

# Of the way - IMO

SEVEN of the 17 fishing vessels lost in unexplained circumstances since 1979 may have been in designated submarine exercise areas, Michael Spicer told parliament last week.

Mr Spicer is parliamentary under-secretary at the Department of Transport. He was answering a question from Carrick, Cummock and Doon MP George Foulkes.

The Labour member had asked him to list all the unexplained losses and say whether they were in a designated submarine exercise area. The question was one of a series that have been asked following an incident on February 18 when a Northern Ireland boat had an unexplained surprise catch in the shape of a US submarine.

Of the 17 boats listed by Mr Spicer, four were definitely in a designated exercise area. They were *Tarradale II* (27 miles east of Pentland skerries), *Exuberant* (between Weymouth and Dartford - possibly off Portland Bill), *South Stack* (between Anglesey and the Isle of Man), and *Jake II* (eight miles west of the Rhinns of Islay).

Others: *Sylvia Marita* (somewhere in the Channel) and *Pearl* (off Holyhead) may have been in an exercise area; on *Zanto*, which was lost off the west coast of Denmark, Mr Spicer said it was not possible to say. He didn't mention *Mhari L*, about which Mr Foulkes asked a supplementary question, and said that *Dawn Waters*, the Jersey-registered, Brixham-based vessel lost in the Irish Sea last year, was not in such an area.

Mr Foulkes asked Mr Spicer to list any incidents reported to the coastguard services in which submarines were involved, or of which the DfP had any knowledge. Mr Spicer said that the coastguard had not been involved in any such incidents (apart from the Northern Ireland vessel *Summer Morn*) since 1979. But they did log two such incidents when vessels reported difficulties - in

1982 and 1984. The DfP has not been involved in any such incident, says Mr Spicer, but he points out that the International Maritime Organisation issued an advisory circular last year following a meeting of its safety committee.

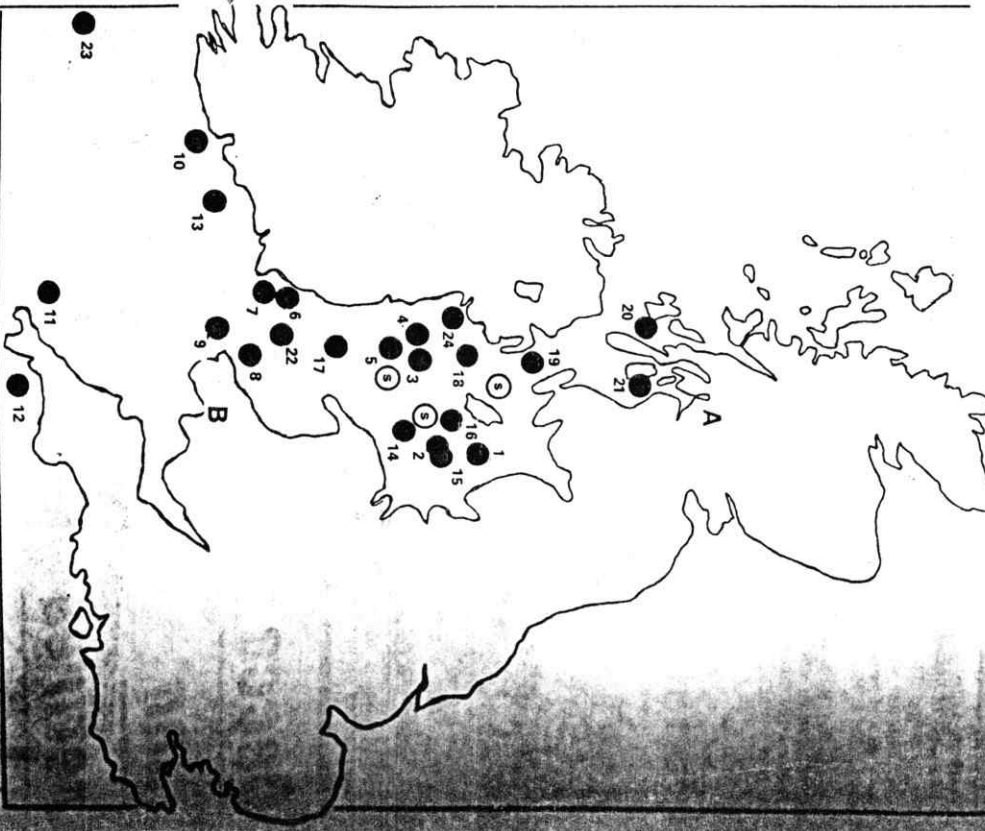
This document goes to the IMO's full assembly for approval in November this year, but it already exists in draft form.

