

Sub problems show safety comes second

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7/12/00

I WISH to take issue with Rear Admiral Anthony's claims that all is well with the nuclear submarines at Faslane (November 23).

The normal cloak of secrecy which surrounds these vessels has been lifted because the Navy had the misfortune of taking HMS *Tireless* into Gibraltar.

Political pressure has resulted in detailed information being given to nuclear experts advising the Governments of Spain and Gibraltar. Much of this is now in the public domain.

HMS *Tireless* has two cracks in

the primary coolant circuit close to the reactor pressure vessel. If Rear Admiral Anthony seriously believes his statement that there are no radiation hazards associated with this flaw then he is not a fit person to be in charge of nuclear submarines.

In the week before his letter was published HMS *Triumph* hit the seabed off the West Coast of Scotland and was taken into Faslane.

Yet the Rear Admiral chose to keep this fact a secret from us all. He claims that the repair to HMS *Splendid* and HMS *Superb* will use

a 'straightforward and fully proven engineering process'.

But the experts advising the Gibraltar government have published a report, based on information from the MoD, which makes it clear that the Navy has never before attempted this kind of repair.

There is a great deal of uncertainty over how it will be done and whether it will work.

The same report reveals that the Navy will not know the cause of the problem for several weeks. So the claim that HMS *Triumph*

is clear of the defect is a nonsense. The Navy do not know what they are looking for.

Furthermore they have not carried out a proper physical inspection of the suspect part on HMS *Triumph* — and I challenge Rear Admiral Anthony to say that they have.

The recent decisions made at the highest level with regard to HMS *Triumph* illustrate very well that, when push comes to shove, the MoD will put operational demands before public safety.

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