

Scottish Sunday Mail

Experts share A-sub rust fears

BY ANGUS MACLEOD

TOP defence experts have challenged the MoD over the nuclear sub HMS Valiant lying crippled in a Scots dockyard.

The Mail told last week how the sub had been hit by radioactive corrosion and how Rolls Royce had been called in to cope with the crisis.

This week junior defence minister Tim Sainsbury claimed in a Parliamentary answer that there had been "no incident affecting nuclear safety on board HMS Valiant during her refit."

But defence experts poured scorn on the denial.

Steam

Desmond Wettern, editor of Warship World and a confidante of Naval chiefs, told the Mail:

"They have got a major engineering problem and it is connected to the age of the submarine's reactor. It is within the radioactive hazard area."

And Walter Paterson, a specialist writer on nuclear engineering, commented: "Radioactive rust is a very apt description of what has happened."

"Engineers actually call it 'crud'. There is certainly some radioactivity in the steam generator of this sub."

Last Thursday the Guardian reported that the reactors which power Britain's nuclear subs had been involved in more than 700 incidents.

Mr Sainsbury has confirmed that the £100 million refit of Valiant will be delayed and extra costs incurred.

HMS Valiant is due to be re-commissioned 19th Nov 88

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NUKES PLANE CRASH PLAN

NUCLEAR bosses are ready to crash a plane in a bizarre safety test.

They want to prove that plutonium can be safely flown from Prestwick to Japan across the United States.

A suitable aircraft would cost about £7million.

BNFL have a £2000m contract to reprocess Japanese nuclear fuel at Sellafield.

They want to send it back via Prestwick.

Ayrshire MP George Foulkes is to ask the Government where the test will take place.