

Radioactive submarine entered Holy Loch

United States Navy officials have privately admitted that a nuclear missile submarine dangerously contaminated with radioactive waste entered the Holy Loch submarine base in Scotland late last month. The incident suggests that US nuclear submarines have been dumping radioactive waste off the Scottish coast. Because of local confusion about the identity of the submarine concerned, naval officials have until this week been able to deny that any incident had taken place. The Ministry of Defence faces a parliamentary question late this week from Scottish Labour MP George Foulkes about the event.

Residents in Dunoon nearby first heard rumours a month ago that one of the Poseidon fleet, the *USS Andrew Jackson*, had been involved in a radioactive accident. Strathclyde Regional Council then made official enquiries. The *Andrew Jackson*, it was claimed

by naval officials, had not been in port at the time, and there had been no radioactive leak. People had 'misinterpreted the routine offloading of a missile'. Eyewitnesses also reported that the submarine's hull had been sprayed with water, but this was officially claimed to be 'routine'.

In fact there had been a serious radioactive accident, and this has now been confirmed to local council representatives, but the contaminated submarine was, according to US Navy sources, the *USS Sam Rayburn*, SSBN (ballistic missile submarine) 635. It carries 16 Poseidon missiles and is nuclear-powered. It entered the Holy Loch on the weekend of the 25/26 February and was taken aboard the dry dock *USS Los Alamos* which is permanently moored in the Loch. According to eyewitness accounts, everyone aboard the *Los Alamos* was issued with personal radiation monitoring badges the next day.

Decontamination teams chipped paint and marine encrustation off the submarine's hull which was continually sprayed with water to prevent radioactive dust or particles being released into the atmosphere.

Although officials continue to deny that any radioactive leak has taken place, the incident appears to confirm local suspicions that the Poseidon missile armed submarines are discharging radioactive materials off the Scottish coast. A report prepared last year by investigative reporter David Kaplan for the US Fund for Constitutional Government quoted US Navy shipyard and submarine personnel as confirming that 'the Navy routinely dumps overboard highly radioactive resins'. The resins are used as filters for the nuclear reactor cooling water system and can be dumped from a nuclear submarine while it is operating at sea. In at least two previous accidents of this kind, the resin has been swept onto the submarine's hull, contaminating paint and marine debris such as barnacles.

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