

From: George Foulkes, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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Copy: Ian
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addressed to
(Julian)

PRESS RELEASE

Slow Progress on Submarine Dangers to Fishing Boats

Following a series of incidents between fishing boats and submarines in the Irish Sea and Firth of Clyde, the 'Celtic Triangle', and the mysterious disappearance of other fishing vessels, and a visit by MPs to the US and UK submarine bases at Holy Loch and Faslane, Ayrshire MP George Foulkes, wrote to the Secretary of State for Defence urging trials of a system to try to avoid such collisions.

The Defence Minister of State, Archie Hamilton, has now replied saying the the Minister of Transport will take the lead in considering such trials. (Copy enclosed)

George Foulkes comments "While I welcome the agreement to look at this and the nomination of a lead department it is still painfully slow. I have now tabled oral questions to both the Transport Secretary and the Defence Secretary to put pressure on them for more urgent consideration".

"Fishermen face enough natural hazards without the added danger of submarines snagging their nets and pulling them back or suddenly surfacing below or beside them".

The latest incident off Arran on Wednesday 28 June between submarine OCELOT and the fish vessel HUNTRESS underlines the need for urgent action on this issue by the Government.

GEORGE FOULKES MP

30 June 1989

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Dear George

Thank you for your letter of 16 May to George Younger concerning a proposal by the Humberside International Fisheries Institute for reducing the likelihood of collisions between submarines and fishing vessels and their gear. I have read the proposal with interest.

As I am sure you appreciated on your recent visit to Faslane, the Royal Navy takes the need to avoid these incidents very seriously, and welcomes any suggestion that may improve safety in waters where submarines operate. However, since this is essentially a matter of the safety of civilian shipping, the Department of Transport have agreed that they should take the lead in considering the merits of any such proposals. We shall then seek their advice about whether it would be helpful to make one of our submarines available to assist with further development and trialling.

I am therefore passing your letter to Ivor Brabazon at the Department of Transport.

*Yours ever
Archie*

ARCHIE HAMILTON

George Foulkes Esq MP