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COUNCIL DEMANDS ANSWERS ON MELTDOWN SCARE

Local councillors voiced their grave concern last week over the nuclear reactor meltdown scare on board a submarine.

And they are to demand answers from the Commodore Clyde and the Secretary of State for Defence.

Several questions were raised on the issue, which happened aboard HMS Resolution at the Clyde Submarine Base at Faslane, by members at Dumbarton District Council's monthly meeting on Thursday.

Of particular concern to Convener Ian Leitch was the role of the Clyde Public Safety Scheme which should have been notified of any problem relating to reactors in submarines.

"The incident did occur," said Convener Leitch, "and when I had a meeting with the Commodore he denied any knowledge of it and I accept that he did not know.

"If there was a radiation leak then the Clyde Public Safety Scheme should have been alerted, but seeing as it wasn't it only confirms the view that this organisation is a sham."

He said that any information given that it was a minor fault will not do as the members wanted to know if the incident resulted in an almost "catastrophic meltdown."

Convener Leitch posed several more questions which the council should seek answers to including: why Commodore Clyde's subordinates did not notify him?; and to what extent does the base experiment with closing down reactors, a system that he was not, until now, aware of?

"This is a matter of urgency and concern for the constituents of this district as a whole," he said.

Councillor Billy Petrie (Ind., Rhu & Garelochhead) said that he had contacted Commodore Clyde, Commodore Patrick Rowe and he could confirm that there was "an electrical malfunction".

"I think it is right and proper to raise the

matter," he said. "But I am impressed with the action of our MP and I think we should leave it in his capable hands and await the replies he receives and, if necessary, ask him to come and speak to us."

Councillor Les Robertson (Lab., Bonhill East) claimed that Councillor Petrie was trying to satisfy his constituents and the Navy by not wanting the council to find out what happened.

"The question I want to know," he said, "is whether or not the hatches of the vessel were open at the time and how much radiation could have been released into the atmosphere and the prevailing winds."

"We should ask the Secretary of State for a complete revision of the Clyde Public Safety Scheme so that it is taken out of the hands of the military, and we should contact other local authorities in the area to see if they have any points to raise," he added.

The council unanimously agreed to the suggestions put forward.

Guardian Feb 26th



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Homeward bound . . . Soviet soliders hugged East German children in Bischofswerda yesterday before boarding a train loaded with dismantled SS-12 missiles bound for Russia. Officials said the rockets' removal was an act of trust that the superpower arms treaty will be ratified. The East Germans waved Communist flags and gave presents to the soldiers.