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Bracing for Armageddon: Why Civil Defense Never Worked

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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出版者:Oxford Univ Pr

出版时间:2006-3

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780195183191

This timely book is a concise survey of the U.S. government's civil defense plans from World War II to the present, including Cold War detonations, Reagan-era Star Wars, and contemporary issues of homeland security. Garrison argues that the true purpose of federal civil defense was to legitimize deterrence policy and the arms race through

false assurances to the masses that they could survive nuclear war and to hide the astronomical expenses of programs to protect the political elite. In examining the popular reaction to civil expense plans, she reveals how the public, recognizing the suicidal nature of nuclear war, ridiculed and rejected civil defense, crippling plans for its implementation.

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