

For Information
From Graham Stein, SCRAM

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CND refit fears 'are bunk'

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A REPORT on the safety of Trident submarine nuclear reactors is to be presented to MPs on the influential House of Commons Defence Select Committee by Scottish CND.

The 76-page report, The Safety of Trident, claims a serious accident could happen during refits on the vessels at Devonport Dockyard.

It says a huge radioactive cloud could then be blown across Plymouth and the South West, endangering up to 350,000 people.

But the report has provoked anger at Devonport Dockyard and Devonport Naval Base where it has been dismissed as rubbish.

A Royal Navy spokesman said: "A Chernobyl-style accident involving a nuclear submarine reactor simply cannot happen."

Scenarios

And Devonport Management Limited spokesman Eain Williams said: "These claims do not stand up to scrutiny."

But CND is standing by its report and hopes it will be included in the evidence considered by defence select committee MPs when they discuss the Trident programme in a series of debates towards the end of this month.

A Scottish CND spokeswoman said: "We have outlined a number of scenarios which could result in a disaster, including a Chernobyl-style incident. But let's face it, one nuclear accident would be one too many."

The CND report claims:

- "A (Trident submarine) reactor accident could be on a scale similar to the Chernobyl disaster." It claims the de-fuelling process, which involves a reactor core being lifted out of a submarine during refit, poses serious risks.
- An accident during this delicate process could lead to the populations of major towns and cities throughout the South West being exposed to high levels of radiation. Radiation from Plymouth could spread as far as Exeter and Taunton.

Enhanced

- Nuclear reactor cores from the Trident boats will be transported from Plymouth to Sellafield where used fuel will be reprocessed. Scottish CND claims there could be "a major accident... anywhere on the rail routes from Devonport to Sellafield."

DML's Eain Williams said: "Safety, already extremely high at Devonport, is due to be enhanced for the Trident refits. There is no cause for concern now and there should be no cause for concern in the future."

"Used fuel movements are the subject of tight control using specialised equipment."

Plymouth anti-nuclear group DIG is backing the Scottish CND report.