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Plea over Clyde subs

AN MP wants pressure to be stepped up following the refusal by the Ministry of Defence to halt submarine exercises in the Clyde.

Three separate inquiries by the police, marine investigators from the Department of Transport and the Royal Navy are underway into how the submarine HMS Trenchant sunk the fishing boat Antares with the loss of four lives.

Labour's Scottish fishing spokesman Brian Wilson said: "I think pressure should be stepped up but it is up to the fishermen. I will support what they decide."

The fishermen are considering a blockade of the Royal Navy submarine base at Faslane in the Gare Loch.

However, no decision is expected to be taken until after a meeting tomorrow

between the Clyde Fishermen's Association and Lord Strathclyde, the Scottish Office Minister responsible for fisheries.

Meanwhile, operations are under way off Arran's north coast for the Navy to raise the Antares from its grave in 500 feet of water.

The Navy will use remote controlled mini-submersibles to survey the wreck and then attach cables

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Warning signal

Sir, — I refer to the recent fatal accident on the Clyde between a submarine and a fishing vessel. Prior to 1939, a submarine, or submarines, on exercise and operating at periscope depth were always escorted by a surface vessel which flew a large square red flag. This signal obliged all vessels, fishing or otherwise, to keep a sharp look-out and served as an early-warning to merchant and fishing vessels to keep clear of the exercise area.

Surely this system could be reinstated until such time as the Royal Navy come up with a safe and sure method of detecting fishing nets while patrolling at periscope depth.

No-one wants the Royal Navy to be hampered and excluded from exercising in coastal waters and the cost of an escort vessel is very much less than the life of a fisherman.

Mr George Foulkes MP, has brought these accidents to the notice of the Ministry of Defence, and I sincerely hope his efforts to ensure safety for fishermen and Royal Navy personnel serving on submarines, meets with success.

The above method was used in the English Channel in the exercise area of the Hurd Deep and never, to my knowledge, did it fail. Perhaps the Admiralty could give it a try and give fishermen additional safety in their already hazardous and dangerous occupation.

(Captain) J K Liston

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Plan outlined on fishing safety

By IAIN GRAY

OUTLINE agreement was reached yesterday between the Royal Navy and Clyde fishermen over ways of improving the safety of fishing vessels working in waters used by submerged submarines.

The agreement, which is subject to approval by the branches of the Clyde Fishermen's Association, was hammered out following a meeting at the Faslane nuclear submarine base. It follows the loss just over two weeks ago of the fishing vessel Antares and her four-man crew.

It is thought the submarine HMS Trenchant may have snagged the trawl gear of the Antares.

Among the agreements reached yesterday between the representatives of the fishermen and the Navy is a scheme whereby there should be a common communications frequency to

allow — wherever possible — submarines and fishing vessels operating in the same vicinity of the Clyde to pass their respective operating intentions.

It was announced earlier this week that the Navy is prepared to give Clyde fishermen advance notice of submarine operations in the estuary out of Faslane and the Clyde. Yesterday's discussions focussed on the technicalities of making such a scheme viable.

On proposals for a scheme for the trailing — from a fishing vessel — of an electronic device, or "bleeper" to alert a submerged submarine to the presence of fishing gear, the Navy confirmed that, subject to delivery of the necessary equipment, sea trials will begin on Thursday.

A submarine and a minesweeper have already been earmarked to carry out the trials.