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Cracked subs pose lethal threat to city

THAT'S NOT A BAR

A NUCLEAR disaster would engulf the west of Scotland after an accident on one of Fastlane's nuclear submarines.

That's the terrifying warning from Soviet military chiefs, who this week in Moscow unveiled top-secret emergency plans they drew up for their own bases after the Chernobyl catastrophe.

And it comes only weeks after the British Government BANNED the Clyde-based subs from entering foreign ports because of dangerous cracks in their nuclear reactors.

The Soviet plan shows the full effect of a nuclear accident on a sub as it returns to base.

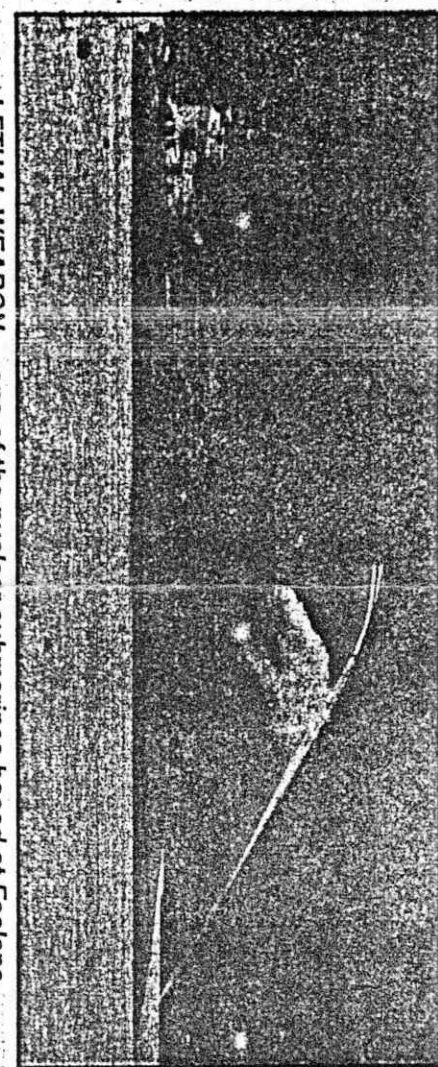
For Glasgow, only 35 miles from Faslane, the effect would be catastrophic — the reactor would blast through the hull of the vessel and vaporise, raining lethal debris on to the base, and releasing a radioactive cloud up to 1000km long.

According to the study: **MORE** than 70,000 people in Glasgow would be contaminated by the poison cloud

● 10,000 of these would die, with another 20,000 suffering long-term health damage

● 30,000 more would need immediate medical attention.

Consultant nuclear engineer



LETHAL WEAPON... one of the nuclear submarines based at Faslane.

Report by DAVID GRAY

John Large, a guest at the Moscow conference, analysed the shocking documents.

He said: "The chance of an accident for this type of reactor is reckoned to be within 1-in-10,000 to 1-in-100,000.

"But western analysts think of this as an 'incredible' risk, that it is so unlikely the chance can be dismissed.

"PUT SIMPLY, THEY CONSIDER THE TITANIC TO BE UNSINKABLE SO THERE IS NO NEED TO FIT EXTRA LIFEBOATS.

"An accident is possible in western marine reactors like the ones on the submarines, but western analysts exclude it from their emergency plans."

Regional councillor Iain

MacDonald was on the nuclear free zone's sub-committee. He said: "This confirms our worst fears that we face a mammoth catastrophe, and shows the ridiculous situation we are in — these submarines are disintegrating, yet are still allowed to be there."

Admit

And a Greenpeace spokeswoman said: "The Ministry of Defence plans for Faslane don't even include this sort of scenario, and will only admit to a possible health hazard up to five kilometers downwind.

"They seem to think the radiation will halt at the perimeter fence."

Concerns over the safety of the base's atomic subs have

reached fever pitch in recent weeks.

On a TV programme screened last week, a top civil servant said: "We would not like any size of accident to happen at all... particularly in a foreign port."

He went on to say a nuclear reactor accident is "less likely" to happen at Faslane, because the cracked reactors are not run up to full power at home bases.

YET JOHN LARGE CONTRADICTS THIS IN HIS REPORT.

He says: "It is necessary for nuclear-powered vessels to operate at full reactor power close by and within the port, undergoing start-up, close-down and testing."

Civilian unions at Faslane have said that from September 30 they'll refuse to work on

the vessels unless the MoD "comes clean" on safety.

There have also been reports that at least one sub at Faslane has been grounded after being refused a safe operations certificate by the Government, making others work for record times to cover.

One of them, HMS Revenge, has been on active service for a marathon nine years since its last refit — two overdue, and there's concern its reactor is being pushed to the limit.

An MoD spokeswoman said: "We hold one of the best safety records in the world as regards nuclear safety, and it is Government policy that safety aspects are paramount.

"If we were not absolutely happy with any aspects of the safety we would not allow staff to be there."

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