



Above: a 'floating reactor' in the Forth. The Navy denies dumping radioactive coolant. Left: the naval hotspots.

by ALLY McLAWS

PUBLIC confidence in the powers controlling nuclear submarines and their safety has been torpedoed by revelations that the US Navy knowingly discharged radioactive material into the Clyde.

There are now renewed suspicions that the Royal Navy's plans for accident emergency procedures are obsolete and calls are being made for the Clyde Public Safety Scheme and Rosyth Public Safety Scheme to be altered radically.

Concern is highest in Rosyth, on the Fife side of the Forth, where Britain's 18-strong nuclear-powered submarine fleet and four nuclear-powered and armed Polaris submarines are re-fitted. The Rosyth Public Safety Scheme (ROSPUSAFE) reveals:

- An area of 550m radius around a submarine should be evacuated as soon as a reactor accident occurs.
- Outside the evacuation distance, following a Maximum Design Accident (contained accident), no counter-measures are required to prevent individuals exceeding the upper emergency reference levels.
- Following a Maximum Design Accident (uncontained accident) sheltering is not considered to be an appropriate automatic countermeasure because the hazard will have passed before people can be warned.
- Stocks of potassium iodate tablets are held at Rosyth and will, if required, be issued to residents in married quar-

US dumping sinks sub safety claims

Dr Norman Godman, MP for Greenock and Port Glasgow, argues that rules for nuclear safety in this country were in need of urgent change. 'A new set of very tight regulations to prevent such deliberate leakage is needed urgently,' he said yesterday.

The Royal Navy states that its nuclear submarines have never discharged radioactive coolant in the Forth and that all the coolant is removed and decommissioned in special tanks at Rosyth. However, only two months ago it admitted that an accident had taken place in the Rosyth dockyard involving a leak of radioactive coolant water into the dockyard basin.

The Rosyth site is undergoing a major expansion which will see the new Trident submarine being refitted there public.

The Royal Navy claimed yesterday that the ROSPUSAFE scheme was monitored constantly and that the chance of an accident involving the 50,000 population of Dunfermline and the thousands of others living even closer to Rosyth was 'extremely remote.'

Meanwhile fears over monitoring and public safety have been resurrected following last night's Channel 4 television documentary *Scottish Eye*, which revealed that US Navy nuclear submarine Commander James Bush knowingly discharged radioactive coolant into the Clyde on several occasions and that other submarines in the US fleet did likewise.

Planners prepare for worst

IN THE aftermath of Chernobyl, the Scottish Office refused to issue advice to local authorities on coping with a similar disaster because, in the words of a spokesman, 'local authority planners would be expected to take that into account.'

Observer Scotland asked them if they had done so.

In Lothian, emergency planning officer Colonel Ian Cameron, said: 'We were writing the emergency plan for Torness when Chernobyl happened so we took this into account when we drafted the plan.'

'If there is an incident at Torness which is likely to affect people outside, monitoring teams from Torness will work out from the perimeter going downwind taking readings.'

'This allows them to establish the extent of the plume and the levels of radiation inside. We also have an arrangement that these monitoring teams would be joined by others from other nuclear power stations and from the MoD.'

He added: 'The Government is now drawing up a National Response Plan and we are co-operating with that.'

In Strathclyde, however, a spokesman commented: 'We have done nothing specific in relation to Chernobyl but the emergency planning unit has plans to deal with accidents at all major industrial installations where there is a hazard and that includes Hunterston.'

A spokesman for Highland said: 'Dounreay has its own plan and Highland Region has its own plan and they marry at certain points depending on the size of the emergency. We are going along with the Government's radiation monitoring scheme and then we will decide how effective their information is.'

The Scottish Office's Emergency Planning Guidance does not specifically mention civilian nuclear installations. A spokesman said: 'If a nuclear bomb fell on Torness the extra fall-out would be academic. Government thinking at the moment is that in the unlikely event of war a nuclear attack would be preceded by a conventional attack.'

'In a conventional attack it is most unlikely that Torness and similar installations would be bombed because that would create a Chernobyl situation. With the wind blowing to the east they would put themselves at risk.'

The final part of the Rosyth Public Safety Scheme which has angered community groups is the lack of information on safety. ROSPUSAFE states: 'It is important to control the release of information on nuclear safety to the general public.'

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