It points out that a fishing boat and a submarine might not have any information about each other's presence. It recommends that a submerged submarine, if information of the presence of a fishing vessel and its fishing gear is available, should, as far as possible, keep out of the way of that fishing vessel and any fishing gear connected to it unless the submarine is disabled.

Prior to this the IMO had received two submissions from Denmark and Ireland, on the problem. An annex to the Irish submission outlined some of the incidents.

## SUSPECTED SUB INCIDENTS

- |  |           |   |          |
|--|-----------|---|----------|
| 1 NUCLEAR SUBMARINE under tow  | 30/7/84   | 18 M.F.V. SUMMER MORN towed backwards for 10 miles  | 18/2/87  |
| 2 NUCLEAR SUBMARINE USS Nathaniel Greene under tow after breakdown   | 11/8/84   | 19 RUSSIAN SUB in incident with R Navy  | -/4/82   |
| 3 M.F.V. ENRANGLED with submarine (M.F.V. Dred) cuts nets, towed 3 miles   | 8/4/84    | 20 SMALL CRAFT towed backwards for 2 miles in Sound of Jura - compensation paid by U.S. Navy  | 1981     |
| 4 M.F.V. SHERALDA sunk by HMS Porpoise   | 18/4/82   | 21 FASLANE COMPLEX  |          |
| 5 M.F.V. CHAMSON DAWN towed by Sea Laser nets  | 18/4/82   | A1 Submarine enters damaged, 24 hrs after loss of <i>Mhari L</i>  |          |
| 6 CITE D'ALTIH disappears off Wexford 10 crew lost   | 12/1/83   | B1 USS Sam Ruben returns 'hot' after incident in Baltic being prep in Irish Sea (see No. 21 August 1984)                              |          |
| 7 7833 YACHT in collision with sub believed to be HMS Oostuin  |           | D1 USS Nathaniel Greene returns under tow with section of bow torn out following incident in Irish Sea on April 10 12/88 (see No. 17) |          |
| 8 M.F.V. CALVANOR disappears with 8 man crew off Shetlands   | Summer/82 | E1 Missile dropped during transfer from depot ship USS Holland NOV 1981   |          |
| 9 M.F.V. Ann de MOUTTES snagged and towed off Shetlands  | 10/3/83   | F1 Fire aboard USS Hawley - depot ship Nov /84  | 30/6/82  |
| 0 M.F.V. JEANNE de LOBRANNE snagged and towed backwards  | 3/2/84    | Z2 BREITON FRANKLIN TE COURSE disappears with crew of five in calm seas   | 2/8/83   |
| 1 M.F.V. ACRIE snagged by HMS Sparan   | -/12/84   | 23 USS SAM RABBITR returned 'leaking' radiation after collision in this area  |          |
| 2 M.F.V. JOANNA C snagged by motor sub   | 3/4/84    | 24 THREE FISHERIES from the DOWN COAST area involved in net snag incidents  | May 1984 |
| 3 U.S. NUCLEAR SUBMARINE forced to surface in middle of M.F.V.'s Wharfed   | 12/7/84   | In addition to the listed incidents - three British trawlers have disappeared without trace in the Irish Sea area                     |          |
| 4 'MINE' goes astern during M10 mine sweeping exercise. Coastguard who co-ordinated recovery, later claimed no knowledge | 19/5/84   | 1981 Cherry   |          |
| 5 M.F.V. South STACK disappears with all hands   | 20/2/85   | 1983 Zamo   |          |
| 6 M.F.V. MAHARI L disappears with all hands  |           | 1983 Exuberant  |          |
| 7 USS NATHANIEL GREENE on the sea bed damaged April 10 12/88, subsequently decommissioned                                |           | (A) FASLANE COMPLEX   |          |
|  |           | (B) BRANWY H O U.S.N. SSSIS SYSTEM  |          |



**THE Celtic League, which monitors military activity in Celtic countries, has produced this map showing what it suspects are incidents involving submarines and fishing vessels in the Irish Sea.**

The League's secretary, Bernard Moffatt, says the IMO resolution does not go far enough and his group will be lobbying for stronger measures.

The Celtic League, which is based in Peel, Isle of Man, has established liaison with a group monitoring the Faslane complex - where Royal Navy and US submarines are based.

The League's campaign was launched in 1982 following a series of accidents involving submarines and small craft.

Since 1982, 28 men have drowned in suspicious incidents in the Irish Sea, says Moffatt. He says many more could be at risk by snagged and submerged or