



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 0171-218 2216 (Direct Dialling)
0171-218 9000 (Switchboard)

MINISTER OF STATE FOR
THE ARMED FORCES

D/Min(AF)/JR/3929/97/M

? 25th October 1997
↓

RECEIVED 24 OCT 1997

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 2 October (reference: JC.11) to George Robertson on behalf of your constituent, Ms Hazel Galloway of 22 Church Square, Galashiels, who has asked you for details regarding 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.

Michael Moore 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 you find the above both helpful and reassuring.

Kind regards,

John

DR JOHN REID MP

This was the response to the printed letter I sent from the September "Nuclear Free Scotland", asking what provision was made for our area. (None, it appears!)

