

MORNING STAR

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NATO sub linked to fishing deaths

FEARS that a submarine on a NATO military exercise may have been responsible for the loss of two fishermen's lives on Wednesday.

by JANEY HULME

Bernard Moffatt of the Celtic League, which monitors military activity from its Isle of Man headquarters told the Morning Star yesterday that no fishermen were informed in advance of the military exercise Sharp Spear.

"And this was in spite of promises from NATO secretary-general

No warning of military exercise

James Cunningham. He said that warnings would be issued to mariners and fishermen," said Mr Moffatt.

A Defence Ministry spokesman yesterday denied that the 26-foot boat Irene, which was wrecked off Barra in the Outer Hebrides in calm weather, had been in collision with a submarine.

"The wreck was found in water too shallow for dived submarine

operations," he said.

But Mr Moffatt said that there had been several incidents in the Clyde involving submarines in a semi-submerged state in shallow waters.

"Last July the yacht Drum was in collision with HMS Otis at night - the submarine left a 20-foot long gash in the yacht and did not stop," he said.

A spokesman at the Faslane base

in Holy Loch, Scotland, admitted that divers from the Faslane base had searched the hold of the wreck for bodies.

"But this is not unusual," he said. "We acted upon a request from the coastguard - because of the location of the wreck it was quicker to use divers from the base."

He denied that submarines from Faslane were involved in exercise

Sharp Spear - "the submarines based here carry Poseidon missiles and do not take part in NATO exercises," he said.

Mr Moffatt reported that this was "nonsense."

"The Defence Ministry are making themselves look ridiculous by making such ludicrous statements."

"How can they claim that the single most important naval installation on the periphery of Europe - ie the Faslane Complex - is not involved in exercise Sharp Spear, one of the biggest NATO military exercises for some years?"

"Scotland on Sunday" 26/11/89

Sub incident

THE NAVY has begun an investigation into a breach of communication rules that led to a submarine breaking shipping regulations and crossing the path of a tanker fully laden with liquid gas in the Firth of Forth.