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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mizan

Dr. N Mamode
Warwickdale Cottage
Overton Road
Kilmarnock
Ayrshire
KA2 0DN

6th November 1997
Our Ref: C/IL/4603/BHD/SA

Dear Dr. Mamode

Nuclear Accidents at Faslane

I enclose a letter that I received from the Armed Forces Minister, John Reid which is self-explanatory. I trust that this is helpful to you. If I can be of further assistance to you, then do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Brian H. Donohoe MP

Enc.



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MINISTER OF STATE FOR
THE ARMED FORCES

D/Min(AF)/JR/4137/97/M

31ST October 1997

Dear Brian,

Thank you for your letter of 16 October (reference: C/IL/4603/RB/BHD) to George Robertson on behalf of your constituent, Dr N Mamode of Warwickdale Cottage, Overton Road, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, who has asked for details about Exercise **SHORT SERMON**. I am replying as this matter falls within my area of responsibility as Minister of State for the Armed Forces.

I should say first that there has never been an accident involving a nuclear powered submarine reactor which has led to, or come anywhere near leading to, any release of radioactive contamination to the environment. We are confident that the continued application of stringent safety procedures will continue to prove effective in preventing any such accident.

Nevertheless, we would consider it irresponsible not to have comprehensive contingency plans for dealing with all aspects of such an eventuality, and we test these plans in regular exercises at various levels including full scale events such as Exercise **SHORT SERMON 97**. An overview of these arrangements was given in the Statement on Defence Estimates 1995.

Plans for responding to defence nuclear accidents are derived in full consultation with all relevant government departments, agencies, and in particular with the emergency services and local authorities in the area concerned. The joint plan for responding to a submarine reactor accident at Faslane is a publicly available document. Furthermore, the public in the immediate area, who might be advised to take action, are sent leaflets under the provisions of the Public Information for Radiological Emergencies Regulations.

Brian Donohoe Esq MP





Exercise **SHORT SERMON**, which will be held in the Faslane area between 18 to 20 November 1997, is being designed to test the response of the MoD and Royal Navy in dealing with an accident involving the reactor of a nuclear powered submarine berthed in Clyde Naval Base. A key aspect of the exercise will be coordination of activities between the MoD and other agencies. We have been most pleased by the comprehensive support for the exercise that has been provided by all local emergency services and authorities and by the Scottish Office and other government departments.

The accident scenario will be simulated and no radioactive contaminants will be used during the exercise. There will be an evacuation of the Naval Base in accordance with the plan, but I would like to reassure you that the local community will not be affected in any way by the exercise.

I hope this explains the position.

Kind Regards

John

DR JOHN REID MP

