

Hansard 11/1/90

Mr. Redmond : To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the spillage of contaminated cooling liquid from HMS Talent at the VSEL shipyard at Barrow-in-Furness ; what precautions were taken ; what health risks arose ; and whether any civilian or service personnel were treated in hospital.

Mr. Archie Hamilton : There was a leak of coolant water from HMS Talent at Barrow, at 4.40 am on 4 December. The level of radioactivity in the water was extremely low. The coolant was being pumped to an external tank when a pipe split and approximately 140 litres were released into the dock. There was no danger to the submarine's reactor. Monitoring of the water in the dock failed to detect any radiation above the normal background and there are no health implications for either Royal Navy personnel or the general public. The incident has been fully investigated and appropriate action taken.

1/7/93

HMS Repulse

Mr. Cohen : To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the Clyde public safety scheme was activated as a consequence of the release of coolant from HMS Repulse on 20 June.

Mr. Hanley : The activation of the alarm was immediately discovered to have been an over-reaction to what was a minor incident that posed no risk to the public. Because of this, the public emergency authorities were not alerted and the public safety scheme was not activated.

30/6/93

HMS Repulse

Mr. Cohen : To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the release of coolant from HMS Repulse on 20 June ; what quantity of radioactivity was released ; how many personnel were contaminated in the accident ; and what is the estimated cost of the clean- up operation.

Mr. Hanley : The quantity of coolant spilt was about one pint and its radioactive content was barely detectable above background levels. No contamination was detected on the three personnel involved. The cost of the clean-up operation was negligible.

23/1/89

United States Submarines (Discharges)

Mr. Foulkes : To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has regarding the discharging of radioactive primary coolant by United States submarines into Scottish waters since 1960.

Mr. Archie Hamilton : Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that any releases of

radioactivity have not breached established national and international standards.

Mr. Foulkes : To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when United States Polaris submarines were ordered not to discharge radioactive primary coolant into Scottish waters ; and on whose initiative this action was taken.

Mr. Archie Hamilton : I cannot comment about specific orders given to United States Navy Polaris submarines, which are a matter for the United States Government.

9/12/88

Mr. Alton : To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what incidents have been reported involving pressurised water reactors in nuclear submarines releasing gas from their cooling systems into the atmosphere ;

(2) what information he has on what radionuclides would be produced if air contaminated the cooling system of a pressurised water reactor in a nuclear submarine.

Mr. Archie Hamilton : The primary coolant water in submarine pressurised water reactors inevitably contains a very small amount of air. The dominant nuclides which form in the dissolved air are nitrogen-16, nitrogen-17 and argon-41, with half-lives of 7.1 seconds, 14.4 seconds and 1.8 hours respectively. Argon, which accumulates over time, is routinely released when necessary, with appropriate safety precautions. No Royal Navy submarine has ever been involved in an incident causing any radiological hazard to service men, base personnel or members of the public