we've never been invaded. Americans traditionally will react to crisis after it happens, but we won't do anything about it in advance, except maybe a little planning," he said.

Whenever a demand to improve civil defense does come up, he said, the State Department and a few congressmen say we'd be alarming the Russians if we built up U.S. forces.

"But the best deterrent in the world is protecting the people," he said. "Right now, we're extremely vulnerable."



AVIATION DAY — Bargain-priced plane rides drew a large crowd yesterday to the Tillford Flying Service at Palm Beach International Airport to help celebrate National Aviation Day. Visitors such as Danny Selby (right), 9, of Lake Worth, were weighed in and charged two cents a pound for their rides. Below, Mark Miele, 8, Brian Ball, 11, and Greg Miele, 11, all of West Palm Beach, used the occasion for their first plane trip.

Landlovers could skip the rides, however, and still get their thrills by looking at various vintage and modern planes and helicopters on display on the ground. Proceeds from the plane rides will be donated to 'Wings of Hope,' a charity that furnishes planes to remote and distressed areas of the world.



Yes, It's Patriotism On Wheels

By TIM O'MEILIA
Post Staff Writer

RIVIERA BEACH — Grim-faced motorists zipping down Broadway past the Port of Palm Beach are having to stop at the railroad safety gate comes down and a massive flag rumbles by.

It's a 30-year-old diesel electric switching engine painted in the nation's colors.

The Port of Palm Beach's contribution to the country's bicentennial consciousness is the handiwork of Harry James and his friends at Wide World Paints in Riviera Beach.

James solved Port Director Frank Donahue's problem of how to celebrate America's 200th birthday by offering to paint the engine.

"John Scotten, the engineer, wanted a quart of paint for the inside of his cab and he said the colonel (Donahue) mentioned something about painting the engine," James explained.

"It sort of planted the idea in my head and I sketched the thing up in color to show him," he added.

He said he would paint the engine if the port supplied the paint, about four gallons. Donahue and the Port Commission liked the idea.

Working all one weekend and three evenings, James, his son, Don; Charles Winn, James' boss Rickard, and his son, Jim, covered the blue-and-white engine in attention-grabbing red, white and blue.

Now motorists impatiently waiting for the engine to pull and push its cargo across Broadway have a different attitude.

"The people all smile and point," said engineer Scotten.

Ironically, after a weekend of climbing over the engine painting on waves of red and white enamel, James strained his back lifting a barrel of mineral spirits last week.

And he says the job isn't quite finished.

"John still doesn't have the interior of his cab painted yet," he said, and laughed through his pain.



Staff Photos

By

John Freeman



"It bothers me that people always say, 'Why worry about it? Nobody's going to be alive afterward anyway.'"

— Robert Owen

ter, but Owen doesn't think it will work in Florida.

"It'll be interesting to see what their computer comes up with for Florida," he said. "Where are you going to send the people? Will Dade County be sent up here?"

Massive relocation may work in Russia, where plans call for sending the bulk of the population 100 miles away from target cities. In China, he adds, the government has the people digging tunnels under the cities. But "in Florida, you dig three feet and hit water," said Owen.

The community shelter plan is better, he said — but even that's not in such good shape at the moment.

"We have enough shelter spaces in the good category to take care of most of the population — if they can get to the buildings, if they know where to go and don't panic," he said.

Still, 90,000 people would have to seek shelter in one of the build-

There Might Be Something to Astrologers' Predictions



Steve Mitchell

I picked up the telephone the other day and the voice on the other end asked, "What's your sign?"

"Taurus," I said. "But with prices going up the way they are, I buy gas wherever it's cheapest."

The voice identified itself as belonging to Robert Scargill Jr. of Boynton Beach, driver of a potato chip truck and sometime astrologer. "I need to know exactly where and when you were born so I can cast your horoscope," he said.

"A few minutes after midnight on July 19, 1935, in Salisbury, N.C.," I said. "It was a difficult birth for my father. He drank nearly a pint of whisky. And I should tell you right up front that I do not believe in astrology."

I didn't think any more about it, because you get lots of unusual calls in this business. But a few days later, a bulky envelope arrived in the mail. It was my horoscope.

It seems that Mercury is in good aspect with Saturn, and my moon is in Pisces. The

moon also is in good aspect with Mars and Jupiter, although the aspect with Venus and Neptune is "difficult."

This, said Scargill, shows that "your emotions and popularity can need reassurance."

No question about that, but I sure don't get much of it. I have come to the point that I read "Listening Post" with all the enthusiasm of a man contemplating root canal surgery.

"You are attracted to the unusual and rather than by the sound in human beings, and can get mixed up with odd creatures if you let yourself go," the horoscope said.

That's the God's truth if it was ever told, I thought. There was this skinny girl from Mt. Croghan, S.C., named Ruby who used to get in fights and cut people with a beer can opener, for instance. Plus a whole lot of others I don't even want to think about, such as the tattooed lady wrestler in Salt Lake City who threatened to break my clavicle in the Dive Bomber Bar.

"You do have fixed opinions, but you are tactful and considerate of the opinions of others," it said.

Indeed I am. There's something about having had your nose broken twice that tends to make you more tactful and considerate of the opinions of others, especially when the others are semi-professional waterweights or large Marine Corps gunnery sergeants.

"The planet Saturn here with the moon shows that you have a great need to be loved," the horoscope said. "There is the chance that love was withheld from you as a child."

That's true. I do have this great need to be loved, and love was withheld from me as a teenager. Her name was Phyllis, and I never forgave her for it.

"Your Venus and Neptune are together in your chart, one of the signs of the ultraromantic, a person with 'other world' charm. This gives you a grace and a charm

of appearance and manner that is especially acceptable to women."

That may well be true, but there are women and there are women, and this "other world" charm seems to have attracted a disproportionate share of girls who are trouble with a capital "T." As the horoscope went on to point out, "There is a touch of sensationalism here that makes your emotions a bit dangerous."

Later on, Scargill the Astrologer sent me his predictions for the coming year. There will be opportunities, he said, "but you will have to be alert and grab them quickly." I've done that. Nearly got my clavicle broken, too.

"Next year will be a time of climax, a time of reward for past work . . . in other words, your reward will be just exactly what you deserve for previous work."

I'm not sure whether that's good or not. As Hamlet observed to Polonius, "Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping?'"