

# Sparks fly as nuke exercise begins

OFFICIALS at the Clyde Submarine Base have hit back at criticisms of the nuclear accident exercise which began in Dumbarton District on Tuesday.

The two-day exercise involving local authorities and the emergency services is based on the scenario of a reactor accident in one of the Faslane-based hunter-killer submarines.

At a media briefing on Monday, Chris Williams, MoD assistant director for nuclear accident responses, dismissed peace protesters' attacks as "selective and inaccurate."

The MoD argue that the emergency procedures contained in the Clyde Area Public Safety Scheme (ClydePubSafe), which is being tested in the exercise, are based on nuclear accident responses cleared by international regulatory bodies.

ClydePubSafe deals with a nuclear accident said to have a probability of happening once every 10,000 years.

In a report released this week environmental group Greenpeace said that the MOD safety

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scheme was incomplete because it concentrated on less serious accident scenarios.

And the green pressure group has called in two experts to make the case against the exercise, codenamed Short Sermon '91.

At a Greenpeace briefing organised in Glasgow on Monday, nuclear engineering consultant John Large and Dumbarton regional councillor Iain McDonald, who is chairman of the Scottish Nuclear Free Zones Committee, argued that ClydePubSafe only dealt with a relatively minor accident.

Mr Large claimed a large release of radiation could happen suddenly and that the exercise failed to take account of this.

Janet Convery of Greenpeace chaired the meeting. She said: "Short Sermon '91 will be based on a scenario involving a limited nuclear accident, although the MOD refers to it as a maximum

design accident.

"The scenario is unlikely to present an immediate radiation hazard beyond 550 metres from the accident site. This corresponds to the perimeter of the base and means the authorities are unlikely to involve members of the general public.

"In fact the public have never been involved in the response to a navy emergency planning exercise, despite the risks they face."

FASLANE Peace Camp released 200 balloons on Saturday to show how radioactivity could drift much further than the base perimeter. As the *Lennox Herald* went to press one was reported found at Dalmally in Argyll.

STRATHCLYDE Region officials will be taking part in the exercise from their 'bunker', a basement HQ under the offices at Garshake Road in Dumbarton.

The *Lennox Herald* will be attending that part of the exercise and a full report will be in next week's issue.

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