

Scottish CND News

Reactor problems found on seven nuclear submarines

With regard to the reactor fault found on HMS Tireless it has now been disclosed that there are signs of this fault on a total of seven nuclear submarines. This was revealed by Defence Minister, Geoff Hoon on 1 Nov.

The submarines are listed as:

HMS Tireless, in Gibraltar
HMS Superb, at Faslane
HMS Splendid, at Faslane and in use only 2 weeks ago
HMS Trafalgar, at Devonport base
HMS Turbulent, at Devonport base
HMS Torbay, in refit at Devonport dockyard
HMS Talent, undergoing maintenance at Devonport dockyard

The statement also claims that other submarines have been given the all clear. However Scottish CND dispute this. Geoff Hoon claims that HMS Triumph has been inspected and no signs of the fault found. This is scarcely credible.

Until very recently HMS Triumph was at sea in the Mediterranean. It would not be possible to carry out a proper inspection of the suspect point of the reactor until the system had cooled down and radiation levels dropped, which would take several weeks. Any decision about HMS Triumph would appear to be based on the fact that this is the newest boat and no signs have been seen in paperwork from earlier inspections of her reactor. But as the area concerned was never previously regarded as a problem, these inspections may not have been as thorough as is now required.

It is particularly worrying that there are signs of the problem on HMS Talent. This means that the fault is not just on the oldest submarines. HMS Talent is only one and a half years older than HMS Triumph, and only three years older than the Trident submarine, HMS Vanguard.

(Geoff Hoon statement reported on iberianews)