

Pressure Press Release

Our friends in Gibraltar

22 August 2000

A British nuclear-powered submarine, HMS *Tireless*, has now been sitting in Gibraltar Dockyard for over three months.

Tireless limped into Gibraltar after a mishap at sea when it leaked much of its nuclear power reactor's coolant into the Mediterranean.

Although the reactor was closed down, its residual heat and radioactivity is such that only now can repairs be started.

The people of Gibraltar – and the Spanish population of nearby La Linea – are frightened and angry. Why?

They have been told nothing by the British Ministry of Defence except that a committee has decided that there is no particular danger of any radioactive hazard.

⊗ The Nuclear Safety Defence Committee meets in secret. All evidence is secret. Its deliberations are secret. Its report is secret.

as "won't say who is on it"

Even the membership of the committee is secret.

Certain facts are known however.

Gibraltar, although designated a Z Berth (i.e. an emergency berth for a nuclear powered ship in trouble), has:

- No nuclear waste storage or disposal facilities,
- No nuclear leakage containment system,
- No medical treatment facilities for radiation accidents (there is not even a radiotherapy unit in the local hospital. Patients requiring radiotherapy are flown to Britain for treatment)

Specialist engineers have been flown out from Britain. There is considerable concern that only a year after a complete refit that included the replacement of the uranium fuel core of its reactor, *Tireless* has broken down. The MoD don't want to tow it back to Devonport or Rosyth where there are full repair facilities. Why? Too dangerous? Sorry, that's also secret it would seem.

The people of Gibraltar are being treated to a staggering display of colonial, Whitehall-knows-best arrogance at a time when the dangers of naval nuclear power have never been more appallingly obvious.

⊗ John is the do correct name. Any other comments etc?
David