

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 8 NOVEMBER 2000

FROM Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

TO Newsdesk

LEGAL MOVES TO STOP NUCLEAR SUBMARINES

Scottish CND has instructed solicitors to act on their behalf to prevent a nuclear submarine from returning to service.

Geoff Hoon has announced that HMS Triumph will return to operational duties shortly. Scottish CND is concerned that if this happens there could be an accident which could lead to a reactor melt down in Scottish waters. This situation was only narrowly avoided earlier this year on her sister ship - cracks appeared at a crucial point in the reactor of HMS Tireless while the submarine was in the Mediterranean.

“Geoff Hoon is showing a callous disregard for public safety in ordering HMS Triumph back to sea without any inspection of its reactor. The Navy narrowly avoided a meltdown on one submarine, now they are sending its sister ship to sea without any proper checks”

- said Brian Quail, Joint Secretary, Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

HMS Triumph is a Trafalgar Class submarine. The Ministry of Defence have admitted that there are signs of a critical flaw on 5 of the 7 vessels of this class. This is a generic defect. The Navy has not had any opportunity to inspect the reactor of HMS Triumph. Geoff Hoon said that HMS Triumph would be used in support of Trident, and so it is likely to sail into Scottish waters and visit Faslane.

Phil Shiner of Public Interest Lawyers has written to Geoff Hoon asking him to confirm within 3 days that HMS Triumph will not go to sea until written reports on its inspection have been made public.

The same lawyers are also preparing to take action on behalf of Gibraltar residents to prevent the repair of HMS Tireless being carried out in Gibraltar harbour. Proposals to repair the submarine in situ are at the centre of a growing political row between Britain, Gibraltar and Spain.

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Copies of the letter from Public Interest Lawyers to Geoff Hoon available.