Southampton Coalition Against Nuclear Ships

The Editor
The Echo
Southampton
26 June 2000

Dear Editor

The visit of another nuclear-powered submarine to Southampton Docks "Z Berth" (Echo 23 June) is bad news. Although the vessel carries no nuclear weapons, the nuclear reactor on board presents a hazard, especially to children and pregnant women. We consider it is wholly irresponsible of the Navy to put the public at an unnecessary risk by inviting them onto the submarine in an effort to regain public confidence after their cancelled open day in April.

After the visit of HMS Splendid in April, readers may recall that a coalition of environment and peace groups decided to challenge the justification of bringing a nuclear reactor into the city. We have also studied the City Council SOTONSAFE plan designed to try to protect people in the event of a nuclear accident in the docks. The plan says that schools and other organisations would be involved in the distribution of potassium iodate tablets to children, but we wonder how this could be done when children are not in school over the coming weekend?

Protests at these nuclear submarine visits have been made since the early 1980s but with more public understanding of nuclear dangers, we now want a court to look at why the navy wants these submarines to visit Southampton. Since there is no benefit to ordinary people here, what is the point of putting us at this risk?

Thanks to the generosity of Southampton people, we have already raised £840, but we are £160 short of the £1,000 necessary to put into court as a gesture of our seriousness in pursuing the case. In addition, we will have our own costs for travelling to lawyers meetings and basic administration.

Anyone who wishes to contribute to the legal fund can do so by sending a cheque to N.I.S. c/o30 Westwood Road, Southampton SO17 1DN.

Yours sincerely

Di McDonald
For Southampton Coalition Against Nuclear Ships (SCANS)