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To: tp-list@tridentploughshares.org
Subject: Re [TP] Future of TP must stay in SDcotland too
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In response to the call for pressure to be kept up in Scotland too, I have pasted the following extract from a recent radio 4 programme "Analysis" which can be heard via the listen again facility for the next few days. The programme was a discussion about the consequences of Scottish Independence, and the nuclear defence issue was one of the issues covered. I think we need to keep up pressure in Scotland, as if the SNP really do manage to shift the weapons south, it would cause huge headaches for the ministry.

"...they returned to tackle what could also be the toughest of Scottish independence challenges: defence. Peter Jones.

JONES: It is a big and difficult issue because the SNP make it perfectly obvious they would like nuclear weapons moved out of an independent Scotland. In fact, they want them moved out. But, in the real world, you have to recognize that it's not practical just simply for the Royal Navy to up-anchor and sail off because it needs the dry docking facilities and all the other paraphernalia which go around with ships carrying nuclear warheads, and those don't exist anywhere else in Britain.

BOWLBY: So a deal on the British nuclear deterrent, which just happens to be based around twenty-five miles north-west of Glasgow at Faslane, looks hardest of all to imagine. Opposition to the base in Scotland has been substantial and sustained, even if it does provide much employment. The nationalists have insisted they'll have a mandate to order its closure, should independence arrive. Professor Hew Strachan of Oxford University is a Scot particularly well-attuned to British military thinking. He suggests this is a negotiation the London side cannot bring itself to contemplate. But why?

STRACHAN: The Ministry of Defence really doesn't want to confront this issue immediately because the worry is that if you start thinking about it, then you make it probable and even possible. The big debate that didn't actually really happen in England about Trident and Trident's replacement that was meant to happen at the end of 2006, all that didn't confront squarely the basic issue and each time it was raised then it was sort of airbrushed out because that depended on Salmond winning an election and the hope was that it would go away. Well, it hasn't gone away.

BOWLBY: Is it conceivable that no one anywhere in the defence establishment has been imagining this scenario?

STRACHAN: Sadly, it is conceivable! I hope it's not true. It is perfectly conceivable!

BOWLBY: The last thing London wants to see is the submarines forced to sail away from Faslane to some hastily constructed and politically controversial English or Welsh alternative. Does Christopher Harvie agree that this looks like the most difficult of issues?

HARVIE: It's a very tender area between the two countries. The Scottish tradition has generally been strongly in

favour of nuclear disarmament, but we find that we have this enormous magazine of lethal weapons parked within thirty miles of Scotland's largest city. Now, whether some sort of deal can come out of this which enables the continuation of the British nuclear deterrent is, to say the least, questionable. And some people, I think, not just in Scotland but in England as well, might say that this is the appropriate moment for their abandonment and, as a result, the situation may be that Britain ceases to become a nuclear power.